



Newsletter 2024

Lifelong Learning & Non-Formal Education in Lao PDR and Southeast Asia



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Dear reader,

it is my great pleasure to present the anniversary edition of the newsletter from DVV International's Regional Office Southeast Asia. In the year 2024 we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of our commitment to support non-formal education and lifelong learning in Laos that began with the opening of our Regional Office in the year 2009.

Looking back, we can be proud of what we have achieved in the last one and a half decades: an increasing awareness of lifelong learning, more commitment to non-formal education, clear structures, roles and responsibilities, improved research, modern adult learning and education approaches and great training opportunities for managers, administrators and teaching staff, resulting in better services for our target groups. It goes without saying that this success would not have been possible without our proven partner network: the Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE) and the Non-formal Education Development Center (NFEDC) from the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES), the Faculty of Education (FED) from the National University of Laos (NuOL) and the Lao Youth Union (LYU) as well as other state organizations and development partners that are all striving for the same goal: the provision of high quality lifelong learning opportunities for all people in Lao PDR, especially the ones which are most left behind.

However, as we celebrate our success, we must not forget that there are still many challenges and tasks ahead of us. Public funding for non-formal education is still far from sufficient. Framework conditions must be further improved and staff at all levels must get more training. The potential of non-formal education must be further explained to a broader stakeholder group, beyond the non-formal education scene. The Decree on Lifelong Learning adopted by the Prime Minister in the year 2020 is paving the way for further developments and an ongoing multistakeholder dialogue that involves almost all ministries of the country. In this context, this newsletter informs about the development of an Action Plan for Lifelong Learning. Another article deals with the introduction of the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA) that will prepare the ground for our future cooperation. You will also read about an increasing regional cooperation of our research partners, our new Model CLC Initiative, digital learning approaches and our successful project promoting life skills. This newsletter is complemented by articles from our Country Office in Cambodia and our long-standing regional partner, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE).

My thanks for the excellent cooperation over the past 15 years go first and foremost to our Laotian partners but also to the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which has been providing the core funding since the beginning of our operations in the country. Finally, I would also like to thank all former Regional Directors, without whom the current success would not have been possible: Prof. Dr. Heribert Hinzen, Uwe Gartenschlaeger and Dr. Johann Heilmann.

We are looking forward to deepening the fruitful cooperation for the sake of more and better learning opportunities in Lao PDR.

I wish you a good reading.

Your sincerely,

Christoph Jost

Lifelong Learning Implementation in Southeast Asia: Cross Country Research Study

Christoph Jost
DVV International, Laos

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nation's Agenda 2030 postulates in its mission statement to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Almost a decade after releasing SDG 4, having passed the midpoint of Agenda 2030's lifespan, it can be noted that lifelong learning (LLL) has gained momentum in many countries around the globe. Policies, strategies, laws, decrees and other frameworks have been adopted in the meantime. Stakeholder groups and platforms at national, regional and international levels have been set up. Hence, there is notable progress regarding country and region-specific mechanisms for policy dialogue, coordination, exchange and planning. Lifelong learning by nature requires a multi-stakeholder dialogue and intra-ministerial coordination. Consequently, new challenges emerge regarding cross-sectoral awareness raising, activity and training plans as well as joint reporting.

Both progress and challenges on the policy level are a good opportunity for cross-country sharing and learning, which is also needed to get a better understanding on how to effectively implement lifelong learning, transitioning from policy to institutionalization, capacity building and concrete learning practice. Against this background DVV International's Regional Office in Southeast Asia in the year 2024 started to elaborate a cross-country research study with a proven set-up of research partners:

- Faculty of Education from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand
- Faculty of Education from the National University of Laos
- SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELLL) in Vietnam
- Faculty of Education from the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Cambodia

Agreements were concluded with all research partners at the beginning of the year 2024. During a research workshop conducted at the premises of SEAMEO CELLL in July all partners gathered to discuss the study outline, define a research framework and a common structure of the study which will focus on the following research questions:

- Which LLL policies and framework conditions have emerged since the release of the Agenda 2030? Which governance structures and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms are in place? How effective are these and how can these be improved in the future?
- Which mechanisms and strategies are applied to put lifelong learning into practice and to document progress? Which institutional and capacity building programs related to LLL exist? Which good practices (from various sectors) should be shared with a wider audience?
- How is lifelong learning promoted and communicated towards other ministries, key stakeholders and the wider public? Which role does non-formal and adult education play when it comes to the promotion of lifelong learning?

During the research workshop it became clear that proper lifelong learning implementation is mostly still limited to the policy level. Therefore, it was agreed to divide the study in two main parts: one about existing and emerging framework conditions (law, decrees, policy, etc.) and governance structures that will embrace the greater context of lifelong learning while the second part will mostly have to concentrate on non-formal education structures, programs, initiatives and corresponding best practices.

The study will be drafted until the end of the year 2024 while quality assurance, publication and dissemination are planned for the year 2025. It is hoped that the study will also serve as a useful tool to raise more awareness on the importance of lifelong learning among stakeholders from the whole education and other sectors.



Research partners during the kick-off workshop conducted at the premises of SEAMEO CELLL

ALE/NFE System Assessment: *Introducing ALESBA in Lao PDR*

Introduction

The “Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach” (ALESBA) is a conceptual framework that was originally developed by DVV International in Africa and now has become an assessment tool also used in Asia. ALESBA can guide governments, civil society, universities and other stakeholders in the complex task of constituting effective ALE systems. The approach considers the governance structure of a country and analyses 20 building blocks of an ALE/NFE system’s four key elements: enabling environment, institutional arrangements, management and technical processes. In Lao PDR, the ALESBA process has been initiated through the following activities:

Capacity Building for Master Trainers

Through an international seminar, hosted by the DVV International’s Regional Office in Sri Lanka, participants from Laos, Kyrgyzstan, Jordan and Sri Lanka learnt about the conceptual approach of ALESBA and engaged into intensive sharing and learning experiences about NFE/ALE systems in their home countries. The training equipped the Lao team (DNFE representative, DVV International project manager, Consultant) with the necessary knowledge and skills to take a lead in conducting the ALESBA process in Lao PDR. During the training participants from the four country teams were introduced to all ALESBA modules and started contextualizing the generic assessment tools to their

home environment. Following the training in Sri Lanka, the Lao team elaborated an activity plan to request the introduction of ALESBA from the Ministry of Education and Sports.

ALESBA Consensus Building Workshop

A consensus building workshop with 26 NFE/ALE stakeholders held in Vientiane Capital kicked off the implementation of ALESBA in Lao PDR. The purpose of this workshop was to introduce the ALESBA conceptual framework and to show its advantages in guiding the improvement of NFE/ALE systems. The workshop paved the way for government approval to conduct the ALESBA assessment with all its phases.

Peer Review Training

The consensus building workshop was followed by the selection of two peer review teams with NFE representatives from the national, regional, provincial, district and community level as well as from the Faculty of Education, National University of Laos. This teams participated in a three-day lasting training in Vang Vieng to provide them with the necessary knowledge about the ALESBA approach, procedures and methodological skills for conducting peer reviews in the field. During the training, participants revised and finalised the questionnaires prepared by the Lao team. The training also equipped all peer reviewers with a thorough understanding on how to enquire and process information using dedicated tools.



Lao expert team at the international ALESBA training in Sri Lanka



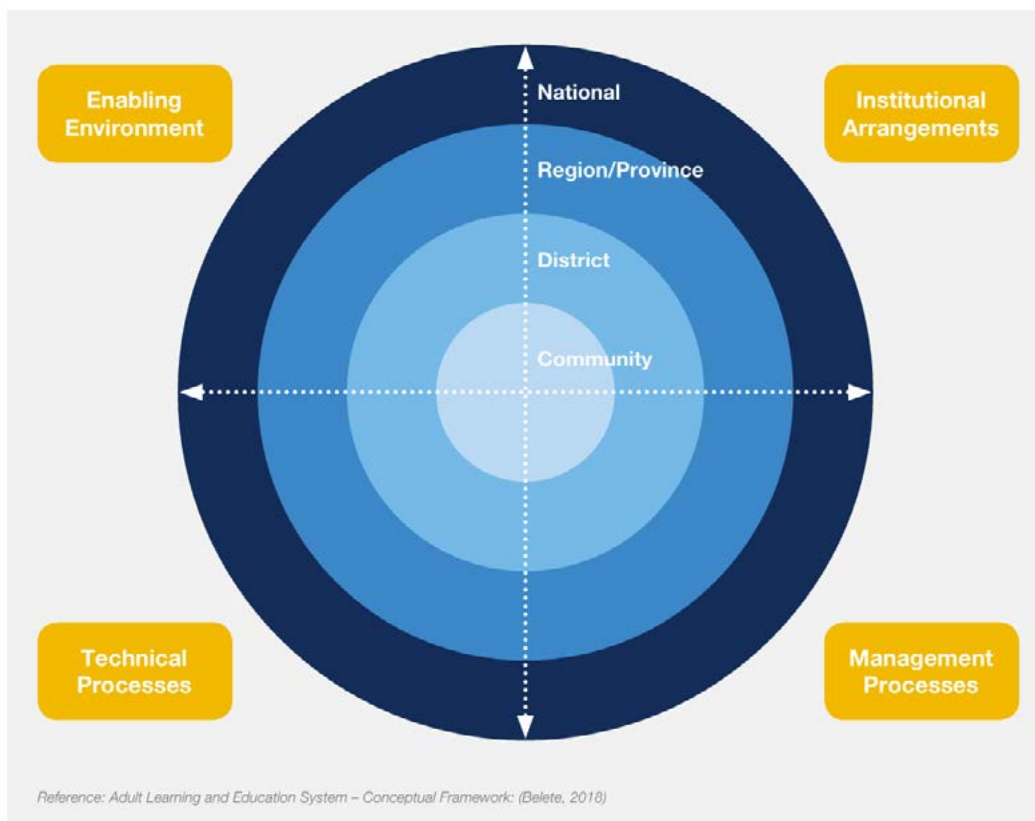
*Lamphoune Luangxay
Ministry of Education and Sports*

Peer Review and Data Collection

After the peer review training five days of concrete fieldwork were conducted to collect data in Vientiane and Luang Prabang province. Two teams of six peer reviewers, consisting of representatives from each level of the NFE structure, met and exchanged with colleagues from same levels (e.g. Province to Province, District to District, CLC to CLC) to jointly find answers to the questionnaires.

Diagnosis, Data Analysis and Dissemination

All information collected during the peer review were assessed by the Lao team. The Consultant elaborated the assessment report in line with the building blocks and key elements of the ALESBA framework. Results were presented during a dissemination workshop to about 40 stakeholders. Participants discussed the results and agreed on a scoring value (ranging from 1 to 5) for all 20 building blocks of the ALE/NFE system, from which an easy-to-understand system overview could be created. The ALESBA process will continue in the next year to discuss and identify priority areas for improving the Lao ALE/NFE system in the future.



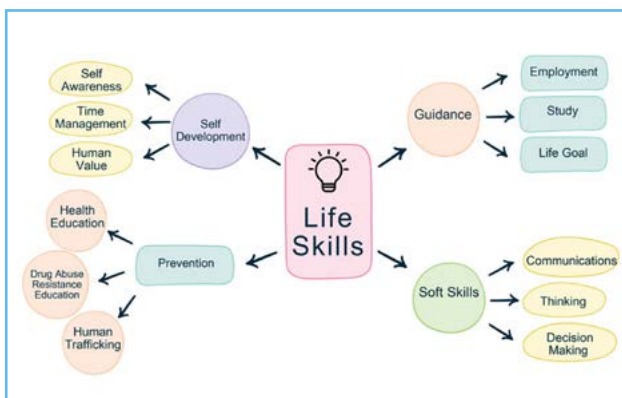
Adult Learning & Education System Building Approach Conceptual Framework

Life Skills for Lao Youth

Nowadays the world is developing and changing rapidly, in all aspects, including the socio-economic dimension. Many changes happen quickly and have a wide effect on the society and the economy. Youths are an important force in the growth of the economy. Young people need to be well prepared and develop a positive mindset that indicates a strong instinct for self-preservation. They must be able to live their lives consciously and wisely while being creative and adaptable.



Dalouny Sisoulath
DVV International, Laos



Conceptual Framework of Life Skills

In response to such challenges, DVV International and the Vocational Development Department (VDD) of the Lao Youth Union (LYU) have jointly implemented the project 'Providing Life Skills for Lao Youth'. The project aims to strengthen young people's ability to face the ever more complex world and find their way after they finished high school. Training in Life Skills is a learning process that encourages the abilities of youths to face future challenges. It is about the development of basic skills by integrating their own knowledge and learning processes into everyday life.

There are many different activities provided in the 'Life Skills for Lao Youth' project. At the very center stands the training for youth using adult education approaches to empower them through joint reflection of former experiences. The topics and activities from the Life Skills trainings help to reflect on lessons learnt and to prepare for the future.

To reach even a bigger target group, LYU's provincial departments joined Trainings of Trainers (ToT) session about the life skills concept developed, including activity-based learning theories, training methods and techniques. They have been equipped with training delivery skills for local youth groups which also includes an analysis of challenges in their local environment, the execution of needs assessment and the selection of key training topics.

Luang Namtha, Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Xiang Khuang, Vientiane Capital, Khammouan, Savannakhet and Saravan Province were the target province of the project. After the ToT, provincial LYU staff planned the training activity in their provinces with the support of the expert team from the Lao Youth Union in the capital of Vientiane and invited facilitators from the Non-formal Education Development Center.

In the beginning of the project a training handbook was developed by experts, LYU staff and DVV International's project manager. This handbook is now serving as a guiding tool to support provincial trainers in their endeavors to provide life skills to Lao youth. It combines activities and planning methods, which are easy-to-understand and appropriate for beginners and more experienced trainers. The Training Handbook covers four chapters: understanding life skills, learning content, activity designs for trainers and activities for training session.

An external evaluation conducted confirmed the success of the project and stated that life skills trainings can be beneficial for any youth group to prepare themselves for the future and inspire them in their journey of lifelong learning. It is planned to continue the project with a second phase in the beginning of the year 2025.



Session on the prevention of drug abuse among secondary students

Ed App: A Digital Tool for Non-Formal Education in Laos



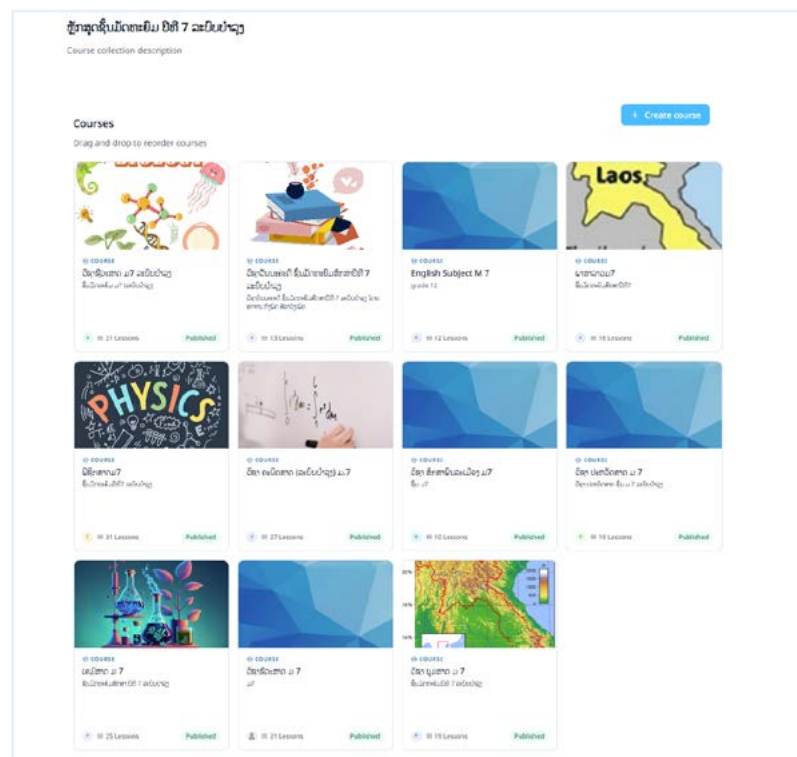
Pakoulee Xaiyaxang
DVV International, Laos

“Ed App” is a mobile application for teaching and learning in the Lao non-formal education (NFE) system. The application contains digitalized contents with interactive exercises and can generate useful statistics, e.g. by recording participation, results and scores of students. The App was developed in 2022 in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to widespread school closures, in Laos and globally. Two studies undertaken in cooperation of the Non-formal Education Development Center (NFEDC) and DVV International, proved the potential and feasibility for online teaching and learning in the Lao NFE system. Since then, Ed App has been constantly further developed as a complementary teaching and learning tool that can also facilitate remote learning.

In June 2024, the Non-Formal Education Development Center (NFEDC) hosted a strategy workshop in Vang Vieng District, Vientiane Province. This important workshop was attended by participants from various departments of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) to develop a roadmap for Ed App implementation and to get approval for a larger piloting process. The roadmap designed foresees the following milestones:

1. Evidence-based selection of target province for piloting
2. Training of NFEDC staff for Ed App administration and content improvement
3. Training of provincial NFE teachers and students on the Ed App
4. Definition of monitoring and follow-up procedures
5. Evaluation of results from the pilot program
6. Presentation of piloting results to DNFE and MoES
7. Agreement on the official use of the Ed App in the NFE system

Up to now, the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), the Non-Formal Education Development Center (NFEDC) and DVV International have developed and added digital content of all ten subjects, grade 12 of the secondary equivalency program, in the EdApp. Moreover, a comprehensive manual was jointly developed with support of experts in digital learning to prepare for a smooth running of the piloting process. NFEDC and DVV International will start training the teachers (admins) in the target provinces Vientiane capital, Savannakhet and Oudomxay in the 4th quarter of the year 2024 with at least 100 students as users. It is hoped that the piloting process will work well and that the Ed App will benefit many more learners in the future. Preconditions will be positive results from the piloting exercise and an official approval from the MoES which is expected to be given in the year 2025.



Learning content of the Ed App with (grade 12)



Pilot training with the Ed App in the target provinces



Vanna Peou
DVV International, Cambodia

Transforming Community Learning and Youth Centers into Lifelong Learning Centers

The National Policy for Lifelong Learning was adopted on July 11, 2019 by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia. In 2020, DVV International Cambodia developed a guidebook on the “Management and Operation of Lifelong Learning Centers” in collaboration with the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) and other stakeholders which was by the end of the year successfully completed and officially launched.

Currently there are more than 300 Community Learning Centers (CLC) in Cambodia, most of which operate only four or six months a year. Moreover, there are 16 Youth Centers in provincial towns, that offer a limited number of activities that attract young people to participate throughout the whole year.

the last project phase (2021-2023) and is currently expanded due to its great success and political support from the Government of Cambodia.

The DVV International office in Cambodia organized a team of trainers with various skills to provide capacity building in the ten selected Lifelong Learning Centers (LLLCs). Trainers were either recognized community members such as retired persons and monks or staff from the Faculty of Education of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Each team of trainers was responsible for the following skills:

- agricultural skills (e.g. vegetable growing, animal husbandry)
- counselling skills
- digital skills, especially needed during Covid-19 but also for continuous online support and exchange.

Modality and strategy of implementation:

With clear work plans, internal regulations, effective strategies and program activities people were easily mobilized in terms of participation in their communities. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms ensured the immediate and long-term outcomes.

Innovation, creativity, sustainability

The LLLCs programs are based on innovative practices which correspond to the needs of the community. The LLLCs create innovative ideas for utilizing available resources. As a result, the Sre Khnong Lifelong Learning Center was officially recognized by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as a best practice example and model LLLC in Cambodia in early 2024. Three LLLCs were already integrated into Commune (Sangkat) Investment Plan in 2024. Based on that volunteer teachers can receive the same monthly stipend as full-time teachers. In addition, many students who have been trained in the ten LLLCs have become in the meantime community councilors, English or IT/Computer teachers at private schools or got well-paid jobs in private companies.

The follow-up plan for the current project phase (2024-2026) foresees to expand the LLLC network, to continue with tailor-made staff trainings in adult learning and education methods as well as in organization and financial management. Short term courses based on the needs of the local population are being developed and implemented in the LLLCs. Policy dialogue with local authorities is meant to increase the number of LLLCs included in the Commune Investment Plans thus assuring more financial sustainability.



Workshop with Lifelong Learning Centers on sustainability strategy in Cambodia

In light of the potentials of the CLCs as well as of the Youth Centers for being a vibrant meeting and learning place for adults, youth and community members, DVV International Cambodia has been working together with partners such as the DNFE and the Department of Youth Center Management in order to transform five CLCs and five Youth Centers into Lifelong Learning Centers in line with standards enclosed in the aforementioned guidebook. This initiative started during

Campaign of the National Policy for Lifelong Learning in Cambodia



Phel Phearounou
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

DVV International follows a long-term and systemic approach with various project phases to effectively support system building for adult learning and education. This systemic and cross-sectoral support includes interlinked measures on the macro, meso and micro level. Along this division, this article gives insights into the ongoing campaign of the National Lifelong Learning Policy and its actions taken in the year 2024.

At the macro level the National Lifelong Learning Policy accompanied by DVV International and adopted in the year 2019 has become the key normative framework. With the objectives to involve ministries, development partners, training and education institutions as well as partners from the public and private sector, the 1st National Forum on Lifelong Learning took place on the 28th March 2024 in Phnom Penh to increase awareness and maximize impacts and outreach. The focus of the in-person Forum laid on the discussion of ongoing cooperations and key actions for providing digital technology to enable lifelong learning opportunities for all and to promote the key strategies for further policy implementation. In the sense of a multistakeholder dialogue, the Forum initiated dialogue between representatives from the National Lifelong Learning Committee (NCLLL) and further key stakeholders.

On another occasion, a consultation workshop on the National Action Plan for Lifelong Learning was organized in the end of July 2024. Representatives from 40 organizations gathered to give inputs and outline goals, strategies and actions required from each NCLLL's member ministry and development partners. After workshop completion, the final draft of the Action Plan was submitted to NCLLL members for endorsement during the Committee's annual meeting. Additionally, the workshop also provided an opportunity for the LLL Secretariat's members to discuss the concept of a lifelong learning city for its due implementation in Cambodia and to participate in UNESCO's lifelong learning initiatives.

At the meso level the professional capacities of LLLCs (Lifelong Learning Centers) are further improved in terms of course delivery for youth and adults. Besides teacher trainings and the development of new short-term trainings based on the needs of the community, there have

been consultative meetings to engage local communities in assessing progress, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities to improve support for community and lifelong learning centers. These efforts aim to share and record experiences via a video documentation, which can later serve as a valuable resource for other community learning centers.

At the micro level concrete learning measures have taken place, including an Essay Writing Contest. In collaboration with the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the 3rd Lifelong Learning Contest specifically designed to raise the awareness of the National Policy on Lifelong Learning among high school students nationwide took place in the first months of the year. The 2024 competition was held under the theme „Human Capital Development is the Lifeblood of Cambodia to Achieve its 2030 and 2050 Vision“. Over 330 students participated, working in groups of three, whereas the chosen top groups have been awarded certificates of recognition, a medal, souvenirs, and other study materials.

In response to the need of including technology into the educational sector, the NCLLL has introduced various digital tools, including a website and social media platforms, to promote and raise awareness about lifelong learning among Cambodian citizens.



High-level panel discussion on LLL National Policy in Cambodia

Empowering Communities: The Model CLC Initiative in Laos



Leklai Southavilay
DVV International, Laos

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in Laos has a long history of collaboration with international organisations to promote lifelong learning opportunities. This commitment has continued with the launch of the Model CLC Initiative, a project led by the MoES-DNFE (Department of Non-Formal Education) in partnership with DVV International. This newsletter article explores the development of Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in Laos and the objectives of the Model CLC Initiative for a new project phase 2024-2026 of joint cooperation.

A Legacy of Learning: Rise of CLCs in Laos

The journey of CLCs in Laos began in 1990 with a pilot project in Luang Namtha Province, which focused on literacy and vocational skills training for ethnic minorities, girls, and women. This project, along with UNESCO's support for the DNFE, paved the way for the establishment of the first two CLCs in Keokou and Nanokhum in 1993.

These initial centers offered literacy programmes, basic skills training and activities that preserved cultural traditions. The positive impact on the lives of the villagers, as reported in a 2004 study of the MoES, led the government to introduce CLCs nationwide. By November 2016, 317 CLCs had been established, primarily with the support of international NGOs and governments. Currently the Lao government lists and supports 128 CLCs since a very large number of learning centers come along with sustainability challenges due to the limited resources of the Lao NFE system.

A Vision for Sustainable Learning

In recognition of sustainability challenges, the Model CLC Initiative was launched in the year 2024. This initiative focuses on establishing model CLCs in four target provinces: Luang Prabang, Vientiane Capital, Vientiane Province, and Bolikhamxai Province.

Multi-track approach:

- **Alignment with Evolving Standards:** The initiative ensures that the model CLCs adhere to the upcoming MoES standards, guaranteeing quality education and service provision.
- **Empowering Communities:** The initiative fosters community-driven learning hubs, encouraging local engagement and ownership. This promotes a sense of responsibility and ensures that the centres address the specific needs of the community, leading to demonstrably positive outcomes.
- **Investing in People:** The initiative prioritizes capacity development. Training programs for CLC staff (managers, teachers, facilitators and volunteers) enhance their skills and effectiveness, allowing them to better serve the community.



Kick-Off Meeting of the Model CLC initiative in Luang Prabang



Community Learning Centers in Ban Hom and Thapho

- **Modern Learning Environments:** To create a conducive learning atmosphere, the initiative provides equipment and renovates facilities. These investments ensure a comfortable and well-equipped space for knowledge acquisition and skills development.
- **Tailored Learning Opportunities:** Recognising the diverse needs within communities, the Model CLC Initiative offers sustainable and effective learning programmes designed specifically for women, men and youth. This ensures everyone has the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and skills to improve their lives.

The initiative underscores the unwavering commitment of the Lao government and DVV International to strengthen communities through CLCs. These centres serve as catalysts for community development and social transformation in Laos.

The Model CLC Initiative represents a new chapter in the development of CLCs in Laos. By addressing sustainability concerns and fostering community ownership, this initiative has the potential to create a lasting impact on the lives of Lao citizens.

Number of the Non-formal Education Centers in Lao PDR





Helen Dabu
ASPBAE

ASPBAE Kicks Off 60th Anniversary Celebration Highlighting its Transformative and Intergenerational Actions for Education and Lifelong Learning in the Asia Pacific

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) believes that education - including adult learning and education (ALE) - is a fundamental human right. It believes in the transformative power of education for building a just, peaceful and sustainable future.

Working closely with its members in the Asia Pacific Region and its partners at all levels, including DVV International (DVVI), ASPBAE has been pursuing transformative and intergenerational actions to hold governments accountable for making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable - free from all forms of exclusion and discrimination. Since its founding in 1964, ASPBAE continues to advance and defend the right of all people to learn and have equitable access to relevant and quality education that promotes gender justice, sustainable future and learning opportunities throughout their lives.

Marking its 60th anniversary in 2024, ASPBAE kicked off its celebratory events for the year with a Regional Education Policy Conference in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 20 March. In collaboration with its member, the "All for Education" National Civil Society Coalition of Mongolia (AFE Mongolia), the conference had the following objectives:

- Provide a platform for capacity building, learning and sharing on the pursuit of transformative policy frameworks for education and the interrelated agenda of gender justice, climate and intergenerational rights and dialogue;
- Deepen analysis on intergenerational issues in education, including youth and adult learning and education (ALE), based on contextual realities at local, national and regional levels and in light of the existing transnational education and development commitments of governments in the Asia Pacific;
- Reflect on and celebrate ASPBAE's 60 years of transformative and intergenerational actions for education and lifelong learning.

Over 100 participants attended the policy conference. This includes ASPBAE and AFE members and partners in Mongolia, Mongolian government representatives, ASPBAE's Executive Council members and staff from 14 countries and five sub-regions of Asia Pacific, and the DVVI Regional Director for Southeast Asia, Mr. Christoph Jost.



President of ASPBAE sharing a session on "Transformative Actions for Gender Justice in and through Education"



Participants enjoying interaction at the conference

The session on transformative ALE consisted of two parts covering transnational policy frameworks as well as country level experiences and engagements in pursuing the ALE agenda at local and national levels.

Key policy recommendations and affirmations in the session reflect important areas which were also agreed in the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) on ALE including the following:

- Strongly committed to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and recognizing that lifelong learning is critical to all 17 SDGs and that, as a core dimension of lifelong learning, ALE is key to their achievement;
- Gender-transformative adult learning and education must be comprehensive, holistic and intergenerational, bringing together educational actors from sectors such as health, protection and justice;
- Uphold the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE), adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 2015, including its definition of ALE and identification of three key fields of learning: literacy and basic skills; continuing education and vocational skills; and liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills;
- Strongly affirm education, including ALE, as a fundamental human right – a commitment which is critical in understanding and framing education as a public endeavour and a common good – as asserted by the International Commission on the Futures of Education;

- Community learning and citizenship education are key factors for sustainable development, including rural development, and to raise awareness about the impact of climate change. Furthermore, ALE institutions themselves can act as models for green transition in society by making their curricula, facilities and management more sustainable.

Finally, in the session covering country level experiences on ALE with conference speakers from Bangladesh, Vietnam and Mongolia, they emphasised the critical areas in the pursuit of the wider ALE agenda such as improving quality, increasing funding, ensuring inclusion and improving data, monitoring and cooperation. They further shared participatory processes to improve not only ALE policies but also the delivery of ALE programmes involving ALE programme designers from the government, teachers and trainers, learners and civil society organisations working in ALE practice and advocacy.

The conference concluded with the 60th anniversary celebratory messages and actions upholding ASPBAE's role in sustaining a strong civil society voice to advance the right to education and learning needs of all, especially marginalised and vulnerable children, youth, and adults.

National Action Plan for Lifelong Learning in Lao PDR



*Mana Chanthalanonh
DVV International, Laos*

The National Action Plan for Lifelong Learning (NAP for LLL) is a comprehensive strategic document that aims to address the diverse learning needs of individuals across all stages of life. It recognizes the importance of lifelong learning for personal and professional development of individuals and contributes to the overall socio-economic growth of the nation. The framework of the action plan encompasses formal, non-formal and informal education as well as workplace learning and covers all levels of education, from early childhood to adult learning. This inclusive approach ensures that no individual is left behind and that everyone has access to relevant and high-quality learning opportunities.

Since the official approval of the National Lifelong Learning Decree in the Year 2020, there has been progressive integration of lifelong learning into existing activities. This integration encompasses not only educational support for marginalized children and vulnerable groups, but also the enhancement of skills and knowledge among personnel and educators within the context of lifelong learning. Furthermore, this initiative includes various professional development and basic vocational training measures.

Upon closer examination of the current lifelong learning landscape in Laos, it became evident that so far mostly the education and sports sector has taken concrete steps to strengthen lifelong learning activities by combining conceptual lifelong learning with practical measures. In the future, it will be essential to establish a

strong link between all ministries involved in the technical and high-level National Steering Committees for Lifelong Learning. This is also crucial for the successful implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED). Consequently, the National Action Plan for Lifelong Learning has been formulated to provide guidance across all ministries and relevant stakeholders and to monitor its implementation.

Following the elaboration of a draft plan, various consultations and review meetings with stakeholders from all ministries involved and provincial education entities have taken place in the years 2023 and 2024. This process was key to ensure that the Action Plan is aligned with the development plans of each entity. The final version of the Action Plan for Lifelong Learning was submitted to the Minister of Education and Sports who is also the chairman of the High-Level Steering Committee whose members are mostly vice-ministers from almost all ministries and mass organizations in Laos PDR. It is hoped that the first High-Level Steering Committee will take place before the end of the year 2024 to officially adopt the Action Plan and proceed with its dissemination, awareness raising and proper implementation with interested ministries of the country.

To ensure the successful implementation of the NAP for Lifelong Learning as planned, a well-coordinated co-operation between the various ministries and stakeholders is essential. Further processing of the Action Plan will also require clear communication, feedback and input from all stakeholders to foster a sense of ownership and commitment. This collaborative approach will help to align strategies, programs and resources to ensure that the Action Plan achieves its intended objectives.



Steering Committee (technical level) finalizing the Draft National Action Plan for Lifelong Learning

Lao-Thai University Cooperation for Lifelong Learning



Khanthong Inthachack
DVV International, Laos

One of the key objectives of the Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos (FED NUOL) is to collaborate with institutions in neighboring countries to open up a wider vision and create new opportunities for further lifelong learning promotion in the country of Laos. In this context, FED NUOL conducted a study visit to the Department of Lifelong Education, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand in April 2024. This visit was led by Dr. Kongsy Chounlamany, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Education, Mr. Christoph Jost, Regional Director of DVV International Laos and academic staff members of the University. The objective of the study visit was to exchange experiences in promoting lifelong learning (LLL) and to strengthen ties between the two organizations.

The Faculty of Education has successfully enhanced and promoted lifelong learning since the year 2018 including various achievements. The Faculty formed a team of LLL instructors who are now teaching lifelong learning contents in different programs. Moreover, specific lifelong learning materials such as a country-specific curriculum and concept, a guidebook for teachers and research papers have been developed and are now being used at the Faculty and its academic partner institutions as well as teacher training institutes throughout the country. The content of the lifelong learning curriculum has been further developed periodically (2020, 2022, 2023). In the academic year 2023-2024, FED NUOL introduced the concept, theory and principles of LLL into the fifth series of teaching-learning courses, attended by fourth-year students of the Faculty of Education. Moreover, 113 people signed

up for vocational training; they were trained in 2 provinces (Capital Vientiane and Province Bolikhamxay), 5 districts and 12 educational institutions.

The key results obtained from the study visit can be summarized as follows:

- FED NUOL learnt from Department of Lifelong Education, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University about management systems for the promotion that can now be adapted for the Lao context.
- Both the FED NUOL and the FED CU (Chulalongkorn University) agreed to a Memorandum of Discussion (MoD). This memorandum is currently reviewed to be approved by the Legislative Committee of the CU before it will be officially signed. Following that, further agreements are planned to formalize the cooperation.
- It was agreed to conduct collaborative research on LLL implementation in Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, with staff members of both organizations serving as principal and researchers.

Based on the joint commitment of both faculties in Vientiane and Bangkok it is expected that the fruitful cooperation will continue in the future paving the way for quality lifelong learning for all people in the country of Laos.



Lao and Thai delegation during the study visit at the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

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