

Education for Everyone. Worldwide.
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Newsletter

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



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Dear reader,

there is no doubt that there have been easier times than the current ones. Who of us would have imagined a few months ago that the world looks like this in the middle of the year 2020?

I still remember very well the time when I first read about the Corona Virus. It was in January; I was visiting our office in Nong and I just read the news and the threat to the Chinese health system that had just been discovered and that seemed to spread rapidly. Yet, my and I think everyone else's worries were still very much limited, it just seemed so far away.

By now we know that this was very much deceiving. The spread of the Corona Virus has dramatically changed our lives. And of course, it has impacted on our work as well – for us as DVV International, but equally for our partners and generally in pursuing the promotion of non-formal and adult education. This puts us in quite a dilemma: On the one hand, there seems to be hardly any space for adult education. On the other hand, adult education is needed more than ever. In these times, where public life has almost come to a standstill people need education. Secondly, education can help prevent the virus from spreading further and it can contribute to a better understanding among the people about all the necessary measures to fight the virus. It has become evident that it was never as easy as now to spread rumours and fake information. And the better people are educated, the less susceptible they are to believing in false information.

So how can education reach those who are the classical target groups of non-formal education? Those who are disadvantaged anyway and who, if the virus situation worsens, will also be the ones suffering the most? In some countries digital education might be the key, yet in Community Learning Centres in rural Lao settings such as those ones supported by us in Nong and Sepon this does not seem to be the most feasible option. But as we don't know how long this situation continues, we still have to see what we can make out of it. We started by initiating the production of face masks with CLCs. For long everybody realised that there is a great shortage in face masks everywhere in the world. So, if the non-formal education system could contribute to reducing this shortage, this would be a great success. And in the long run, this might even become an income generating activity for CLCs. In the meantime, we will also look for and develop alternative approaches how people's needs can be addressed.

At the same time, through this newsletter, we would like to share with you some alternative approaches both from Germany and Vietnam. And finally, there is some further success we should not be silent about: The Lifelong Learning Decree has been approved by the Prime Minister! This really is good news for us and our partners. What a pity we cannot celebrate it or even launch the decree officially. But we will catch up with this as soon as the situation allows again.

Most importantly, I sincerely hope that all of you are well and healthy. Let us all try our best in fighting the virus and showing solidarity. For now, enjoy this first edition of 2020. Let us hope that when you read the second edition in December, the world looks a bit brighter again.

Yours sincerely
Johann Heilmann
Regional Director

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Laos adopts decree for lifelong learning

Since 2015, the concept of lifelong learning has officially been introduced in the United Nations' Agenda 2030. Laos has now also adopted its framework on this basis. On 23 March 2020, Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith signed the Decree for Lifelong Learning, which has been developed in recent years with the support of DVV International.

The decree will allow a broader view on education and bury old ideas based on strict separation between formal and non-formal education. For teachers and policy makers, this is a great opportunity to try out new learning opportunities and to recognise all forms of learning; formal, non-formal and informal. The decree can now serve as a guide to rethink educational plans and programmes and to develop new innovative approaches that will benefit all people in the country in the long term.

DVV International supported the development process of the decree, which was steered by the partner department for non-formal education (DNFE) in the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES). For many years, DVV International has provided expertise, organized advisory meetings with representatives of various Laotian ministries and connected DNFE with international partners such as the Centre for Lifelong Learning of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO CELL), the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the UNESCO regional office in Bangkok. All have been accompanying the development process since then.

With the final signing of the decree, the first steps towards implementation can now begin. The adoption of the decree is central for the work at macro level, on which the regional office of DVV International will build its work in the coming years. The first step will be the establishment of a national steering committee for the implementation of the decree. Subsequently, concrete approaches are to

be developed which will contribute to strengthen adult education in Laos. In addition to continuing its cooperation with DNFE, DVV International is also planning further cooperation with the Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos in order to integrate the topic of lifelong learning more efficiently into teacher training. The official launch of the decree, which was planned at a conference, has had to be postponed for the time being due to the corona pandemic.





Our NFE
Advisor in
charge of the
District NFE Center
and the LLL
Decree

The development of the Lifelong Learning Decree in Lao PDR

Ounpeng Khammang, DVV International Laos

The process of drafting the decree

In order to operationalize the concept of lifelong learning (LLL), the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) arranged a first meeting on the concept of LLL for ministry staff and external stakeholders in March 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness and understanding of the essential features of LLL among Lao policy-makers and other relevant actors. A second meeting took place in December 2013 with the objective of engaging representatives of the ministry and provincial education sectors in an open-format discussion on how to structure the national LLL policy. Based on suggestions provided by the participants of the second meeting, the DNFE drafted a LLL policy for Lao PDR and involved stakeholders in its revision. The DNFE initiated a project, supported by DVV International and UNESCO, on establishing the policy. An external consultant was invited to develop Lao PDR's LLL policy in two stages: the first stage included a desk research on the situation in Lao PDR as well as the developments on LLL in neighbouring countries, followed by a three months consultancy for the DNFE. The preparatory activities included an extensive analysis of related literature materials and policy documents in regional and international contexts. Thus, a study was carried out on Asian LLL initiatives: In Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Documents on education for sustainable development, global citizenship education, the ASEAN economic community and other matters helped to build a detailed understanding of the LLL development from a global perspective. The second stage was a period of interviews and dialogues on level of policy-makers and other stakeholders from international, German cooperation's and other development partners. The potential of the education sector in Lao PDR as well as demographic data were

considered and used for the preparation of the policy. In accordance with the findings, a first draft was presented at a workshop, where representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) gave their input on the content of the draft policy. Subsequently, a technical validation workshop was conducted to collect feedback from experts in policy design, about the draft's outline, format and other technical features. The DNFE revised the draft and shared it during a series of meetings and workshops with representatives of provincial offices of the MoES, other Ministries and stakeholders. This process continued from mid-2016 until the mid of 2019.

The development of the LLL decree has initiated multiple discussions during several internal and high-level workshops and meetings. The final draft of the decree was accompanied by an impact assessment, which was recently introduced as a national tool for the development of any law and decree by the ministry of justice. At the last workshop in early 2019 the LLL decree was finalized and submitted to the concerning ministries, as well as the Cabinet of the Prime Minister.

The development of the LLL policy has been supported technically and financially by the DVV International Regional Office, who is working closely with the DNFE of the MoES. We have co-organized several meaningful activities such as study visits, trainings on capacity building, workshops and meetings, on country, regional and international levels. Additional support was provided by UNESCO Regional Office Bangkok by co-funding the consultant for developing the Decree and UNESCO institute for LLL, who hosted two Lao officials for research projects related to LLL.



Parallel to the development of the LLL decree, the Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos (NUOL) developed and piloted in co-operation with DVV International a Module on LLL for teacher education. The module has started with the first semester students of the academic year 2017-2018. It expanded in 2018-2019 to the Savannakhet University which is located in the central and Souphanouvong University which is located in the north of the country. The Faculty of Education of the National University has organized a workshop to exchange and share experiences of the pilot programs with the three Universities. This cooperation provided unique chances to promote LLL, as nearly all of the teachers and trainers in NFE are teachers. Additionally, the holistic concept of LLL demands to be implemented from the earliest education level to create a positive image of learning and enable the next generation to learn autonomously. The LLL decree will open the door to extend these efforts to the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) as well, where most of the Primary teachers are trained. Currently, the TTCs belongs to a different department of the Ministry, which creates a certain barrier for cooperation.

The National LLL Decree represents a historical policy development for Lao PDR. It will be the first document of its kind in the country. The government understands it as a wide-range policy for all sectors and stakeholders. The MoES is assigned by the government to play the key role in developing and implementing the LLL decree. The Minister of Education and Sports has nominated a committee which is comprised with the Vice Minister of Education and Sports as chairman, the Director and Deputy Director-General of the DNFE, Deputy Director-General of Planning, Deputy Director-General of Organization and Personnel and related organizations in the MoES. The DNFE played the role of the key agency in the development process of the LLL decree. The management cost, resource and technical information has mainly been provided by the MoES. During the development process, several workshops and meetings both technical and higher level were conducted, in which the key organizations and stakeholders were involved to share their ideas and perspectives.

The procedure of the LLL policy development

Step 1: An external consultant conducted a baseline survey and developed a first draft of the Decree in March-April 2016.

Step 2: revivifying of LLL policy, finalizing and submitting it to the government for approval.

The procedure of the LLL policy development

Step 1: An external consultant conducted a baseline survey and developed a first draft of the Decree in March-April 2016.

- The external consultant from the Philippines conducted the survey and developed the first draft of the LLL policy. She was embedded in the DNFE and worked closely with one Deputy Director General as her counterpart.
- The draft of the LLL policy was commented by the participants in the several workshops and meetings.
- Afterwards, the first draft of LLL decree was translated into English and submitted in a high-level meeting to the MoES, based on the feedback, it was revised, particularly to involve and clarify the responsibilities of all stakeholders, not only the education sector. The structure of the LLL committee was restructured; it became an integral part of the human resource Committee to avoid overlapping and establishing yet another structure.

Step 2: reviewing of LLL policy, finalizing and submitting it to the government for approval.

- With the support of the UNESCO and the DVV International, the DNFE has co-operated with the stakeholders and other education partners to continue and finalize the LLL decree in organizing around 10 different workshops and meetings both technical and high-level. The workshops and meetings involved the key partners who are directly responsible for the development of any legal framework and law in the country, e.g. the Ministry of Justice.
- Finally, in the beginning of May 2019, the report on the development of LLL decree has been submitted to the Minister of Education and Sports by the DNFE. The Minister of Education and Sports further on sent an official letter to the Prime Minister's Office and

the Ministry of Justice for further procedures. The Ministry of Justice together with MoES, and related organizations have been revising the decree in accordance with the law. They have officially approved the policy, by sending an approval letter to both MoES and the Prime Minister Office.

The Prime Minister's Office has forward it to the members of the Government for comments and feedback. After receiving the feedback, the Prime Minister Office send it back to the MoES to re-finalize, following the comments of the government members and has then submitted the latest draft of the LLL Decree to the Prime Minister Office. The Prime Minister's Office submitted it to the Prime Minister to get the approval and signature. And finally the Lifelong Learning Decree was approved and signed by the Prime Minister on 23 March 2020.

After receiving the official Decree, the MoES will continue to prepare for the launching event and implementation activity. As the Lifelong Learning Decree is the first agreement in Lao PDR, it still needs more cooperation and support from all stakeholders and development partners for both technical and financial.



Top 10 characteristics of a lifelong learner

Know your interests

If you could learn a new skill, what are you most interested in learning? Is this new skill for professional or personal reasons or both? Even if you can't apply it directly to your job, following new interests can help you become a more passionate, well-rounded professional.

Acknowledge your learning style

Everyone has his or her own way of learning new things. For example, do you learn best by reading, writing, listening, or by a hands-on approach? Choose lifelong learning resources that cater to your best learning style and preferences.

Set goals

Commit yourself to learning by setting clear goals for what you want to learn, how you plan to go about it and how long it will take. Don't forget to reward yourself once you have acquired this new knowledge.

Develop good reading habits

When was the last time you read or listened to a good book? Good reading habits open up new adventures and explorations into other cultures and worldly experiences.

Seek resources

Find out about learning opportunities online, in your local library, or at your local college and university. Many offer continuing education opportunities that are fun and educational.

Join a group of like-minded learners

Have you heard of www.meetup.com? It is a great place to put in a few descriptors about yourself and find others in your area that enjoy the same experiences.

Get Involved

Volunteer in a church or in your community to help meet people, learn about various opportunities and give service to others in need.

Share your skills and knowledge

Do you crochet or cook or enjoy ceramics or drawing or music? Why not share your expertise with others? By communicating ideas to others, you are more likely to solidify that knowledge in your brain.

Take a course

Take an online course or attend a course at your local college/university. If you don't have the time, find a webinar or four- to six-week course in your area that is interesting and fits your budget and schedule.

Stay curious.

Lifelong learning is about staying active and staying curious in your mind, body and spirit. Pick one of these 10 ideas and begin today.

Crisis Response – The role of ALE in coping with the corona pandemic

Societies around the globe have been hit hard by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). People are being affected in their daily lives and are concerned about the consequences for their health, jobs and well-being. In nearly all countries across the world, providers of youth and adult education have been forced to temporarily close their doors, with dramatic consequences for the sustainability of these institutions, their employees, and, not least, the learners. At the same time, adult learning and education (ALE) can contribute to mitigate the consequences of the crisis, offer badly needed education and training and support social action.

DVV international, as the only development partner focusing on ALE, suggests concepts on how ALE can contribute to managing the crisis by offering social and educational services, especially to vulnerable groups. At the same time, we urge governments and international actors to provide ALE providers – public, private and civil society organizations – and their staff with the necessary resources to deal with this situation. It is a joint

responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that non-formal education offers will continue to be available during the crisis and after.

Using the potential of ALE to combat the crisis

ALE is a sub-sector of the education system with a combination of characteristics which are of particular value in the ongoing situation. ALE provision is strictly

demand-driven, flexible, mostly non-formal, action-oriented and transformative. Based on this, ALE providers and projects have the potential to support people in many ways:

- Implement low-threshold health education, e.g. through campaigns to inform especially marginalized groups about the virus and (simple) ways to protect individuals, families and communities.
- Arrange income-generating activities, which contribute to produce desperately needed equipment, services and products like masks, soap, and nutrition.
- Develop and provide alternative learning opportunities to help compensate for the interruption of formal education services, thus counteracting the aggravating learning crisis
- Provide opportunities for reflection on common values like global responsibility, solidarity and active citizenship
- Mobilize and manage community action, as ALE-providers are in many cases deeply rooted in the local context and near to the people.

Develop new offers

All across the world, face-to-face learning activities are coming almost to a complete halt. As a consequence, participants lack the possibility to participate in essential learning opportunities. On the supply-side, ALE providers and a very high number of freelance teaching staff are facing critical economic situations. At the same time, the nature of the ALE sector with its flexibility and the strict orientation on the demand of the learners and societies makes it favorable for developing creative, quick responses:

- Push digital learning opportunities for participants, including the establishment of platforms, non-formal trainings and (certified) online courses.
- Support parents in enabling them for online work and assisting the online learning of their children
- Boost the outreach through making use of social media tools and channels and using traditional means of distance learning, e.g. cooperation with radio stations and TV channels.
- Offer psycho-social support services to help adults to cope with the burden of crisis.



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These new formats demand an investment in the creation of an enabling environment:

- Invest in digital infrastructure at the level of national and regional networks as well as local providers and provide digital devices for participants from vulnerable groups, where no other options are available
- Train staff to be able to use digital options and consult learners.
- Develop more online opportunities for capacity building of ALE staff, managers and trainers
- Offer digital communities of practice (CoP) at the local, national, regional and global level to facilitate the development of competencies for ALE staff, exchange experiences and support each other

Governments and development partners are requested to support ALE providers in their digital efforts.

Ensure the sustainable future of ALE

For many, if not most ALE providers, this is an existential crisis. With income possibilities dropping near to zero (participants fees, at least temporary termination of project funds), many are struggling. It is the role of the public and governments worldwide to ensure the survival of the ALE sector. Direct financial support is needed!

Recognizing the primary responsibility of national governments, there are still some things that development partners and international agencies can do:

- Support networks in their efforts to advocate for public support in coping with the crisis
- Support policies and practices to help ensure that the crisis is not used as a pretext to implement measures leading to shrinking spaces for civil societies
- Ensure that existing structures will be used to implement corona-related actions, instead of establishing parallel mechanisms (reinventing the wheel)
- Provide flexible, tailor-made funding schemes for protecting the institutional substance and key staff of essential ALE providers and networks

DVV International views its role as supporting its partners to cope in the best possible way with the impact of the corona-crisis and to develop formats for essential ALE services as a response to this crisis. We will regularly inform and update about innovative initiatives developed by our projects and partners on how to deal with the crisis and provide necessary support to the people. The Corona virus is a global crisis, and we should ensure that the response to it will be truly global.

Reaction of DVV International Southeast Asia

The Regional Office for Southeast Asia initiated the production of face masks through the non-formal education (NFE) system in Laos and Cambodia. It is envisaged that NFE institutions in Laos, mainly Community Learning Centres (CLC) in Savannakhet Province already supported by DVV International, and so-called pilot CLCs in Cambodia will start producing face masks in order to address the acute shortage which has arisen because of the COVID-19 crisis. In a second step, when the situation has eased, this will also serve as an income-generating activity for CLCs.

Production of face masks

After developing a new standard for Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Cambodia, DVV International is now piloting this standard at ten different locations across the country. In the context of the corona pandemic, DVV International equipped the ten CLCs with material for the production of face masks. Thus, they were able to meet the acute demand for face masks within a very short time. In the medium term, the production of face masks should also generate income.

Tutorial on how to sew face masks

In order to prepare the production of face masks, a Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEDC) from Laos has produced a video in the Lao language with the support of DVV International. It explains how to make different types of face masks, taking into account that in some areas particular material might be more difficult to obtain than the material needed for other types of masks.



ASPBAE STATEMENT

Protect Education and Strengthen Solidarity in the Global Effort to Combat the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) joins the global community in expressing its utmost concern on the Covid-19 pandemic that is causing unparalleled hardship on the lives of peoples around the world, leaving the most vulnerable groups highly exposed to the disease and to its dreadful consequences. Confirmed cases of infections and deaths continue to escalate globally, including in many developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region where health systems are extremely challenged. Hundreds of millions have lost their jobs or are at risk of losing their only means of livelihood. According to UNESCO, as of 3 April 2020, over 1.54 billion learners have been affected by closures of schools in 188 countries, representing nearly 90% of the world's student population. Wide-scale lockdowns would have also shut many Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and other adult learning and education programmes throughout the region.

We affirm that even in crisis situations, the right to education must be protected and learning must continue as it is one of the most important strategies for responding to this and other crises. Children, youth and adults need to be made aware of the constantly changing developments regarding the virus and its impacts, enabling them to – individually and collectively - cope and adapt to the crisis' fastchanging circumstances which have far-reaching consequences.

We support the efforts of UNESCO and governments in deploying distance learning solutions using appropriate technology and flexible learning approaches, including residential and community-based learning programmes. ASPBAE, however, notes that majority of learners from poor and disadvantaged households have no internet connectivity and lack the resources to access and acquire technology. This situation may further widen the digital divide and hasten the corporate capture of education technologies. Even now, there has been a rush among private ICT firms to aggressively promote and market their

digital learning modules and platforms. We are likewise aware that ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, Dalits, adult learners, and other disadvantaged groups – especially girls and women from within these - are left out and further marginalised due to the absence of appropriate learning materials, language barriers, and institutionalised discrimination. We therefore call on governments, development partners and the global community to ensure free and open access to appropriate technologies and tools that facilitate distance learning and community-based learning programmes, offering context-appropriate quality education and learning to the most vulnerable and excluded groups.

Much is demanded of teachers, trainers and education personnel as frontline responders to ensuring the continuity of education under the COVID 19 pandemic. Their safety, well-being, job security, training and support should be guaranteed as priority, to empower them in their efforts to reach all, even the hardest to reach learners i.e. those in rural areas, remote locations, those with special needs - through suitable, contextually appropriate means.



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The enormous loss of livelihoods and income owing to the lock-downs and quarantines are keeping countless poor learners away from participation in education and learning activities. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), with school closures, as many as 368 million children around the world are now missing out on school meals from which they are dependent for their daily nutrition. Women endure multiple burdens in this pandemic as they deal with increased domestic work, bigger health responsibilities, and even added teaching load, as they struggle for food and livelihood to sustain their families. Social safety nets that put resources in the hands and control also of women - cash transfers, food assistance - and other measures that protect jobs will need to be ensured as essential elements to ensure continued learning.

We are concerned to see autocratic measures being taken that circumvent democratic and accountability processes in the emergency response in many countries. People's voices and agency should be strengthened and heard in shaping the responses to the crisis. Only then can sustainable, relevant and effective solutions be found; solutions that leave no one behind. We call on governments to adhere to internationally agreed human rights standards and adopt a rights-based approach in their response to this pandemic.

ASPBAE notes that governments are currently realigning their national budgets to address the health emergency and to provide social assistance to vulnerable groups. The budget cuts and realignments can be deep, and can impact on planned allocations to education. The expected additional budgets intended for the recovery phase of the health crisis to include stimulus packages to address massive economic losses, can further drain the low resource base especially of poor and low-income developing

countries. We call on governments to strengthen their resolve in shoring up and safeguarding social sector budgets as countries will need to strengthen their health, education and social protection systems to fully recover from this crisis. We also call on the international community to mobilise much needed resources and institute measures such as debt relief to support low and middle-income countries in their efforts to invest in people through education – a critical strategy for economic recovery, growth, resilience and overall development.

ASPBAE stands in solidarity with other civil society organisations and the global community in fighting the Covid-19 global pandemic. We will cooperate with efforts to ensure continued education and learning for all children, youth and adults; by promoting truthful information and combatting disinformation and fake news; by helping build peoples' agency in shaping the response to the crisis and its aftermath; and by monitoring government accountability and international support so that countries emerge from this crisis with far better and more equitable education, health, nutrition and social protection for all.



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Management Training for Community Learning Centers in Cambodia

Vanna Peou, DVV International Cambodia

Due to the lack of professional management skills in Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in Cambodia, DVV International, together with the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the University of Adult Learning in Melbourne, organized a management course for CLC members in Cambodia. The two-year training course from 2019 to 2021 contains six modules, Module 1 and 2 were done in late 2019 and early 2020, we hope we will continue Module 3-6 in 2021, each lasting for four days.

The training of Module 1 and 2 were executed through a participatory approach, including experiential learning activities that ensured the participants' full engagement in the learning process. Each activity lasted for about 1.5 hours and encouraged the participants to share their experiences and questions to deepen their learning.

The training topics covered were: the differences between non-formal education (NFE) and formal education (FE) learning principles and approaches; the concept of NFE and skills development; the concept of NFE and community development; the concept of CLC and CLC standards; the Lifelong

Learning (LLL) Policy Decree, and the NFE Policy; the differences between adult and child psychology; the motivators of adult learning; learning methods for adults; principles of teaching adults; the concept of LLL; the relation between LLL and FE, NFE and informal learning; the relation between LLL and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and regional frameworks (ASEAN, SEAMEO); ways for participants to understand and shape their CLCs to LLL and adult learning and education (ALE) centers; the communication

of these concepts to staff, CLC members and key partners; the organization of meetings and facilitation of discussions (role of the facilitator)

through participatory methods, approaches and techniques; the basic concept of communication (sender-receiver) and communication tools (e.g. PPP); ways to communicate with target groups, listening and speaking skills, and presentation planning; the definition of teamwork, roles in teams, group dynamics and task delegation; ways to mobilize and map communities and CLCs; ways to identify community problems.

The key findings and participants' recommendations are:

- Most participants found the training very important. Although they started working with CLCs over four years ago, they had never received any training before.
- The participatory approach proved to be beneficial for adult education. The participants committed to continue to apply the approach with their colleagues in their ongoing CLC work.
- The participants were confident to express and share their experiences and views openly.
- The participants could contemplate ways to apply their learnings in their CLC work through mandatory daily journal writing tasks.



*Our Country
Director in
Cambodia*



- The participants enjoyed the four-day training course of modules 1 in Daun Keo (Takeo Province) and 2 in Sunway Hotel Phnom Penh. They gained management expertise and the reflexive learning games of each lesson equipped them with hope, a larger understanding of and confidence in sharing this knowledge with people in their communities and institutions.

On behalf of DVV International, I would like to thank Ms. Anita Borka, Prof. Robbie and Mr. Phork Sovann for doing their best to provide the knowledge, skills and enjoyment for all participants. It is my hope and confidence that Ms. Anita and Prof. Robbie will continue to help ensure the operating of the other modules as well, and that it will be as entertaining as Module 1 and 2.



Our Project
Manager for Skills
Development and
Liaison

Mobile Skills Trainings in 2019: Cooperation between DNFE and DTVET

Khanthong Inthachack, DVV International Laos

In 2019 DVV International, the Department of Vocational and Technical Education and the Department of Non-formal Education of the Ministry of Education and Sports agreed to continue supporting the project of Mobile Skills Training. The target villages were all located in Ban Sam Sang villages in rural areas. All activities were implemented taking advantage of the experiences of the Integrated Vocational Education and Training (IVET) Schools and the Regional Non-formal Education Centres in Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Pakse.

The training provided within the project included the prevention of diseases and the treatment of larger animals (e.g. pig, cow, buffalo), as well as growing mushrooms and organic agriculture. Furthermore, trainings on cooking repairing motorbikes were conducted. Each training lasted five to six days. The total amount of 228 participants of whom 95 were women, took part in the training. A meeting to review the project from 2019 will be organized in

the near future, and the training for 2020 will be discussed with the two departments for further consolidation. In cooperation with DTVET and the IVET schools, previously also with the GIZ VELA project, DVV International has been organizing Mobile Skills Trainings since 2010.



Training
for villagers
on repairing
motorbikes in
Nong District

Training for Master Trainers and its achievements for future Adult Education in Laos

Richard Isaiah Peters, DVV International Laos

"[...] the ToMT is well suited to improve the quality of non-formal education."

DVV International and the Department of Non-Formal Education conducted the Training of Master Trainers (ToMT) program 2015-2017. The participants came from various institutions, mainly from Non-Formal Education Centers under the Ministry of Education and Sport, but also from the Lao Women Union, Lao Youth Union, Vocational Skill Centers and the National University. Two years have passed, until the Tracer Study was initiated. In charge of the Study was the Lao-German Development Consulting Co., Ltd. (LGDC). Besides conducting interviews LGDC elaborated two questionnaires for the participants, and their respective supervisors. 80% of the ToMT participants took part in the Tracer Study.

The main objective for the ToMT was to convey future Master Trainers an adequate set of skills and knowledge. The Study analyzed the impact of the training courses and how those may have benefitted the participants in a professional and personal context, as well as its impact on Adult Education in Laos.

The majority of participants stated a progress in their personal and professional development. Besides improving general knowledge and technical skills, they reported an increase in various soft skills like self-confidence, leadership or active participation. The statement is underlined by their supervisors which all agreed in the participant's improvement at work. Due to most participants being directly engaged in teaching activities they can actively apply the learned content in their daily work. Five of them explained that they use the learned knowledge "very much" on a daily basis, while the majority settled with

"much". Around 90% of the respondents passed on their acquired knowledge to coworkers, to also elevate their knowledge. Some through organized training settings, others through a practical-oriented approach by demonstrating. Being asked which chapters of the ToMT manual, which were handed to them during the training, they used for training, the chapters about communication and group work, as well as the Adult education techniques were the ones most frequented. Based on the statement of 26 out of 28 participants, they are interested to work as trainer for trainers, the other two would join after more training. Six out of nine Supervisors also recommended their staff, the other three would like them to have additional training first. Regarding the question, where the participants and superiors would wish more support for better applying the ToMT, both groups stated: repeated training, more practical exercises and refresher courses. Concerning the contribution of the ToMT for adult education in Lao PDR, the response from both groups were generally positive and optimistic. Only one supervisor stated that it still needed a lot of implementation steps before reaching national level, the others were quite optimistic and declared that the theoretical foundation has been laid with the ToMT.

Concluding the Tracer Study, it becomes apparent that according to the participants and the supervisors the ToMT is suited to advance the quality of non-formal education, and it shows a solid development of the personal qualities of the participants in their training and teaching activities. Therefore it corresponds well with the aim off DVV International to train adult educators and impart them with knowledge combined of methodical expertise and the concept of Life Long Learning. Nonetheless, the Tracer Study articulated couple of recommendations which also align with the



*Our Intern
from Germany*



**26 out of 28
participants, they are
interested to work as
trainer for trainers**



Six out of nine Supervisors also recommended their staff, the other three would like them to have additional training first.

wishes the participants and supervisors expressed, like regular refresher trainings. Furthermore, the study highlighted the need to give experienced master trainers more opportunities to coach future master trainers, and therefore fulfill the task of the Training of Master Trainers.

All in all the conclusion of the Tracer Study was very positive and underlined the achievement of the Training of Master Trainers for the non-formal education in Laos.

DVV International celebrated its 50th anniversary in Weimar on 7 May with a ceremony featuring Federal Development Minister Dr Gerd Müller as the keynote speaker. The celebrations formed part of an international conference on the role of adult education in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

What saw the light of day 50 years ago as a small specialist department of the German Adult Education Association (DVV) is today the leading specialist organisation for adult education and development cooperation. DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the DVV, works with partners in more than 30 countries and supports the development of sustainable youth and adult education structures worldwide.

The ceremony in Weimar was attended by approximately 250 guests coming from Germany and abroad. In his keynote speech, Dr Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, paid tribute to the Institute's decades of successful commitment, and emphasised the considerable significance attaching to adult education for development: "Lifelong education forms the basis for reason, tolerance, equality, conflict prevention, peace at home and between peoples. The world needs nothing more than education."

David Atchoarena, Director of UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), congratulated the Institute: "DVV International is an influential player in the international adult education community. UNESCO is looking forward to continuing its cooperation with DVV International, especially in this crucial phase of Agenda 2030. We wish DVV International all the best for the next 50 years too."

The "Rita-Süssmuth-Award for the international Volkshochschule" was also awarded for the first time during the ceremony, under the auspices of the German Association of Cities and Towns. Honorary DVV President Prof. Dr Rita Süssmuth acknowledged the adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) in Bonn, Hanover and Ulm with the award that is named after her for an international orientation of educational work at local level.

The anniversary celebrations took place as part of the international adult education conference that DVV International organises every two years (7/8 May). Guests from 30 partner countries, including government representatives, discussed the crucial role of adult education in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Only if adults too receive adequate education will it be possible to implement the Agenda 2030", said Christoph Jost, Director of DVV International. "We need adult education for all people worldwide in order to be able to successfully walk the path to a globally just and peaceful society."



Members of ToMT in the Follow up Workshop for ToMT

Online learning in Vietnam gets a boost from COVID-19 Pandemic. What is missing?

Khau Huu Phuoc, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning

The Cyber World

One morning three years ago, I was sitting in a coffee shop, sipping some warm coffee when I heard some giggling from a table in a corner of the room. Thinking some young people were having a good time together, I glanced over and saw four youngsters, two girls and two boys, aged about 18, fixing their eyes on their mobile phone screens in silence, their thumbs moving up and down, or quickly swiping across the screens. The scene was a flip side of what I had imagined. They were totally lost in the real world, not being socially with one another, and were totally immersed in the virtual one. A few minutes' observation revealed that they were actually communicating, not in that physical setting, but in the cyber world.

The internet has created an invisible world, where a lot of people are present mentally, emotionally and socially for work, entertainment, socialization, and learning.

Online education

Web-based learning began in the 1990s, but E-Learning utilizing full interactive features of the internet taking the advantages of Web 2.0 was experienced since 2005 (Lehman & Conceicao 2010). Online courses have since been offered by many universities and education institutions in the world, serving the learning needs of millions of people, both young and old, male and female, employed and job-seeking. The trend of online teaching and learning is obvious, but has yet to be a replacement of traditional face-to-face practice. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a wave of online lessons which were transformed from the conventional classroom content delivery to internet-based projection. More than ever, online instructions seem to be the one and only option of education in places and countries where the

disease is ravaging, with people in lockdown and education institutions temporarily shut down. The number of these territories and countries, Vietnam included, is increasing rapidly day by day, to reach 209 as of April 7, 2020.

The situation in Vietnam seems to confirm the alleged multiple benefits of online learning: saving traveling time between home and learning places, reducing gas consumption, increasing the level of learner confidence due to the absence of scrutiny from surrounding people, to name a few. However, this mode of learning also comes with two inherent drawbacks: the low level of active participation, and the feeling of isolation as many students are experiencing, or in other words the feeling of not being present, in the learning environment. As a result, it is not uncommon that students log into a class and leave it there while the teacher is teaching, or the video is playing, sometimes only to do something else. In short, they are not actually engaged in the learning process.

Sense of presence

Lehman rightly viewed that the sense of presence in online learning does matter, and has much to do with the actual learning outcomes. According to Lehman, two aspects of online presence are required for individuals to cross the threshold of the virtual classroom: telepresence, which is the sense of "being there" in the context of the classroom, and social presence, which is the sense of "being together with others."

Humans are social creatures and need social support (OECD Better Life Index, Lents 2018). Biologically, they have evolved to work together in coordination, to eat and live together in communities, and in such undertakings to learn



*He is a Research
and Training
Manager in
SEAMEO CELL*



from each other. As it was, learning in primitive societies took place naturally, simply through young people playing with their older, watching their senior perform tasks and then mimicking them. While skills could be trained more or less in that way, wisdom as we call it, accumulated and grew over generations to such amounts that simple imitation would not be enough, and masters, instructors or teachers, depending on how you view those knowledge transferring people, became the ones responsible for the transmission, via the medium of language, of the systematic arrangement of wisdom (Dewey 1916). Whatever form of learning and education takes place, however it is conducted, the ultimate aim is to prepare young people for their meaningful future integration into society.

Learning is a social activity. Learners come together, receive instructional guidance from teachers, discuss, draw up new knowledge, and put it into application. Has the internet created a virtual community where students feel socially bound for such activities? It sure has, as can be experienced by the young people in the coffee shop that I mentioned earlier. Their contacts remained in the cyber world: they laughed at each other's posts, comments, and responded to them, seemingly forgetting their real existence in this world. Has online learning environment utilized this function to provide a sense of "being there" and "being together" that makes the internet technology, the devices in use (laptop, mobile phone, camera) seem transparent, which enables learners to feel that they were actually in another location and immersed

in a context where classmates and teachers were interacting? The answer is not definite. As long as learners feel that they are sitting alone in their own places, manipulating the communication devices by tapping on keys, moving the computer mouse around and clicking, interest of being with others for a learning task is not there. They feel obliged to go online to fulfill the duty of a learner for the final goal of receiving credits towards course completion.

Ally (2008, cited in Hartnett 2016)

defined online education as "the use of the internet to access materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience." Once the element of human interaction is lost because of the inappropriate course construct, the learning environment becomes a static place in the mind of learners who are left without strong motivation for collaborative contribution to lesson contents which are displayed on the physical inanimate electronic devices in front.

The missing attribute of online lessons

As a result of the COVID-19, face-to-face teaching and learning has been temporarily suspended. Education institutions across Vietnam have resorted to the internet as a teaching platform where videos are posted for lessons, live streaming is employed for real-time teaching, and social network applications are used for information exchange and discussion. To some learners especially those in rural and mountainous areas, this poses difficulties, because of the complete shift from the brick-and-mortar classroom to the virtual one, which is a totally new experience.

The media in Vietnam have started to look into and made some preliminary assessment of the implementation of online teaching and learning. Opinions, while showing optimistic viewpoints of the new trend regarding the time saved traveling between home and learning places, and the idea that online learning is the best way to make use

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of the time during extended school closure, which otherwise would be wasted, point to two major obstructions: the lack of suitable infrastructure in remote and mountainous areas which renders this mode of teaching and learning virtually impossible, and the low true participation from the part of students which results from a feeling that they are isolated from the conventional classroom, thus lacking a sense of collaboration and competition, and suffering low teacher-student, and peer interaction.

Many teachers resort to social network platforms for lesson delivery, but these lack the necessary functions for online teaching and learning. A lesson is not a one-way transmission of knowledge to learners. It does not include solely giving exercises to be done. In the absence of direct human interaction in mini-society of the class, an online lesson has to do much more to attain the same level of involvement as in an offline class.

In short, while the first obstruction is one of technology, the second is more on the methodological side and within the capability of teachers with relevant know-how to handle.

What can be done

Technological and digital infrastructure apart, a feeling of “being there” in the physical classroom can be created by providing an environment where natural interaction can be simulated. Lehman suggests a range of activities that enable teacher-student and peer interaction. These include assign roles of individuals in teams, request each student to make at least one contribution during a class session, online group discussion forums, team projects, debates, fishbowl, mini-lectures, PowerPoint with voiceover, short video sequences, synchronous Web or videoconferencing, guest experts, chat, object or picture demonstration, collaborative concept maps, participant videos, virtual lab work or simulations, blog participation, interviews, and trigger videos. Of these, synchronous class sessions with webcams turned on should be exploited for real-life experience when learners can see each other while sharing opinions, and at times having fun with each other as they do in class.

The Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET) in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communications is going to build a common platform for

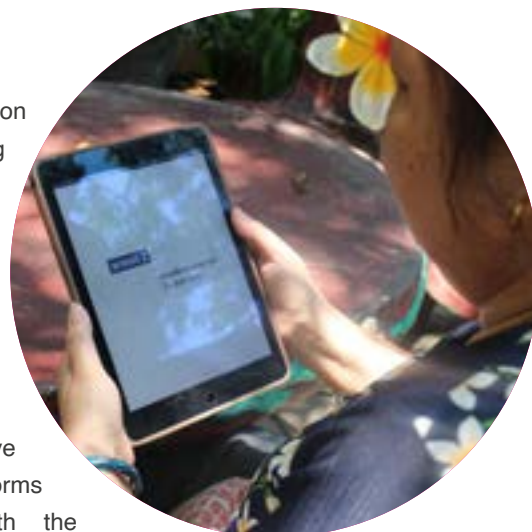
use by all education institutions in setting up and delivering courses (Tuoi Tre 2020). The platform will feature many communication enhancing functions. Several companies of the private sector have offered similar platforms

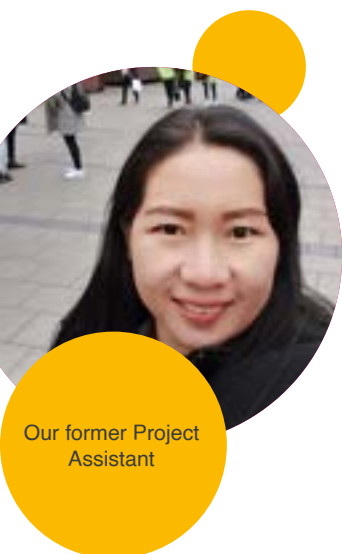
at low costs. With the

Ministerial Circular 10/2017/TT-BGDĐT (MOET 2017) stipulating regulations on distance higher education, and the yet-to-be-issued ministerial circular on mandatory integration of online teaching and learning into formal education curricula, coupled with the availability of infrastructure guaranteed by internet service providers, and technical platforms to be launched soon, most will be left in the hand of schools and teachers for the sustainability and efficacy of online courses.

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My first six months in Germany

Pakoulee Xaiyaxang

Pakoulee Xaiyaxang, who has worked as a project assistant for DVV International in the Regional Office in Vientiane for the last one and a half year, presently she is in Germany to work in an adult education centre (Volkshochschule) in Germany and learn about the German adult education system.

Touching snow and experiences in abroad are my dreams, because there are a lots of things to learn and see. I had decided to take this opportunity to come here in order to develop myself that is why I have to leave my Lovely daughter and my family is away.

At the beginning it was little bit hard for me, because I was homesick, and everything was new for me such as people, culture, language, food and environments, and also including Bus and Train system are new for me as well, they are very good and on time. Staying in Germany and learning German is the most difficulty for me but nowadays it is getting better. In the same time I also had fun and joyful with the environments in working place with learning new things, hangout in new places with friends and enjoy with every seasons.

Intern of working, I am doing new things with new colleagues and different system of management, it make me get more understanding about work and drill with people. In every day we provide the

seminar for 55 to 60 people. There will be two groups such as weekday's group and weekend's group, in each group is about 2-6 seminar classes and difference topics such as languages, communication skills, management skills, policy, meditation skills, planting skills, yoga and others.

Last month I had a week for visiting MONA LEA project (Vocational training for international women, who came to stay in Germany for few years and want to get a job or need to earn honey to support their families). It was very interesting for me because every participant has differences background and Education, but 70% of the participants could get jobs. And this project is similar to Laos in term of Budget and the purposes of the participants. I will go to DVV in Bonn for two weeks on 13 to 26 March 2020, and also plan to visit Cologne University on 20 March 2020. I hopefully that my Bonn time will be wonderful and I am great to be there for seeing and learning how is our HR look like.



Right: PaKou with her colleagues in Adult Education Centre (Münchener Volkshochschule) Left: A place around where Pakou stay in Munich

Perspectives on Mobile Community Learning Centres for Kavet Communities in Ratanakiri

Interview by *Sophia Martell*, DVV International Cambodia

Since 2019 three Mobile Community Learning Centres in Kok Lak and Veun Sai Commune, Ratanakiri Province, have been established. In those remote areas, 99% belong to the ethnic minority of Kavet who are disadvantaged on multiple levels. Therefore, DVV International and their partner organization NTFP are working towards enhancing the access to basic education and lifelong learning for everyone. While visiting one MCLC site, DVV International had the chance to interview a Volunteer Teacher who is also a Member of the MCLC Committee (Mr. S.), as well as the Project Coordinator Mr. Vansak from NTFP.

Mr. S. how are Kavet children and youth disadvantaged?

The Kavet people have to be able to communicate with the rest of the Cambodian society, but they lack the Khmer language. So, it is very hard for us to communicate, and some are also concerned about how they can make use of their labour power. And there is not enough food and hygiene deficiencies, leading to health problems. The Kavet community is missing on some of the basics of a minimum subsistence means.

Mr. Vansak: In addition, it is a very remote area and the infrastructure is bad. So, it is very hard to reach the community. Compared to other communities in the highland education is more difficult to access.

How can they benefit from the MCLC activities?

First, they have access to education and the opportunity to learn Khmer in a Bilingual class. But then they can also gain knowledge about hygiene, health and gain practical skills in agriculture to be able to plant their own vegetables. Then their families do not have to go all the way to the market and spend more money.

The benefit for the community is that the participants are sharing their knowledge and experience with the community members.

Mr. Vansak, what's the main idea of the MCLC?

The main idea is to have a common place for learning. The community comes together, and we provide this opportunity for the community that has very limited access to basic education. With the MCLC Committee we also try to make it sustainable and have a place for lifelong learning. It is about including everyone, from children to adults to participate and share knowledge and skills. Currently the focus is on the Bilingual Khmer and Kavet class, so that the participants can later transfer to the formal school system.

Which goals are you aiming at?

For now, the main goal is to see that everyone who has no or limited access to education has the opportunity to participate here. But we also want to see the link to their livelihood, so the knowledge and skills that they can gain here, contribute to the whole community.



Our intern in Country Office in Cambodia



Soft Skills for Lao Youth

Dalouny Sisoulath, DVV International Laos

Soft Skills are now highly appreciated in the global education debates and especially around Asia. The concept includes the training of several key skills which are crucial for young people to make their way in the 21st century: teamwork, leadership, decision making, self-esteem, communication, and time management. The youth should also be able to manage conflicts in a productive matter and find creative solutions for various challenges.

The Vocational Development Department of the Lao Youth Union (LYU) provides short term trainings for young people in different trades such as sewing, repairing motorcycles and cars, computer technology, mushroom growing, beauty treatment, electrical wiring, as well as English classes. Currently, LYU possesses vocational training centers in 14 out of 18 provinces. However, due to budget restraints, courses are only taking place in nine of these 14 centers. The completion of these courses takes between three to four months. They are often paid by the students themselves, or funded by development partners. As they are facing the challenges of missing soft skills as well, LYU asked DVV International for

support in implementing modules on soft skills into their training concepts.

DVV International

and the Vocational Development Department were involved in the project funded by Sternsinger called: "Soft Skills for Lao Youth", providing soft skills training for Lao youth in rural areas and at the same time improving the capacity for LYU trainers.

The overall goal of the project was to enable the Vocational Development Department of LYU to use Soft Skills in their training programs, by providing a basic understanding of Soft Skills to LYU teachers on provincial level, so those teachers themselves can provide soft skills trainings to their students.

Project implemented 5 trainings on soft skills for Lao youth in difference provinces

- A training for trainer/teacher (ToT) of LYU vocational training centers countrywide.
- A training for the students at Don Bosco Vocational Youth Training Center, Vientiane Capital. The target group are students and teachers in the center, whereby the students of this center are vulnerable youth from the provinces.
- A training for the students in the Savannakhet Teacher Training Center, Savannakhet province. Target group are students from Savannakhet University, Savannakhet Teacher Training College, Xaisombath College, Savannakhet Public Health College, and Savannakhet Lao Youth Union Officer.
- A training for the students in Sepone Technical School in Sepone District. The target group are students in Sepone Vocational School and Lao Youth Union members from difference sector in Sepone District.
- A training for the students in Saravanh Integrate Vocational Education and Training (IVET) School, Saravanh Province.

The trainings for the students were facilitated by the ToT group with support from a facilitator from DVV International and LYU, in order to further develop the facilitators' skills and test the soft skills manual by themselves. At the same time the goal was to make the trainers understand the concept of soft skills, in order to enable them to conduct soft skills trainings in their institutions. They should internalize that soft skills are key competences which will help them and their students in their daily life, as well as, in terms of career and employment.

Our writer who is responsible for Soft Skills Project



The project also produced four videos demonstrating the content and use of the soft skills framework's key concepts, for instant the concept of Soft Skills, critical thinking, decision making and effective communication. The trainers/teachers can use videos as teaching materials in Lao language for conveying soft skills with examples that are appropriated for daily life routines. The videos represent an easily accessible medium for understanding the concept of soft skills, especially for a non-reading environment, like in Laos where illiteracy is still a problem. The videos are accessible online via www.youtube.com audiences can access the videos on desktops or laptops, at home or at the office, and via smartphones.

Soft Skills are highly needed for different target groups not only for students or teachers, but also recommended for the officers on different levels, in order to extend soft skills trainings to the other sections of our work and cooperation.

Resource Centre

Somchit Phonevilay, Non-formal Education Development Centre

The NFEDC with support from DVV International established the Resource Center at the Non-Formal Education Development Center consented by the General Director of the Department of Non-Formal Education in agreement No. 1212/DNFE, from the 08th November 2016. The objectives are to collect, promote and provide information concerning education, especially information regarding Non-Formal Education and lifelong learning. Since the establishment of the Resource Center, the Center always pays attention in developing staff capacity, as well as expanding the Resource Center to regional NFE Centers. In 2019, the Center produced videos in order to engage in Vocational training and building awareness. One video centred around the question of how to make brooms as a resource for NFE target groups. Additionally, two videos about lifelong learning were translated from English into Lao and six articles regarding education were also translated for publication, these videos and articles can be acquired online by the public through the NFEDC website, Facebook page and the its Youtube channel. By following the links below, the videos and articles can be accessed for watching or reading:

- Website: <https://nfedi.org/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/nfedc>
- YouTube Channel: Search: Non-Formal Education Development Centre

The Center also implemented a training workshop on how to use Microsoft Access for the staff of the NFEDC library by inviting a trainer from the DNFE. Another workshop concerning capacity building for Village

educators and primary school teachers in Hadxaikhao Village focused on encouraging

reading activities for children. An annual meeting for Sharing, Learning of NFE resources, Promoting and Encouraging Community of Practice was held as well. Following this examples the Center has implemented in 2020 a training workshop to encourage reading activities in Community Learning Centers for village educators and primary school teachers in Muen District, Vientiane Province.

However, due to the current situation in Laos, as with many other countries in the world facing COVID-19, the implementation of the Resource Center activities are slowing down for the meantime. The situation also causes many other problems, one of them being the price of materials and food rising to an higher amount than normal. This can be especially seen by the need of wearing a mask, so we have produced a video on how to make a mask using cloth to prevent virus infections, and also dust etc. that can cause bad effects for the respiratory system on the short- and long-term, by publishing it on the NFEDC YouTube Channel and Facebook page. This year the Center has also planned to expand the Resource Center to another NFEC in Xiengkhuang province with the objective to promote NFE resources on a bigger scale. Other plans include the idea to create a questionnaire for a tracer study to evaluate the NFEDC Resource Center implementation results since its establishment, to review and follow up activities in each period and helping target groups to make it more sustainable.



Interesting

Important Website in region

www.aspbae.org

www.pria.org

www.seameocelll.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 79(2019): The contribution of adult education to active participatory citizenship

IPE 77: Rethinking adult learning and education - Asia perspectives

IPE 78: Adult education as a key to development - challenges and success factors

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Soft Skills Instructional Package

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