

**Province:** **Xieng Khouang**

**Area:** **Plain of Jars**

**Status:** **ongoing (2004-2007)**

**Partners:** **NZAID, UNESCO, Lao National Tourism Authority, Ministry of Information and Culture**

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**ARCHAEO-UXO Village Assisted Clearance**

In 2004 developed the ARCHAEO-UXO Village Assisted Clearance approach at three sites on the Plain of Jars. This work was funded by NZAID, and in carried out in partnership with UNESCO, the Lao National Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Culture and Information.

The Plain of Jars, situated in Xieng Khouang, is an archaeological site comprising thousands of megalithic stone jars widely distributed over the mountainous expanse of the province. The jars are one of Laos' greatest remaining archaeological mysteries, and are a significant component of the cultural heritage of the people of Xieng Khouang. Xieng Khouang is, however, not only one of the poorest provinces in Laos, but also one of the most heavily bombed places on earth. Without UXO clearance it is not possible to protect the jars or to promote all the jar sites as a tourist attraction.

The project will safeguard the Plain of Jars using the ARCHAEO-UXO Village Assisted Clearance approach. This work is intended to encourage the development of safe, community-based and



Making the jar sites safe will increase the opportunities for local communities to benefit from tourism. Photo: Sean Sutton/MAG

environmentally friendly tourism. This in turn will help transform these communities into viable livelihood centres and promote economic stability.

The project works closely with local communities and has made strong links with the ongoing development of cultural tourism activities in the province. These links will ensure that a significant portion of provincial tourism revenue is funnelled back into local conservation and development initiatives. Ultimately it is hoped that the Plain of Jars will achieve World Heritage status.