

International Standard for Archival Description

- 1.1 Reference code** UNHCR 53
- 1.2 Title** Records of the Offices in Laos
- 1.3 Dates of creation** 1975-2000
- 1.4 Level** Fonds
- 1.5 Extent (quantity)** 21 m, 1 CD-Rom, 1 Diskette
- 2.2 Administrative/Biographical history** UNHCR established a regional office in Vientiane in October 1974 following the Paris peace agreements on Vietnam and Laos. In these early years of UNHCR involvement in Laos, efforts were concentrated on the local settlement and rehabilitation of the thousands of internally displaced persons. From 1978 through the mid-1990s, the emphasis shifted to the resettlement of refugees in third countries, during which time UNHCR was to play a significant role in the resettlement of over 2 million people.
- 2.3 Archival history** Three important returnees' databases were created at the UNHCR Office in Laos. The first database was created beginning circa 1985. It has data on an estimated 70% of the returnees. It was originally created in Lotus software; the staff member managing the database converted the data in 2001 to a Microsoft Access 97 format (returnee98.mdb). The names and surnames of persons and places are transliterated into English. In addition, there is a second, separate database of returnees in 1999, which was created in Microsoft Excel 97 (retu-all.xls). A third database exists which tracks the monitoring visits to returnees (Missions98.mdb).
- The original CD-ROM sent by the Office in Laos contained several irrelevant files. These irrelevant were removed in February 2002. Most of these irrelevant files were not accessible. The files were various attempts of the responsible staff member to convert the Lotus Notes data to Access and to group all the records together in one file.
- 2.4 Immediate source of acquisition** The paper records were transferred from BO Vientiane to UNHCR Archives in February 2002.
- 3.1 Scope and content** The records document the changing role of UNHCR in Laos as the international community sought a durable solution to the refugee crisis in South East Asia. The files contain records of the visit of High Commissioner Sadruddin Aga Khan in 1975, as well as early correspondence with Lao government ministries and documentation on refugee flows. Especially rich with information are the "notes for the file", arranged by year from 1980-1999. The records include correspondence, project and protection files, press clipping and numerous photo albums.
- The records contain individual refugee case information and lists.
- 4.1 Conditions governing access** Records are subject to the General Restriction Policy of the UNHCR Archives
- 4.2 Conditions governing reproduction** Records are subject to the Copyright Policy of UNHCR
- 7.2 Rules or conventions** Internal UNHCR rules
- 7.3 Date of description** 13 February 2006