



Dear reader,

Following the rotation of Regional Directors in summer 2023 it is my great pleasure to present the first Newsletter of DVV International's Regional Office Southeast Asia since I have taken over this position. The first months mainly served to organize the handover process, learn about our existing partner network and our ongoing endeavors to support the set-up of sustainable structures for non-formal education in our partner countries. This learning process will certainly continue in the time to come since there are no ready-made solutions but rather collaborative processes taking into account country specific conditions and DVV International's key principles: partner orientation, ownership and joint respect.

Having arrived only recently in Vientiane I would like to share some impressions and observations made during the last months and look forward. On the other hand, you find in this Newsletter also a review about the last four years from the former Regional Director, Dr. Johann Heilmann, whom I would like to thank once more for his outstanding engagement. During his time as Regional Director we have intensified the cooperation with our key partners from the Laotian Ministry of Education (MoE) at all levels and started new initiatives in various fields of non-formal education – albeit the major challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With reference to my experience as former Director of DVV International, please allow me some remarks from a global perspective. There have been promising developments on the macro level in Lao PDR and Cambodia. Both countries have undertaken important steps to promote lifelong learning by adopting a decree and a policy, respectively. These key documents do not only match very well to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda (SDG-4). They also pave the way for a more holistic understanding of education providing learning opportunities for people at all ages and across sectors. To further illustrate this progress, you will find in this Newsletter various articles about the promotion of a lifelong learning action plan in Cambodia and a study on the motivation to take part in second-chance education in Laos. Furthermore, we inform about CLC development and training the trainer initiatives, a new handbook for women empowerment and our first steps to use a mobile application (Ed App). Finally, our regional partner organization, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), informs about the follow-up process related to the outcomes of the CONFINTEA VII Conference that took place in the year 2022.

I am looking forward to deepening the fruitful cooperation with our partners that will be entering into a new project phase in the year 2024. I wish you a good reading.

Your sincerely,
Christoph Jost
Regional Director

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A chapter of Lifelong Learning in Lao PDR

Johann Heilmann, DVV International

A common remark you hear, when people look back at a certain period in their lives, is that “time has flown.” Indeed, this is something I have to admit to as well, even though at some stage during my four-year- stint in Vientiane time seemed to be standing almost still. I started my job as the Regional Director of DVV International for Southeast Asia in June 2019 – about nine months before we were confronted with an unexpected global pandemic that challenged us privately but also in our professional endeavours. While the resulting lockdown in 2020 was short-lived, we were particularly impacted in Laos in the period between April 2021 and February 2022: Schools were closed, travel was almost impossible, most people worked from home and events involving larger numbers of people could not be held.

In other words: My daily work certainly looked different in those days compared to what I would have expected before coming to Laos. But this also showed the necessity of one of the key themes we are striving for with our work in Lao PDR: Lifelong learning. Suddenly we all found ourselves in online meetings, developed new modes of communication and reflected on how we could support each other in those challenging times. And this then opened new paths. New paths for learning and new paths of cooperation. Maybe the Non-Formal Education Development Centre (NFEDC) would not have met in Vangvieng in early 2023 to work on integrating content of the NFE equivalency programmes into an app and piloted it soon thereafter without a pandemic? Maybe we would not have reflected so much about how we can make our workflows more efficient and reduce travel costs had it not been for the impossibility of travel over a long period of time?

I can thus realise that despite the many difficulties we were facing in that period, we still managed to move forward and take advantage of the changes that occurred all of a sudden. And this certainly is a quality that all of us will need in the future as well and which is why lifelong learning is so important. Just as a few years ago we did not know we would have to learn so much about the prevention of infections, we do not know

WHAT we need to learn in ten years’ time from now on – but it is certain that we WILL need to learn new things and therefore be ready to learn. So, if I look back at my four years in Laos that just ended in June this year, I can say that maybe we did not achieve everything with regard to structures, the implementation of trainings or the development of curricula. But I sincerely hope that with our DVV team in Laos and the region and with all our partners we drew a substantial step closer to prepare those around us for continuous learning. For being open to learning new things. And for even enjoying it.

One objective we always set ourselves in our work is to truly create an impact. To achieve sustainability. To make sure that project successes stay for long beyond the end of the project’s last activity. As difficult as this might be in many regards, one area that shows sustainable success without any doubt is the one about human resources. As DVV International, we got involved in a lot of different areas of education and learning in the past 14 years, but the one improvement, which stands out for me, is the impact of individual capacity building. It is great to see a good number of the trainers of the training cycle for adult educators a few years ago still actively engaging in trainings and in further widening their horizons, thereby further contributing to increasing the access of our target groups, especially in rural and remote areas, to lifelong learning opportunities.

In this spirit I would like to thank the entire adult and non-formal education community for the excellent cooperation over the last four years. May you all continue to strive for increasing the access of our target groups to good-quality education. And may you all continue doing this through strengthened structures of non-formal education in Laos and Cambodia!

Hope to keep in touch with many of you and all the best from DVV Headquarters.



Case Study – the starting point to become one of the great trainers for the project and Northern Regional Non-Formal Education Development Center

Leklai Southavilay, DVV International, Laos

“Whether I conduct an online or offline training, success depends on various factors including the quality of training materials, an understanding of trainees or audiences, great coordination and preparation, and strong teamwork,” shared Mrs. Vanpheng Khonechaleune.

Vanpheng further stated, „There has been a significant change in my self-development and motivation compared to my previous experience. This is not only true for me but also for my colleague, Mrs. Nan. She has demonstrably improved her skills in providing effective training to her audiences both at the center and in numerous training courses. We are committed to integrating these acquired skills and knowledge into our work, even after the project ends,“ Vanpheng added.

Providing Effective Training Courses Through Skilled Trainers

The project has significantly strengthened the capacity of trainers from Luang Prabang, Xiengkhouang, Bolikhamxai, Huaphan, and Salavan provinces. This has resulted in a marked improvement in the quality and relevance of training courses, achieved by shifting the focus to a blend of theory and practical hands-on training to build participant competency.

These improvements are evident in the positive feedback from participants and the knowledge exchange happening within their communities. Many participants have commented on the interactive and engaging nature of the training, with one lady from a participating province stating, „I have attended many training sessions in my village, but I have never enjoyed myself and learned so much before. I like this one the most because of the kind trainers and fun games. I will surely share the fun and knowledge I gained from the training with many people in my community.“

Bolikhamxay Province, Lao PDR: Vanpheng patiently and actively demonstrates the most powerful and interactive activity to participants at the Vat That village meeting hall in central Lao PDR during a training session on communication skills for community women. This topic falls under the Women Empowerment Handbook approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in February 2023. She consistently emphasizes to coaches and the trainer team that „people learn best when they feel safe and happy.“

The 35-year-old says she enjoys learning and exchanging skills and knowledge with different departments, friends, and various development partners. However, working with DVV International’s Women Empowerment Project has been a unique experience. It has allowed her to learn more standardized processes, starting from understanding participants’ needs to designing agendas, training content, methodologies, demonstrations, practices, actual training sessions, reflections, and coaching. Vanpheng confidently shares this insight.

“I am so impressed since I first joined the project, and I would like to express my sincere thanks for allowing me to work in the project and team from various departments – DNFE and DNFEFC in particular.”



Left: Women participants enjoy the game during the training courses in Bolikhamxai Province

Right: Vanepheng Khonechaleune (center) with co-trainers demonstrating game to participants at Bolikhamxai Province

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Women Empowerment Handbook

The Department of Non-formal Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, in collaboration with DVV International, organized a Women's Empowerment project to train trainers in non-formal education from 2021 to 2023. This project aimed to build trainers' capacity to empower women through non-formal education. Additionally, the project developed a handbook as a guide for trainers to organize training programs within their organizations.

The handbook comprised four chapters:

Chapter 1: Lifelong Learning and Adult Education

Chapter 2: Soft Skills

Chapter 3: Gender Action Learning System

Chapter 4: Family income generation

This handbook emphasizes practical session. Therefore, we recommend that trainers supplement the materials with additional homework. This handbook is a compilation of content from various resources, intended as a guideline for trainers who can adapt activities to the target group and learning environment.

The full book can be access under www.dvv-international.la or Scan QR



Regional CONFINTEA VII Follow-up: ASPBAE's Engagements and Perspectives from CSOs in the Asia Pacific

Helen Dabu, ASPBAE

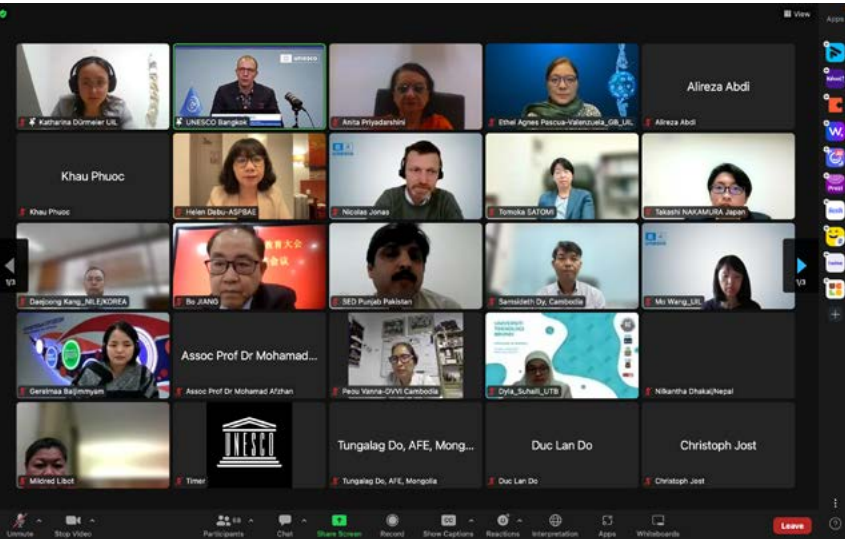
On 30 May 2023, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Offices in Bangkok, Beijing, Jakarta and New Delhi, organised a virtual Regional CONFINTEA VII Follow-up Conference for Asia as part of their efforts to pursue the commitments made in CONFINTEA VII codified through the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA).

This regional inter-governmental conference offered an important step within the region to both engage governments in the Asia Pacific to expand dissemination efforts on the CONFINTEA VII commitments, and to also concretise these by identifying action points made in the MFA with a focus on policies, funding, provision and quality and governance, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The follow-up mechanism was also discussed at the preliminary stage to track progress to be made and exchange good practices within the region.

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), as an organizing partner for this regional conference pursuing the CONFINTEA VII outcomes, presented the "Civil Society Recommendations in the Implementation and Monitoring of CONFINTEA VII Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA)" within the plenary session which featured governments and other stakeholders' perspectives on the MFA implementation, including priority areas and good practices in the region. More than 60 participants from governments in the region, UNESCO sub-regional offices and various stakeholders, including civil society organisations (CSOs) represented by ASPBAE and some of its members, and representatives from DVV International Southeast Asia Office, attended this virtual regional conference.

As part of ASPBAE's practice and to ensure that its input to this regional process reflect the perspectives and recommendations of CSOs, especially its members in the Asia Pacific region, it organised a virtual preparatory CSO consultative meeting on 23 May 2023. This meeting

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brought together representatives from ASPBAE’s membership consisting of ALE advocates and practitioners from countries in South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and Central Asia. The outcomes of this CSO consultative meeting along with the CSO Spotlight reports on ALE developed by ASPBAE members at the country level were put together into a summary recommendations paper presented by the ASPBAE Secretary-General in the main regional conference on 30 May and was also submitted in writing to UIL and UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Offices in the region.

In the main, ASPBAE’s recommendations in the pursuit of CONFINTEA VII MFA commitments in the region revolved around the key areas of national ALE policy and financing; equity and inclusion; ALE and digital equity, literacy and citizenship; quality delivery and provisioning of ALE; ALE governance and systems; monitoring and accountability mechanisms of the MFA and; promoting good practices from countries within the Asia Pacific.

Amongst others, ASPBAE emphasized that governments must enact a comprehensive legislation and policy on ALE as a right within the lifelong learning framework, with the participation of civil society and other ALE stakeholders. The national law should be followed with clear implementation rules and guidelines, defining specific roles of the national and local governments and with categorical policy on annual budget allocation from the national or central government.

It also called on countries to urgently support and finance community learning centers. Learners, parents, family members, and communities must have access to

community-based learning, gender-just skills education, family literacy programmes, reading centres, and other programmes that foster intergenerational learning and support the continuity of learning, especially on mental health, food and nutrition and community resilience efforts.

Cognisant of the accelerated pace towards digitalization in many countries in the region, ASPBAE highlighted that education systems should set into motion affirmative actions toward ensuring access to multilingual education and digital literacy for families, especially in remote rural areas and other marginalised communities.

And to ensure CONFINTEA VII MFA commitments are pursued, ASPBAE called for a wider information dissemination campaign from local to national levels about the state of ALE at the country level, and start a country and multi-stakeholder process of developing an Action Plan for ALE and the implementation of the MFA where clear country targets, financing and indicators for monitoring progress are defined. This should ensure the participation of CSOs and other key stakeholders in defining priority areas and action plans. To reach out and achieve wider support, the MFA and country action should be translated into the country’s language. Capacity building of local governments, CSOs and other stakeholders on concretising the MFA into policies, financing and programmes will also be critical in the coming period.

Finally, ASPBAE emphasised that issues such as climate change, migration and refugee crisis, conflict and disasters need international cooperation. It therefore urged Member States to define a regional ALE agenda and clear cooperation plans that will provide learning and opportunities in conflict-affected countries, Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

As CONFINTEA VII follow-up efforts have only just begun, ASPBAE, together with its members, affirm its commitment to sustain its active engagement and contribution in these processes. It will continue to work with national, regional and global CSO formations to advocate for a more ambitious, gender-just, climate-saving and inclusive ALE agenda as codified through the Marrakech Framework for Action.

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Governmental Institutions and Development Partners Convene Lifelong Learning Workshop to Gather Input

Vanna Poeu, DVV International, Cambodia

In collaboration with development partners, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) organized a consultative workshop on the draft action plan of the national lifelong learning policy. The workshop aimed to gather input and facilitate exchange on strategic goals and activities that individual ministries/institutions can implement.

The workshop was conducted on July 28th, 2023 by General Secretariat of National Committee for Lifelong Learning of MoEYS under support of DVV International.

This workshop was organized in the presence of his Excellency Nos Sles, Secretary of State, MoEYS and deputy director of the National Committee for Lifelong Learning (NCLL) and his Excellency Professor Chhem Keat Rithy, Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister, and Secretary of State, Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology & Innovation, and a committee member of NCLL, MoEYS.

The purpose of this important workshop included promoting the understanding of the national policy, discussing the draft of action plan and reviewing on the strategic goals and main activities to be harmonized and to define activities of the relevant ministry/institution to

carry out following the steps to reaching the set goals.

In his opening speech, his excellency Nos Sles considered that this workshop is of great importance for the discussion on the identification of key inputs to set realistic strategic goals and activities, suitable for the target group that will benefit from the national policy of lifelong learning.

At the same time, he deeply thanked the donors of the relevant ministries, UNESCO, DVV International and other development partners, which contributed to the development of the national policy of lifelong learning and action plans in the past.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport emphasized that lifelong learning is becoming a crucial issue for education and a beneficial tool for attaining freedom, joy and responding to the changes in market needs, especially the need for all citizens to learn in all circumstances.

Lifelong Learning is a learning process, including formal, non-formal and informal education that is used throughout human life to develop hard and soft skills to become good citizens and to live together peacefully and harmoniously in cognitive society.



Weaving the LifeLong Learning among Laotian CLCs

Chiara D'Urso, DVV International, Laos

During my fruitful internship experience at the DVVI office in Lao PDR, I had the opportunity to spend a week in fieldwork, to get aware of the ongoing projects in Nong and Sepon which aim to strengthen Community Learning Centers, in particular through a focus on income generating activities for women, but also by opening them for youth and children.

In the morning of Friday 14th October 2022, together with a DVV expert project manager Dokkham, the DVV driver Vila and two trainers - experts in weaving and sewing bamboo handicrafts, from Vientiane Capital, we headed to our southern Laos destination: Nong and Sepon districts, in the province of Savannakhet. Although I felt driven by a desire to be surprised by the experience itself, some special expectations came up. Anyway, I was sure it would have impressed me as never before. I knew I would have met ethnic people who live in remote villages, in the middle of nowhere of breathtaking Lao nature, thus, having an adaptive and curious mood can trigger a positive approach to enjoy every single moment as unique-unforgettable.

I visited Sepon CLC and met the people from the NFEDC and Lao Youth Union (LYU) offices. Simplicity characterizes Laos itself as well as the warm welcome people show for foreigners. Nevertheless, DVV organized a weaving handicraft workshop, to express to the municipality representatives the importance of LLL for all, a capacity building and a team building function for municipality staff, for partners organizations (LYU, LWU) and for DVV. For the local villagers an opportunity to develop and practice hard skills for generating new incomes.

Indeed, the matters that these districts are facing include: finding new ways to support the villagers sustainably and fostering local

municipalities to find economic fundings for implementing projects autonomously. So far, DVV Laos has established many lifelong learning projects for a long time, empowering communities to blossom themselves, with the aim to let them walk with an independent commission, which makes a big difference in every person's lifepath.

Definitely, considered bullet points regarded the importance of taking advantage of the all-current resources to transfer this expertise to the local population, recognizing the young generation's aspirations, abilities and force. A tough aim to achieve, considering the socio-economic reality, but not impossible: often, less is more and together we are stronger.

While the bamboo training lasted for the full week, I visited four different villages, each with different objectives.

The first, it was difficult to reach, with unfeasible road conditions. I clearly realized that if from these villages you want to make a living, no matter the challenges, high necessity to be active to serve the village primary needs. However, it was a drizzly day and we arrived in the Sepon village, Lakoum, in one CLC equipped to allow villagers to improve&share their skills. Indeed, they learn to read and write, acquire basic grooming skills, use sewing machines, and create traditional bamboo handicrafts; this empowering context fosters the self-economic growth of women. Of course, the provision of equipment can make a difference in their lives, by smartly developing ways to generate new incomes, in line with the market demand. Furthermore, the connection of CLC gives the opportunity to organize exchanges with other villages.

I interviewed some girls sewing cotton clothes, asking about their feelings, dreams and family support. The shyness, the short available time and the unclear perspective for their future made slightly the same answers, asserting unclear ideas and passion for those activities, as their dream jobs. After our visit, fifteen teenage girls from Lakoum village came to Sepon CLC



Dokkham, me and municipality representative with villagers handicrafts

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Me and Lakoum villager during training, Sepon CLC.



Sinhs made in Kalak village, Sepon district.

for three days to practice their skills in bamboo bag making and creative sewing. During the first village visit, curiosity was the common feeling between me and the locals, who had sight of shyness&surprise.

However, happy and glad to meet respectively, we left the village to go back to the Sepon CLC. In this context, I also improved my manual skills in making bamboo handicrafts. It's been so challenging: because of the linguistic barrier, integrating the weaving process itself was ambitious, but relaxing and absolutely rewarding. Personally, lifelong learning has infinite meanings of observations and applications, it offers an opportunity for adaptation, learning for and from every single human being.

Not least, bamboo is widely used in Lao communities, as one of the strongest world plants. In the villages, they make bamboo houses, tools, and eat it.

Moreover, the project aims to empower women in generating incomes from the implementation of different abilities. Thereby, in these villages the main manual activity is weaving, to create beautiful cotton cloths, Lao traditional skirts: the "sin". In general, Laotian people know how to weave from a very early age since weaving is an essential skill for every woman to claim their artfulness. So, these villages have been equipped with those implements, and everyone is motivated to learn. The process of making cloth of a "sin" made of cotton, for instance, takes more or less one week.

What characterizes these clothes is the colorful and fabulous motifs as well as the delicate embroidery. The different colors and motifs reflect the ethnic group culture, the Laos culture, the social relationships and

beliefs from each community.

However, every village has its project pieces of training, depending on its needs. For instance, there is a village where children get aware on the importance of healthy nutrition. The adults are trained to cook and prepare nutritious food for their families. Genuinely, they showed me how they prepare the food and also how their passion for weaving gives them the strength to believe in a better future.

Furthermore, youth and women follow a knowledgeable path to arise awareness for preventing diseases, undesired pregnancy, taking health care, and getting into a new mindset of seeing males and females with equal rights. Of course, if everyone recognizes these potentials, issues would decrease significantly. This DVV project has already brought many benefits in villagers' lives and keeps on supporting them to co-create self-structured realities. It shows a big and positive change from the micro to the macro level. Hence, more concrete actions would make significantly the difference.

Also, as a lifelong learning expert, I recognize the value of looking back to the past, keep on looking towards the future, by living the "present" moment as a gift. Thus, I believe that those districts have great potential to reach satisfactory results if circularly keep on involving every social-economical level. In conclusion, this experience represented a meaningful opportunity to widen my perspective on how CLCs work in Lao PDR, seeing how these people feel happy to learn lifelong with their own communities and neighbors. Doubtless, I will remarkably remember it.

Give back to Society: Helping, Giving and Volunteering

Ros Keng, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia

Helping, giving, and volunteering are acts that fulfill life's ultimate meaning. All three of them encourage people to create intimate solidarity and fellowship, as well as a sense of common ownership. The aforesaid also has benefits for both physical and mental well-being and contributes to a society consisting of beneficial impact, potential, and strength.

Helping one another is simple yet has a beneficial impact. Acts of kindness persuade others to embrace. Moreover, when people help others, they mostly feel good about themselves. Knowing that the more kindness you show, the more grateful you feel and the more inspiration you achieve. Indeed, youth devote their time and knowledge to lifelong learning centers because they are aware of how giving back to the community strengthens society. Giving to others can lower stress levels, feelings of loneliness, and signs of depression. Giving can encourage a more sincere and positive perspective with regard to helping others in the community.

Throughout the ancient times of Cambodia, volunteering has long been a culture of sharing and supporting one another. This volunteer activity has been expanding and actively contributing to social development, where citizens of all ages are encouraged to take part in the growth of the local community and society. Youth can learn, earn experience, and improve via volunteering in a variety of areas, including critical thinking, social issue knowledge, improving physical and soft skills, teamwork, and establishing a sense of patriotism.

Volunteering broadens the impact of helping others as well as offering back to the community by providing a large-scale opportunity to make a good difference. Examples of volunteering range from cleaning school grounds, watering flowers, cultivating crops, and devoting oneself to non-profit organizations that support community

development. Both volunteers and recipients get a refreshing feeling from volunteering. The mission of reaching a common goal is to promote successful teamwork as well as mutual support and friendship.

Volunteering may additionally provide opportunities for learning and developing new skills. Indeed, anyone can volunteer at lifelong learning centers and gain additional knowledge of administrative procedures and development planning in the process. They will therefore get to build up their knowledge base. Given the experience that employer's value in candidates, Volunteering can also enhance a person's capacity for employment.

The Royal Government places a great value on and emphasizes education, training, and capacity development of young people both in and out of school, establishing the objective of „one young person with at least one life skill“ as well as the national strategy on developing Cambodian youth. The 10th policy's Strategy addresses issues with volunteering in Cambodia in connection with the SDGs 2016–2030. National Policy on Lifelong Learning, as outlined in the 8th Strategy: Promoting a Living Culture for Global Citizens: „Movement of all citizens, particularly young people, to participate in voluntary work in all forms and Cambodia's digital economic and social policy framework 2021–2035“. Based on this, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has produced a manual on the execution of volunteer work at community learning centers and youth centers to assist authorities in charge of youth and youth volunteers in the capital and provinces who are in charge of coordination and assist with the execution of ongoing initiatives.

I am personally, as well as the leadership of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, sincerely thank to DVV International Organization, which has collaborated with the Department of Youth Center to recruiting 220 young volunteers to work as volunteers and interns at the Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport, and some community learning centers since 2020 until

Youth volunteer teaches elementary class



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now. Groups of youth volunteers who have implemented projects in the community enable them to plan, raise funds, implement projects and lead projects successfully, which has received strong support from all occupations across the country.

In short, volunteerism is an essential driving force in reaching all of the SDGs, which is the vision of the United Nations 2030.

In conclusion, helping, giving, and volunteering are all great methods in order to make the world a better place. Depending on the individual, these activities might be straightforward or complex, but they all have a significant impact on people and society in general. In the end, these acts of generosity and kindness always uplift our spirits and strengthen our bonds with those around us. Thus, it is crucial that we honor and applaud those who invest both their resources and their time in enhancing both their community and the lives of others.

Development of our Community Learning Center (CLC)

Prak Toeun, AngChum Primary School and the Sre Knong Community learning Center, Kampot Province, Cambodia

In 2013, our Community Learning Center has been established by the Department of Education and coordinated by the Ministry of Education. Through the support of the Ministry, we were able to hire two professional teachers from the community. With a small budget, received from the Department of Education, we bought materials, that allowed us to start developing the CLC.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of publicity work, the CLC was not very well known at the time and we did not have the infrastructure to improve our working progress. With only a few old computers and no room to store documents, we could not complete important management work. Also, we did not have an established management system yet. The distribution of the different tasks in the CLC was undefined, leaving most of the work for the director of the center.

The biggest challenge before the cooperation with DVV International was the appearance of the CLC. Our CLC was the first national community learning center in the area, making it a new concept for the community. The management skills of the team were very limited, which is why tasks, such as leadership, implementation, budgeting, and networking could not be applied. Without partner organizations and the involvement of the local monks as well as the authorities, the CLC could not develop into a better learning space.

In addition, the environment of the center was not yet inspiring. Without the garden, the area was messy and dirty. The teaching lessons were not adapted to the student's schedules and needs, which is why a lot of students missed their classes. It became apparent that non-formal education had to be established as a new concept in the community in order to provide lifelong learning for more people.

Collaboration with DVVI in 2020-2023

However, a lot has changed since the cooperation with DVV International. Especially during the covid-19 pandemic, when all the schools were shut down, we were very fortunate to have DVV International as our partner. Through the installment of computer labs, the establishment of a garden for crops, capacity building for the management team, and the provision of budgets, our CLC could develop greatly. DVV International has transformed a regular room into a lab, equipped with computers, a large camera, and portable WIFI. Through this room, we were able to hold meetings on Zoom or Google Meet and produce learning videos on different topics.



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During Covid, we created hundreds of videos, that we then distributed in different group chats for students to watch. This did not only help schools to teach math and Khmer, but it also helped students with their diplomas in School or College. Here they learned to work and study on computers, prepare documents, create a CV, and apply for a job. The ability to apply for various jobs helped people to teach as private teachers, study in international schools, and apply for universities.

Furthermore, the production of agricultural videos, such as land compost production, planting, all kinds of nurseries, charcoal production, and fertilizer mixing, as well as the production of agribusiness books helped our community to develop their farms and gardens. Through funding from the National University of Cambodia and sponsoring by DVV International, we also had the opportunity to create 60 vegetable gardens and build chicken coops.

which is a great way of promoting the CLC. Thus, the demand is high, and we can now offer English and computer classes in the mornings and evenings.

Our major achievements in the CLC range from upgrading infrastructure to improving educational opportunities for the community. Firstly, we constructed two buildings, including a factory, a resource room, and an agricultural processing room. We also installed 32 high voltage lamps, which allows us to also give classes in the evening. Secondly, the CLC became a place where people like to stay and exchange experiences. Thirdly, we improved the grounds so that we can plant crops, raise chickens, and breed fish. Fourthly, we educate different target groups on various topics, e. g. monks, commune councils and chiefs, students from different levels as well as young school dropouts. We also give graduates the chance to become professional teachers, volunteers, or commune councilors.

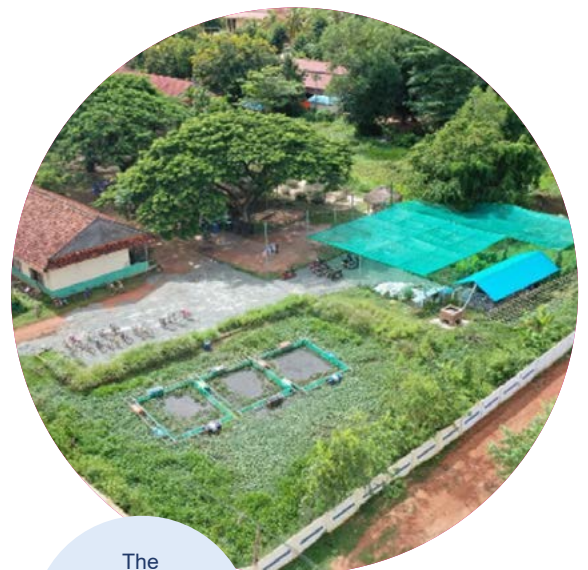
In conclusion, before partnering with DVV, the Sre Knong Community Learning Center was as normal as any other center across the country. But since the support of DVV International, the center has changed, both in terms of management capacity and opportunities. The community now actively participates in many professional activities and in developing creative ideas, transforming the CLC into a lifelong learning center.



ICT Training in CLC

The computer lab also enables our professional management team and committees to design budget plans and assist the communities with different topics. For example, we can now provide photocopy services. Through our services, the community does not have to travel to distant places, which saves time and money. 50% of the generated income is donated to the community, and 50% is used for the improvement of the CLC.

In the co-sponsorship with DVVI, the committee has received excellent capacity building and training. This assists the center for example in the implementation of a curriculum. We now offer classes in metal handicrafts, fish farming, and processing of products, e. g. from plant tubers to flour. The community has learned how to generate income through the computer lab and how to set up safe stalls for daily income. Through the celebration of different events, like the Solidarity Flower Festival, the CLC attracted more people from the district,



The compound of the CLC with plant crops, raise chickens, and breed fish

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New teaching-learning tools in Non-formal Education

Soukanya Manyvanh, Non-formal Education Development Center, Laos

The equivalency program was established in 2009 and has enrolled a total of 555 scholars, including 178 females. In 2019, the initial wave of the pandemic-induced shutdowns of non-formal education (NFE) programs disrupted academic normalcy for many students, making it impossible for them to attend the program. In response to this challenge, the Non-formal Education Development Center (NFEDC), under the supervision of the Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE) of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), developed a new teaching-learning method.

To address this challenge, NFEDC, in collaboration with DVV International, conducted three studies in NFE in Lao: „Feasibility Study on the Potential of Online Teaching and Learning in NFE in Lao PDR“ in 2021, „Analysis of Availability of Online Teaching and Learning Tools for NFE in Lao PDR based on the needs of the NFE system“ in 2022, and „Study on the Equivalency Program Classes in Lao PDR“ in 2023. The studies revealed that NFE can establish online learning by developing appropriate tools, approaches, and methodologies. Additionally, there is a need to build the capacity of teachers. Accordingly, NFEDC and DVV International agreed to develop an online learning tool that is suitable for the NFE system, particularly in remote areas.

The researchers recommended EdApps as a platform for an online learning tool for NFE classes. EdApps was developed in late 2022 and piloted twice: first in ICT training for NFEDC administration and technical officers in December 2022, and then with grade 12 students in the equivalency program in February 2023. The two pilots yielded the following results:

Strengths:

- New teaching-learning tool
- Enjoyable and not boring
- New learning method
- Can learn anytime



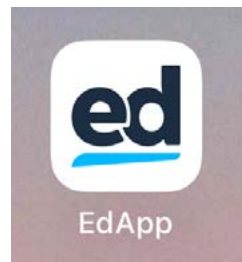
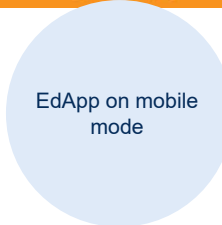
- Necessary for the present and future Improvements:
- Add videos relevant to the lessons
- Add descriptions of each formula, solution, and scoring clearly
- Add learning activities such as games, question-answer, and scoring

Following the pilot, NFEDC held a consultation meeting to improve the content and methodology. Currently, EdApps covers 10 subjects:

- 15 chapters of Lao Language
- 13 chapters of Literature
- 28 chapters of Mathematics
- 10 chapters of Civic Education
- 19 chapters of History
- 19 chapters of Geography
- 25 chapters of Chemistry
- 21 chapters of Biology
- 12 chapters of English Language

In July, a consultation meeting was held to present EdApps, review, revise, and improve the application in terms of wording and technical issues. The participants were representatives from DNFE, the Research Institute for Educational Sciences, and NFEDC. The recommendations from the meeting were as follows:

- The app is very important for organizing NFE classes, particularly in provinces with ICT literacy.
- The app is convenient to use for monitoring and evaluation.
- Students can do self-paced learning.
- Further development of the app is needed.
- NFE classes should also focus on improving teacher capacity.
- DNFE and MoES should recognize the app.



Study on Equivalency Program Classes

Jana Träber & Pakou Lee Xayya DVV International, Laos

In April 2023, DVV International in Laos carried out a study on Equivalency Program Classes. The Equivalency Program provides knowledge and skills with an alternative opportunity to finish primary or secondary education. Based on statistical data by NFE outlining the number of learners who participated in the equivalency programme classes in 2022, the study aims to provide information about the participants experiences after the end of the course and will give an insight into the motivation of the participants and the impact of the courses on the participants living conditions/well-beings after completion the program. In cooperation with NFEDC, three questionnaires for the target group of students, alumni and teachers have been developed in a capacity building workshop from 10 to 12 April 2023, and subsequently tested at an NFE centre in Vientiane Capital. From 24 to 28 April 2023, colleagues from DVV and NFEDC staff split into two teams and visited Xiengkhoung, a province in the north of Laos and Savannakhet, a province in the south. From 3 to 4 May 2023 a part of the team collected then data in Vientiane Capital. The interviewees consisted of 29 students and 9 teachers from primary, lower and upper secondary school levels as well as 16 alumni. They all were chosen due to their participation and experience in the Equivalency Program classes.

The aim of the study will contribute to the NFE system to better understand about the needs and intentions of participants and will also provide a better overview for the

need to increase the permeability between formal and non-formal education. It has found that many of the participants study in NFE for their personal benefit to gain and improve knowledge as well as to obtain the certificate and with this to enter the next step, often the wish for further studies. Besides these reasons, finding a job and to receive vocational training that can be used for their income generating activities are additional factors why participants want to attend the program. It is remarkable to note that most of the participants report how much the Equivalency Program has helped providing them with significantly more knowledge. According to them, the program did not only help in knowledge development, such as reading, writing and calculation. Rather, it also provides social skills, such as the improvement of their communication with others, that led to the fact that many of them gained self-confidence, felt better integrated into the society and were able to make friends. The new gained knowledge along with the practical skills have been found as very useful for their life after the course ended. These helped in their daily businesses, while many of the graduates reported of having gained a higher income after completing the program with some of them having found a job.

However, not all people who could benefit from the program are reached. Distance between the participants homes and the location of the NFEC as well as the integration of work and education in their daily life represent, besides other challenges, major deficits for the (regular) participation in the program. Raising awareness of the Equivalency Program and its equivalence with formal education, as well as integrating the potential of online learning in its program, including training local staff to build on their skills and more needs assessment will be required.



Income generation for women in Sepone District

Xaysana Sengphathip, DVV International in Nong District, Savannakhet Province, Laos

Ms. Apae is a 38-year-old farmer who lives in Lakeum, Sepone district, Savannakhet province. She raises animals and sells seasonal forest products. She is married and has four young children who are still in school and cannot help with the household chores. As a result, her family is very poor.

Before joining the project, Ms. Apae worked in rice farming. However, rice farming is heavily dependent on the weather. In some years, when the weather is good, she has a good harvest. However, in other years, when the weather is bad, she does not have enough rice to feed her family for the entire year. To supplement her income, she would go to the forest to find and sell forest products, such as poaceae (grass plants for making brooms) or small bamboos. However, this income was very low and not enough to support her family.

After the project provided vocational training and established a women's group to help women earn an income, the women in the village learned how to weave professionally, particularly the traditional Makong ethnic pattern. Ms. Apae said that this project has given her a decent job and increased her income. She said, „I weave every day after I finish my farm work. In one month, I can produce three pieces, which I sell for 350,000 Kip each. This means that I can earn between 700,000 and 1,050,000 Kip per month.“

Ms. Apae added that she plans to continue weaving even after the project ends because it is a good source of income for her. She also said that she will teach her daughter how to weave so that she can have her own job



in the future.

Ms. Morm is a 23-year-old who lives with her parents in Lateung village. She engages in crop farming and collects forest products for sale. She is the middle child of three; her older sibling is married and lives with her husband, while her younger brother is in the fifth grade at Lateung Secondary School.

Before joining the income generation project, Ms. Morm practiced shifting cultivation with her parents. However, some years were very dry due to insufficient rainfall, resulting in meager crop yields. To supplement her family's income, she had to work in the city. However, this meant leaving her parents and younger brother unattended.

After participating in various vocational training programs, including basket weaving, broom making, and tailoring, Ms. Morm was chosen as the leader of the women's income generation group by the manager of the community learning center (CLC) and the village headman.

She utilized the sewing machine at the CLC to practice her sewing skills, starting by sewing clothes for her mother and friends. Initially, she set her prices very low. As she gained experience and improved her sewing skills, she gradually increased her prices to match market demand. Currently, she earns approximately 300,000 kip per month by sewing 15 Lao skirts. Half of her sewing income is used to maintain the CLC's sewing machine and the women's group's cash box.

Ms. Morm expressed her aspirations for the future, saying, „I would like to have a sewing shop to provide more income for myself and my family. I also wish to learn more about professional sewing.“



Interesting

Important Website in region

www.nfedi.org
www.rda.org.la
www.aspbae.org
www.seameocell.org

Interesting publications

Adult Education and Development

AED 86 (2019): The good adult educator
AED 85: Role and Impact of Adult Education
AED 84: Inclusion and Diversity
AED 83: Skills and Competencies

International Perspectives in Adult Education

IPE 81 (2023): Adult Learning and Education with
IPE 80 (2022): Citizenship education and ALE
IPE 79(2019): The contribution of adult education to active participatory citizenship
IPE 77: Rethinking adult learning and education - Asia perspectives

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