ការប្រឈមកាម
ដោយមាត់ក្រុង
It was a dark and stormy night in the middle of the rainy season in southern Laos. Sister La wakes as usual needing to use the toilet. But as her family still hasn’t built a latrine, sister La must venture out into the perils of the night, where she encounters mosquitoes, a snake and even what she thinks is a ghost. The following day, when Sister La’s father hears what happened the night before, he finally makes the decision to build a latrine for the family. After the latrine is constructed, Sister La feels safer going out at night and her mother sleeps easily knowing her daughter will no longer have to go far, even in the middle of dark and stormy nights.

Objectives
To help the participants/target audience to…

• Know how the benefits of having and using an improved latrine (an essential part of every household) can help improve a family’s quality of life and well-being (convenience, comfort, safety and good health)
• Look for more information on benefits of having and using an improved latrine from their community leader or health volunteer
• Seek information on types of affordable latrines that suits their need from suppliers/sales or equipment shops
• Build and use a latrine. Promote the use of the latrine by family members, and support neighbours to do the same.

Remember
• This story is supposed to make learning fun. So be sure to smile, laugh and enjoy reading it with people in your community.
• You can change the names in the story to names more similar to people in your community (however be careful not to make anyone uncomfortable or embarrassed).
• You can create a similar story to this as long as it has a successful ending that has to do with the benefits of constructing and using a latrine.

Instruction and Steps for storytelling

If visiting a household, this story is suitable for mother, but may not necessarily be limited to other family members, such as father, children and the elderly. The story is about La forced to venture alone into the night – about safety, convenience, responsibility for family.

1 Engage your audience
• Know how the benefits of having and using an improved latrine (an essential part of every household) can help improve a family’s quality of life and well-being (convenience, comfort, safety and good health)

2 Build the scene
• Throughout your storytelling, you want to tell your audience the story in a way that makes them feel like they’re there. Start by giving them context when you start your story. Continue to create the scene by using details which help them picture the action and feel the same way as the characters in the story. For example, “It was a dark and stormy night in the middle of the rainy season in southern Laos…”

3 Build tension and release tension
• You want to make your audience see the problem and finally the solution in the story. Furthermore, you want to make your storytelling exciting, for example, when the characters are facing a difficult situation, you want to build a feeling of tension. But later the problem or the tension is ultimately overcome, and everyone is happily smiling after they successfully built a latrine.

4 Emphasize what’s important
• After your audience see both the problem and the solution, you want to emphasize key messages or the benefits of having a latrine which will help them improve their lives (convenience, safety and privacy). This will give them good opportunities to have good health, a better quality of life, prosperity, and the pride and dignity of the family leader, demonstrating that they are responsible for their own community as well.

5 Discuss by asking questions and listening
• After your audience knows the end of the story, ask how they feel or what they think about the story. Show them again the opposite situations between before and after having a latrine and how the characters felt and why they decided to solve their problems that way.
• Ask: “Do you want to listen to another story?”
Scene 1: I’m scared but I have to go!

- But, just as her mother said, by the time the sun was setting, sister La was already running out the door and then sitting in the bushes squeezing her stomach and thinking to herself that she would try not to eat the same foods again the next day.
La knew her mother couldn't sleep if either she or her brothers had to go out at night.
La's mother always said it was best to stay inside and wait to go in the morning. She said that her children could get malaria from mosquitoes or bitten by a snake … or even bump into a ghost!
La was afraid of all these things, but there was nothing she could do. When she had to go, she had to go!
However, what happened one final night made her think again.
She thought it was a normal night. She tip-toed out of the creaky house, walked to the forest, and squatted down near a tree where she came almost every night. She looked up but there were no stars this night, just the faint glow of the moon. It was darker than most nights, and she knew if she had to come out again tonight she would get rained on. Lightning was already streaking in the distance.
Then 'bzzzz’ … Thwack! She slapped at a mosquito that had landed and bit her on the middle of her leg. She looked down. She hadn't killed the mosquito, but she'd left a big red mark that stung almost as much as the big bite.
La wanted to get up and run back inside. She was so angry. But she wasn't finished yet. So she sat there a while longer with the mosquitoes.
‘…Psssst …’ came a sound from the bushes. “What was that?!” she whispered, listening closely. ‘Psssst … pssst’. There it was again!
She looked around, but didn’t see anything. ‘…Pssst… psssst…’ La pulled up her sinh and quickly turned around. There, just beneath her feet, was the longest python she'd ever seen. And it was going to bite!
“Eeeek!” she cried, running back toward her house.
She knew she could run faster than the snake, but still she could hear something behind her. She ran even faster.
“Haaaaaa … haaaaaa.” Something or somebody was laughing! But it was a strange laugh. She glanced up. The shadow of a man rose from the bushes behind her.
“Aaaaah, a ghost!” screamed La. Luckily, now she could see her mother calling to her from the porch of the house. She ran up the stairs into her mother's arms. “Ma,” she cried. “I saw a snake and a huge mosquito bit me … plus I saw a ghost!”
Story title: “La’s Adventure”

Scene 3: Finding A Hero/Solution

- The next day sister La and her mother described to her father all the things she'd run into the night before.
- “And you're always telling her all those chilies are good for her!” chided La's mother to her husband.
- Sister La's father looked back at them sheepishly.
- “What should I do?” asked the father. “Kill all the chili plants? Chop down all the mango trees in our village!?”
- “No,” said mother. “We need to do something good for the safety and health of all of us!”
- Sister La walked back to her favourite mango tree as her parents continued to talk. She started thinking whether she should dare eat one today after everything that happened the night before.
Later that afternoon, La and her mother found her father and brother building something in the back of the house. She looked closer.

“A latrine!” she exclaimed excitedly.

“Yes,” said her father proudly. “No more snakes. No more ghosts. And this place will have a lot fewer mosquitos without all of us pooping around here.”

Even La’s mother was impressed.

“Thank you for listening. We should have done this a long time ago,” she said. “But where did you get the money to build it?”

“It’s actually not that expensive,” her father explained. “The neighbours gave me some of their wood. The village chief showed me where to dig. And how can I put a price on my daughter’s safety and health?”

La and her mother smiled.
Scene 5: A good night’s sleep! (Final)

• When the latrine was finished the following week, La ran out to her family garden and picked a full handful of chilies, even more chilies than normal. When she sat down to eat that evening she took a few of the chilies hidden next to her and gave a couple to her father.

• La looked at him and smiled. He smiled back and laughed. But when they stopped laughing, La heard someone else still laughing.

• “Haaaa … haaaa!” “Oh no!” yelled La. “It’s the ghost again! He’s back!” She ran to the window.

• But there was no ghost. It was just her cousin, stepping out of the new latrine. She thought for minute and realized he had always had a strange laugh.

• “Well, now I guess you won’t go running and screaming from me again if we both have to poop at night,” he said, laughing up at La.

• Later that night, La got up as she always did. But this time she didn’t hear her mother wake and she wasn’t afraid as she walked outside.

• She had even heard that all her neighbours were now also building a latrine and their village was about to be awarded the status of ‘Open Defecation Free’.

Story title: “La’s Adventure”