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# Newsletter

Lifelong Learning and Non-formal Education  
in Lao PDR and Southeast Asia



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Special Issue:

Gender

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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

The year 2016 saw a growing understanding of various actors for the concept of Lifelong Learning (LLL): Adopted as the main framework for shaping the education sector in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), LLL is now widely accepted as the key to success in the context of ASEAN integration as well. For sure, this creates an important opportunity for the Non-Formal Education sector to be better recognized. Unfortunately, up to now, many countries, including Lao PDR, spend less than 1% of the education budget for NFE. Many big donors neglect the potentials of NFE and concentrate exclusively on primary education, TVET or higher education. It will be our task to create strong arguments for the impact of NFE in tackling the effects of climate change, to provide second chance and literacy for drop-outs and marginalized groups and offer life skills training to enable all people to become active and well informed citizens.

I would like to draw the attention on one specific aspect: The role of NFE in coping with the widening gap between the rich and the poor. This dynamic is a growing concern in our region – being unable to solve this issue might lead to growing tensions and violence. NFE has various roles in this context:

- **Compensating:** Second chance education and skill trainings to improve the income and employability options of vulnerable groups is a traditional sector, NFE is active in. To support people in improving their desperate livelihoods will stay a major concern.
- **Coherence:** A peaceful society will be built on the abilities of all its parts to interact and work together. NFE can play a major role in fostering dialogues and provide information on important topics in the society.
- **Adaptation:** NFE throughout the life cycle is of growing importance to support people to adapt to rapid changes, be it in the labor market, the climate or technology.

Our final issue of the Newsletter for 2016 will provide you with some interesting examples of good practices. A special attention will be given to gender oriented projects to draw the attention to the specific possibilities, adult education and non-formal education can offer in this respect.

Yours sincerely,  
*Uwe Gartenschlaeger*  
Regional Director  
DVV International, Southeast Asia

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## The Training on “Gender Mainstreaming in Non-formal Education” for ToT Master Trainer in Khammouan Province

*DVV International is currently implementing the project called Training of Master Trainers and its main goal is to build the capacity of the teachers in Non-formal Education. There are five module trainings to be implemented during 2015-2017 plus 2 elective courses. Gender mainstreaming is one of the elective courses and this training was held from 20-22 September 2016 in Thakek District, Khammouan Province.*

“Gender Equality” is one of the Sustainable Development Goals. It follows the understanding that many education and development projects on national, provincial, district and local level fail as the full involvement of women is not realized. To continue the Training of Master Trainers project this time DVV International has provided the course on Gender Mainstreaming in Non-formal Education for our Master Trainers. The training provided an opportunity to share information and experiences in order to build capacities for implementation. Ms. Boutsady Khounnouvong, an expert on Gender was the key provider during the preparation, and in implementing the training, mainly based on the expertise of gender work with the partners in Lao PDR and region. Anita Borkar the Gender Expert from ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education), India was the co-trainer.

In this training all the participants had chances to share and exchange their experiences on gender issues related to their working place. In the future, when they design training programs, hopefully they will be able to use Gender lenses and be able to deliver information about gender to their target group and their colleagues. The participants also had more chance to apply and reflect on previous modules such as adult learning methodology, teaching techniques, and especially the feedback from their practical training.



## Gender in Laos Boutsady Khounnavong Gender Expert

The overall population of Laos was estimated at 6.8 million people in 2014 with a growth rate of 2% per year. It is projected to grow to over 8 million by 2020. Life expectancy has increased to 60 for men and 65 for women in 2012 since water and health care have improved. Furthermore, the population is very young with an average age of 21.6 years. (<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/laos-population/>)

In Laos, more women than men marry at a young age. One in four young women and nearly one in ten men aged 15-19 years is currently married. The average age for the first marriage among women aged 25-49 years is 19.2 years and has changed little over the past 20 years. 37% of women get married by the age of 18, 58% get married by the age of 20, and 22% have never been married. Women are the head of approximately 10% of the households. This is mainly because their husbands have died, although 20% of them are in this position due to outward migration of the man (ADB, World Bank 2012: 34).

There are large differences between urban and rural situations with regard to education and fertility. Adolescent fertility for every 1000 girls aged 15-19 years is 94. In the rural areas there are 114 births per 1000 girls, whereas it is only 44 births per 1000 girls in the urban areas. The average birth interval of urban women is 46.3 months compared to 32.2 months for rural women. Furthermore, the average age of a woman giving birth for the first time is 21.1 years.

Literacy is higher amongst the young citizen: 69% of women aged 15-24 and 77% of men are literate, but again, there are regional differences. In the South, only 55% of women compared to 70% of men are literate. In the central region the number of literate women is 76% and 79% for men.

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### Women in Decision Making

The proportion of women in decision making agencies is still low (5-6%), which is said to be due to 'having to balance family responsibilities with training and other constraints to participation' (MPI 2013b: 19).

Women Leaders are needed at all levels, but it can be particularly hard at the village level, where tradition, culture, the role of women in the home, and their own confidence, mitigates against them putting themselves forward to be a village chief. The LWU magazine noted that in 2010, there were 8,608 villages in Laos, but only 226 female village heads (2.62%) and 942 or 6.6% of female deputy village heads (Work Live Laos 14.5.12). Over the years, there has been both government and NGO action to encourage women into this public sphere.



Table Women in Decision Making positions for the whole of the country

| Position                                     | Total  | Women | Women as % |
|--|--------|-------|------------|
| Members of the National Assembly             | 132    | 33    | 25         |
| Minister and equivalent                      | 50     | 7     | 14         |
| Deputy Minister and equivalent               | 126    | 21    | 16.7       |
| DG and equivalent                            | 437    | 71    | 16.24      |
| Provincial governor, Vientiane Capital Mayor | 17     | 0     | 0          |
| Deputy governor                              | 50     | 4     | 8          |
| District Mayor                               | 145    | 12    | 8          |
| Head of Village                              | 8651   | 145   | 2          |
| Deputy Village chiefs                        | 16,786 | 1200  | 7          |

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs 2013

Therefore, DVV International in Laos has organized a Gender Mainstreaming training for 30 Master Trainers in Non-formal Education. The purpose of this training was to gain knowledge and understanding of Gender among the master trainers. The topics included the unique needs of women and girls, especially women and girls with impairments, how gender mainstreaming is possible especially in their area of work. Participants were enabled to integrate gender issues into non-formal education and their daily work. Moreover, the participants are now able to analyze what issues and concerns they have to consider to ensure gender mainstreaming when developing and implementing a project.



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## Training on Gender Mainstreaming in Non-formal Education in Khammouan Province

*Dalouny Sisoulath, DVV International, Vientiane, Lao PDR*

The training on Gender Mainstreaming in Non-formal Education was held on 20 to 22 September in Thakhek District. This is the one of the elective subjects of Preparing Master Trainers in Non-Formal Education in Laos project. According to the curriculum "globALE" there are five obligatory modules and two additional training activities. The Curriculum globALE (CG) is a cross-cultural core curriculum for the training of adult educators worldwide. It was developed jointly by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association. In five modules, it describes the relevant skills needed to lead successful courses and provides guidance on their practical implementation. The objective of the Curriculum globALE is to build the capacity of the teachers or facilitators in Non-formal Education.

DVV International is implementing the Training of Master Trainer for Non-formal Education in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), RMIT University Melbourne and UNESCO Regional Office Bangkok for 36 Master trainers. The program is implemented on request of the Department for Non-Formal Education of the Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR.

As we know, gender equality is one of the Sustainable Development Goals. It means **equality between women and men (gender equality)** and refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

This particular training module served to increase the knowledge of the participants about gender in a general and work-related context.

The main objectives of this training are as follows:

- Gain understanding of the term "gender" and its difference from biological sex
- Understand gender inequality and its roots
- Raise participant's awareness for gender inequality in everyday life as well as their work context
- Explain the concept of gender mainstreaming and give techniques that they can employ in their own projects to improve inclusion of women and girls
- Further extend their knowledge about/on adult learning methodology by observing the facilitator's methods

The expert on Gender, a facilitator from the Gender Development Association introduced the concept of Gender mainstreaming in Non-formal education and how to utilize the ideas of the gender training such as getting to know the difference between biological sex and social constructed gender by using the statements like "men have beards and women don't" or "Women have long hair; men have short hair." These statements help participants to understand their role and responsibility and furthermore, understand each other. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was introduced to the participants. It covers all levels of society. On the macro level it says that, "the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields." On the community level, "a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women". Additionally the participants improved their understanding of the direct and indirect forms of sexual discrimination against women.

At the last day of training the participants used the Problem Tree method to actively find the causes and reasons of the problem as well as the solutions. The roots in this case resembled the causes, the problem was the trunk and the leaves of the tree symbolized the solutions. The participants actively engaged in discussions about the gender issues in Lao society such as the family, community and the work place. Gender issues in Lao start from the family and cultural traditions. Dealing with how we can help women actively to participate in society without fear was very important to the participants in particular.



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## Women Empowerment: Is there a success recipe?

Lessons learnt from the Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEPP) in Ethiopia

Sonja Belete, DVV International Ethiopia

Much has been said and written about the topic of gender and specifically issues pertaining to women. How to empower women; give them equal access to opportunities; and other theories and debates still continue today. After implementing an integrated women's empowerment programme (IWEPP) that managed to reach 30,000 poor and illiterate women in Ethiopia, it is possible to share a few of the key insights and lessons we have learned in this short introduction.

If the question should be asked, if there is a success recipe for women's empowerment, many different answers and 'recipes' may be provided. In our experience the combination of 3 core elements in a totally integrated manner definitely proved to be successful. IWEPP consisted of adult literacy (through Functional Adult Literacy and Reflect approaches), technical livelihoods skills training (market related) and entrepreneurship support in the form of business skill training, business development support services and access to credit through a savings and credit scheme with matching funds provided by the IWEPP programme. Integration is no

easy task and had to be established at all levels of implementation (including manuals, training of experts and facilitators, etc.), but ultimately the integration of these 3 elements served to lift thousands of women out of poverty. At the same time the inclusion of life-skills related topics into the adult literacy curriculum addressed the other aspects of women's lives and helped them

to cope with issues at household and community level.

Now 4 years after the programme phased out, women groups continue to meet, save, lend and borrow money and engage in income generating activities. Literacy has given

them access to information and business opportunities and because of their numeracy skills they keep records of their transactions. However, amongst all these positive impact lessons, the two factors that seemed to have contributed the most to the sustainability of the programme are the following:

- Working in groups: The women were organized in groups of 25 and attended classes and training together. They knew each other intimately and even though there has been conflict at times, they have been bound together and supported each other through personal and business challenges. They conducted their first business activities in groups and as their confidence grew, branched out and started their own business or working in smaller group formations of 2 – 5 women.
- Savings and Credit Schemes: Instead of just offering the women loans to start their business, IWEPP preferred that they save together over a period of a year – as collateral to qualify for matching funds to the same amount as they saved. These matching funds were added to their capital from which they could borrow and pay back with interest, allowing them to start bigger business ventures.

Empowerment grew out of a newly found confidence based on skills acquired, support from group members, feeling in control of one's life and having status in their household, communities and hope for life!



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## INTERVIEW WITH MR. JOST, the Director of DVV International

1. Mr. Jost, I read that you are a former banking apprentice. Could you please briefly outline your personal way from this traineeship to your current position as the head of DVV International?

*Following my bank apprenticeship, I travelled for a couple of months through Mexico and Guatemala where I also started learning Spanish. Based on that experience I studied Latin American Science and later paved the way for international cooperation. I worked six years in development consulting, mostly focussing on financial and socio-economic planning and monitoring issues. During the last six years I was working at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) shifting my focus on education. Thus, my new post at DVV International allows me bringing together experiences in poverty alleviation and education. This hopefully explains the particular way from a banker to an adult educator.*

2. When did you visit Lao PDR for the first time and what was your first impression?

*If I remember correctly, this was in the year 2008 setting up a monitoring system for a rural infrastructure programme with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) and the corresponding provincial authorities in Bokeo and Luang Namtha. My first impressions were mostly related to the beauty of the country as well as the courtesy and prudence of the people. All in all, I have been working for about six months in Lao PDR, split up in various business trips.*

3. In your opinion: Which is the most urgent project you are currently working on?

*I do not want to mention a certain project because needs differ from region to region. The development community is currently speaking a lot about the refugee crisis and how to prevent flight and migration in the future. However, this must not necessarily result in a concentration of funds and activities in a certain region. We should rather invest in new approaches for social, economic and political empowerment providing all people with a life in dignity and peace. I am convinced that adult education and lifelong learning plays an important role as to this.*

4. Which areas should the DVV especially focus on in the future?

*The current focus of promoting community learning centres should be strengthened. It is line with the priorities of our partners, on governmental and local level. Community learning centres as such are needs-oriented, cost-efficient and provide for an excellent outreach. They cover a broad range of services to community members: literacy, basic education, other learning and socialising opportunities as well as sports and cultural activities. However, the promotion of these centres will only be sustainable if human resources such as teachers and administrative staff will be trained properly and organisational structures will be improved.*

5. What do you hope to have achieved in ten years' time?

*Challenges are manifold. As mentioned before, a key issue will be to convince donors and other stakeholders about the strengths and impacts of adult education. Next to key functions such as poverty reduction and the provision of opportunities for the less privileged ones, there are more reasons for Lifelong Learning: new technologies, an ageing society, global competition and migration – just to name a few.*

6. And what is necessary in order to achieve these goals?
- We need to improve advocacy and lobbying; putting adult education more on the political agenda. We need to provide more data and evidence on results and impacts of our activities. We should make clearer that adult education activities are not isolated but interlinked to development objectives such as health, employment and gender. The sustainable development goals are a good starting point – but we need to underpin mere rhetoric and statements with facts, figures and political support. This can be only reached in coordination and concert with our partners worldwide.*



Giving speech at the Policy Forum in Bangkok during his visiting Southeast Asia

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## Education for Sustainable Development through CLCs Conference in Hoa Binh, Viet Nam

*Peou Vanna*, DVV International Country Office in Cambodia

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a new topic for all of us. Community Learning Centers (CLCs) can play a vital role in teaching this subject.

To be able to do so, CLCs should be sustainable. The whole community must understand the benefits of CLCs; moreover, they must understand that CLCs are not owned by the State or any NGO's, but owned by the villagers themselves. State should support and encourage the CLCs support committee and motivate them to have sufficient capacity to boost CLCs sustainability.

### What do we do to make people recognize that CLCs in their communities?

In his presentation Prof. Dr. Kiichi Oyasu from Okayama University of Japan shared about the method of best practices related to mobilizing people to participate in National KOMIKAN association located in Okayama as well as promoting ESD through Community-Based Learning, he stressed that the CLCs support committee must be educated on Soft Skills, especially communication skill, they have to be honest and to devote time to the task of CLCs. The quality education and lifelong learning opportunity for all must have a central place in national education and development system. Many representatives from different institutions/organizations presented their best practices/challenges and exchanged experiences and solutions from local to national level. After the one day conference, more than 70 participants representing learners, teachers/facilitators and managers of CLCs from 10 provinces of Viet Nam, Ministry of Education and Training, Research Institutes, UNESCO, and participants from Laos and Cambodia who have gathered in Hoa Binh City, committed to continuing and expanding education for sustainable development (ESD) through lifelong learning. Some points of commitment were raised by all participants as following:

- Raise greater awareness of advocacy for the significance of ESD in CLCs and the role of CLCs in the promoting ESD.
- Encourage the community ownership and build appropriate governance structure for sustainable management and operation of CLCs.
- Develop professional competencies to enhance quality provision of education for sustainable development through the CLCs.
- Empower communities in accelerating sustainable solutions for issues identified by the community members



such as climate change, bio-diversity, food and nutrition security, resilience and disaster risk reduction management.

- Strengthen partnerships to mobilize resources from communities, corporations and local, national and international sources for promoting ESD through CLCs (including human, material and financial resources).
- Support and share good ESD practices at the local level through establishing network of CLCs in the context of lifelong learning for all (children, youth, adults, the elderly, the disadvantaged).

To promote ESD at the local level and further strengthen the role of CLCs in promoting lifelong learning or build learning society or sustainable development, participants jointly recommended the following to the government and local leaders at all level as following:

- Increase public awareness about the roles and important of CLCs for lifelong learning for all and sustainable development for the community.
- Improve the legal basis/regulations and the appropriate policies for maintaining, strengthening and sustaining CLCs.



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## A world without Adult Learning and Education

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) published in September 2016 the Third Global report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III). The report provides an excellent overview about the current successes and challenges in our sector. DVV International Newsletter will publish some interesting findings in the upcoming issues.

At the end of report, UNESCO draw the picture of a world without Adult Learning and Education (ALE):

A world without ALE would represent the denial of the human right to education. It would undermine social justice, sidelining the many adults who have been failed by initial education and have left school without basic skills and literacy. It would condemn many adults to a lifetime of inequity and restricted opportunities. It would also represent an unsustainable burden for younger generations who have benefited from educational investment. Furthermore, a world without ALE would reduce the value of education as an instrument for social, political, cultural and economic progress. It would represent a denial of human potential. It would disregard the growing body of scientific evidence that people can continue learning and contributing to their societies and economies throughout their lives (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007).

Compared to an 'ALE-rich' society, an 'ALE-poor' society would be likely to have the following characteristics:

1. Adults, communities and organizations would be less able to adapt and change. Workers would find it difficult to change jobs or occupations, making the labour market less efficient. Workers would be likely to experience lower job satisfaction, to resist technological change and to be afraid of innovation.
2. Adults would be less able to look after themselves and their physical and mental well-being. They would also be less equipped to look after the health and development of their children. Their low sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem would make them more vulnerable, exposing them to exploitation and encouraging them to adopt risky behaviour.
3. Adults and communities would be less open to others, and xenophobia and intolerance would grow. People would have fewer opportunities to connect with and learn from people outside their immediate circle. Society would become less cohesive.
4. Adults would become more dependent on their families or on the state, leading to tensions between generations and within families. Older people and people aiming to return to the labour market after a break (especially women), would have fewer job opportunities, leading to an overall loss of expertise and burdening welfare budgets. Inequity and inequalities of all kinds would be higher.

*Continue page 8*

- Support collaboration of all providers and stakeholders involved in the delivery of community-based ESD in CLCs. More specifically, to establish Steering Committees for Adult Learning and Education at all levels to promote inter-sectoral cooperation and assist in mobilizing resources for Adult Learning and Education through CLCs.
  - Ensure sufficient resources to enable CLCs to function better. Specifically, ensure that at least one permanent staff member for each CLCs is responsible for the daily work that includes planning and implementing CLC's activities including ESD.
  - Develop competencies of staff and teachers of CLCs to implement ESD by developing relevant training materials and organizing training for them. On-going capacity development of CLCs staff is very important to ensure the quality as well as quantity of ESD at the local level.
5. People would be less likely to understand environmental change and know how to change their behaviour. They would lack the confidence and motivation to join collective efforts to tackle



environmental degradation. Attempts to green the economy would be far less likely to succeed, and societies would be less resilient in dealing with the consequences.

The world would pay a high price if it ignored the potential of ALE. The slow growth of ALE could lead to populations being overwhelmed by global changes that are much larger than any one

individual, group or country. Drawing on the evidence gathered in this report, UNESCO encourages countries to look to the future and construct stronger approaches for ALE within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The whole report can be downloaded in English at

## Interesting

### Important Website in region

[www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)

[www.pria.org](http://www.pria.org)

[www.seameocell.org](http://www.seameocell.org)

### Interesting publications

Adult Education and Development

AED 79: Networking - Rio + 20 - Lifelong Learning

AED 80: Post 2015

AED 81: Communities

AED 82: Global Citizenship Education

### International Perspectives in Adult Education

IPE 76: Refugees: A challenge for adult education

IPE 75: Agenda - 2030 - Education and Lifelong Learning in the Sustainable Development Goals

IPE 74: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mass Graves - Proceeding of the International Conference Tbilisi, Georgia

IPE 73: Digital Adult Education - A Key to Global Development?

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Voice Rising - access via [www.icae2.org](http://www.icae2.org)

Education Policy Matters - via [www.unescobkk.org](http://www.unescobkk.org)

### New Publication

DVV International Impact Report 2009-2015

Sharing for Learning in Lao PDR: DVV International Engaged in Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development in Asia Pacific

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