



Capitalization of Experiences

HELVETAS Laos, Women's Voices CEDAW orientation session with NA, PPAs, LNCAW, LWU and civil society representatives in 2018, at the start of the project

WOMEN'S VOICES PROJECT – LAO PDR

On August 14, 1981, Lao PDR ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), officially and legally committing itself to address and mitigate inequalities in women's and girls rights, access to services, and meaningful participation and leadership in cultural, social, economic and political spheres.

The European Union (EU) funded **Women's Voices** (WV) project, 2018-2021, had the **specific objective** to, '*Strengthen Lao civil society and their networks to engage with the National and Provincial People's Assemblies to improve information, dialogue and oversight on women's rights and gender equality.*'

To achieve this objective, HELVETAS Laos reached out to two of its **longstanding local Non-Profit Association (NPA) partners**, **i.** the Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (**ADWLE**) and **ii.** the Gender Development Association (**GDA**). Both have an extensive and complementary track record of experiences and expertise with various gender and women's issues, cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder networks from local to national level, and an established legitimacy with the communities they interact, as rights holders. Recognizing that the success and the sustainability of the action relied on the **involvement of concerned duty bearers, with CEDAW related mandates**, HELVETAS outreached to and engaged with the National Assembly (NA), the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus (WPC), the Provincial Peoples Assemblies (PPAs), the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women (LNCAW), the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and related local authorities and academic institutes. After four years of several note worthy firsts, planned and unplanned results, outcomes and impacts, this **Capitalization of Experiences (CAPEX)**, aims to highlight the who, what, why and how of the most significant changes in attitudes, relations, and practices among others. Such transformations around often complex, taboo, sensitive, and 'private' issues, remain unique in the Lao context, as in many around the world.

ACTORS

SPACES

CHANGES

ABOUT WOMEN'S VOICES

Listening to women's voices (or acknowledging the lack thereof) is essential to address gaps in women's rights and gender equality. Capacity development, the provision of thematic IEC materials, case studies, and collaboration alongside trust re/building was essential. This facilitated spaces and opportunity for coordinated outreach and evidence based policy dialogue of the NAWPC and PPA members with local civil society. Leveraging respective mandates and complementary resources, led to improved oversight and promotion of the protection of women's rights, gender equality and access to justice in Lao society. In turn, an exponential number of constituents were strengthened in their capacities and self-confidence to voice their concerns and expectations on the issues related to their legitimate rights as afforded by national legislation and international conventions like CEDAW which the government of Lao PDR is a state party to. Thus the action contributed to improve the status of fundamental human rights and the implementation of the Rule of Law in Lao PDR at national, provincial, district and village levels.

ABOUT CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981 after the twentieth country had ratified it. By the tenth anniversary of the Convention in 1989, almost one hundred nations have agreed to be bound by its provisions. **Lao PDR became a signatory in 1980 and ratified it in 1981.** Among the international human rights treaties, the Convention takes an important place in bringing the female half of humanity into the focus of human rights concerns. The Convention addresses direct, indirect and multiple forms of discrimination, focusing on three main areas of rights, namely:

- **Civil and Political rights, and the legal status of women**, as in their identity, inclusion and representation, among others.
- **Reproductive rights** as in family, maternity, unpaid care work and SGBV rights among others.
- **Cultural and traditional rights**, as in harmful practices which contribute to the marginalization and/or insecurity/ unsafety of women and girls, be it socially, economically, and/or politically.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The partners have an extended history of partnership in field based interventions and collaboration in strategic initiatives.

HELVETAS

Is an international NGO, working in Lao PDR for over 20 years. HELVETAS is committed to a just world in which all people determine the course of their lives in dignity and security, using environmental resources in a sustainable manner. It enhances capacities and resources in the areas of skills, jobs and income; water, food and climate; and voice, inclusion and cohesion, mainstreaming gender and social equity, and rights based approaches. HELVETAS forges multi-stakeholder partnerships with the public, private and civil society sectors, with an aim to strengthen the social contract between duty bearers, service providers, and rights holders, at national, local and regional levels.

<https://www.helvetas.org/en/laos>

AWDLE

Is a local non-profit association (NPA) with a longstanding track record in promoting and defending women's rights and access to justice, through evidenced based research, development of user friendly IEC resources, and collaboration with related ministries and institutions, and the establishment and provision of legal aid and protection services among others.

<http://adwlelaos.org/>

GDA

Is a local non-profit association, with a broad network, focusing on gender rights and equality with a mission of alleviating poverty, addressing violence, enhancing equity and supporting empowerment for all people, in rural and urban areas. It does so through outreach, capacity development and advocacy initiatives in close collaboration with the LWU and related public institutions and departments.

<https://gdalaos.org/>

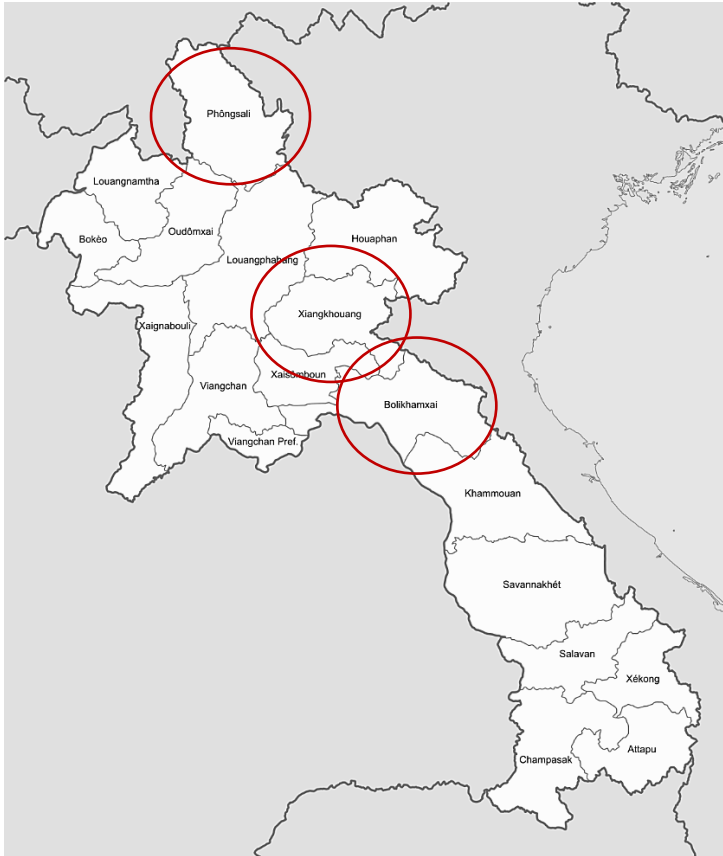


IEC information on Gender roles and unpaid care work



IEC information on types of gender based violence

THE TARGET LOCATIONS



The three partners have well recognized experience in the three selected provinces, ensuring a **foundation of familiarity, legitimacy, well established collaborations with local authorities and communities, and local knowledge**, essential for the project, considering its complex and sensitive subject matter.

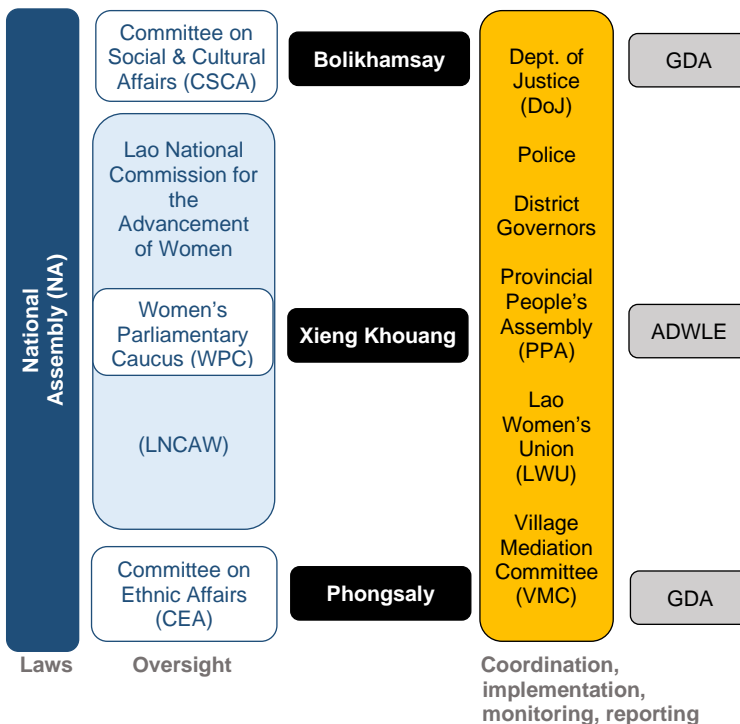
Generally, there is very little **awareness of women's rights and gender equality at community and district level**. Legal aid suffers from lack of resources and has limited presence in the provinces.

Issues in communities that prevail are **higher rates of school-dropouts among girls**, disproportionate **unpaid care work burdens**, and **SGBV**, including early marriage/ pregnancy, and human trafficking. These in turn compromise if not **threaten women's and girls' safety and wellbeing, access to essential services and reaching their full potential**. This can be even more prevalent in **ethnically diverse provinces with important border areas** as those targeted by the Women's Voices project.

Women, especially from **ethnic groups, tend to be more marginalised**. They are at higher risk of SGBV in Laos. As the most ethnically diverse country in Southeast Asia, their **ethnicity, location as well as other socio-economic factors** such as low level of education and alcoholism, **affect their position and rights**.

In selecting these three provinces, the action therefore paid special **attention to ethnic groups, traditions and cultures**.

An estimated **7500 Lao Citizens, of which more than 50% were women, ethnic and/or marginalized, in Bolikhamsay, Xieng Khouang and Phongsaly** were reached.



SNAPSHOTS OF KEY LEARNINGS AND MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Below highlights key learnings and factors leading to a selection of **most significant changes, among and between the actors, according to outcome**, in their attitudes, will, skills, interests, and resources; and how these in turn influenced their relations, expanded spaces, and contributed to Women's Voices being heard, promoted and safeguarded more in Bolikhamsay, Xieng Khouang, and Phongsaly, Lao PDR.

OUTCOME 1

Lao civil society organisations and communities will be empowered to contribute constructively to policy dialogue on women's rights, gender equality and access to justice at central and local level.

WHO

"Before in their village the ethnic family women mostly eat after men, but after this project, they observed women and men in ethnic group in their villages are eating the same time with men and they see more ethnic women went to marriage parties (weddings) with their husband which is different from before.

Now they know that women have rights and can do anything same as men, even their daughters have the same right to education as their sons".

VMC representatives

ACTORS (Rights holders)

Lao Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) and civil society/ communities.

Baseline

Due to their longstanding work on women's rights, and Lao legislation familiarity and some international exposure, **the NPAs** retained a solid basis of knowledge and capacity related to CEDAW. According to the capacity needs assessment, areas for improvement included:

- Understanding the more structural positioning of CEDAW within the international UN, regional ASEAN human rights framework, and the Lao national legal framework.
- The more specific aspects of the reporting and review processes as well requirements
- How the CEDAW committee works

At the community level, the baseline revealed that on average 70% + of villagers are un/der educated, with approximately 13% having completed mid secondary, and 0.9% having a higher diploma. This has a direct impact on the awareness of rights, and in turn the capacity to exercise one's rights, or act in defense of or on behalf of someone whose rights are being violated.

Related to this, when asked about their degree of awareness of the Education law, as part of baseline and endline surveys: 33% male respondents initially answered they do not know, and at the end of the project, this figure fell to 17%.

Similarly 46% of female respondents first answered they did not know, and by the end of the project, only 29% answered the same.

Regarding **the Village Mediation Committees (VMCs)**, which are largely composed of representatives from village heads, the party secretary, Lao Women's Union, Lao Front for National Construction and Village security, the majority of members are male. PEK district in Xieng Khouang however had the most balanced composition, with 14 men and 12 women. This may indicate why legal aid needs were not initially seen as a priority and why a clear majority of both men and women disagreed with the statement that *Lao women are more disadvantaged than Lao men*. Whereas in Bolikhamsay and Phongsaly the results were more mixed.

WHAT, WHY AND HOW

ATTITUDES, SKILLS, WILL, INTERESTS and RESOURCES

Key results

- ADWLE and GDA produced six evidenced based case studies and organized dialogue sessions on three topics of concern with executive and legislative bodies.
- Over 80% women and 90% men surveyed during the final evaluation, demonstrated increased familiarity with the Law on Violence against Women; and over 1,350 community representatives of which more than 60% were women and/or from marginalized groups, confidently engaged with PPAs on their issues of concern.
- 230 village leaders and mediation committee members, of which 110 women, have enhanced knowledge of laws, mediation capacities and GBV case handling resources. The final evaluation showed that the targeted 18 VMCs can reference relevant laws and respond to GBV cases accordingly.

Most significant change(s)

- ADWLE signed an MoU as the main partner of the LNCAW and LWU for data collection in preparation for the 2021 CEDAW cycle.
- Targeted VMCs have GBV action plans, and reported a decrease in GBV cases, in some communities no cases since the project interventions.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- Having clear minimum targets in gender and other social group representation is key for effective intervention planning and execution.
- Developing capacities by using locally contextualized visual materials, interactive group work, role play and action learning approaches which participants can apply immediately are most effective according to post training/learning surveys.
- When awareness, knowledge and skills are appropriately supported e.g. practical needs based, do no harm, and conflict sensitive, this can positively influence the interest and will of concerned stakeholders to and toward change.
- Developing the capacities of the NPAs in gap areas, in tandem with the NPAs strengthening the VMCs while in parallel capacitating the community, with affirmative actions for women and men, produced mutual benefits and enhanced accountability between the VMCs and communities they serve, and in turn women and men.

- NPAs' long standing and expansive community networks are an important asset. However this asset remains under-optimized if the NPAs cannot leverage their outreach to produce solid evidenced based documentation to better engage with and demonstrate their added value to relevant authorities at different levels.



A group of men do a joint exercise during an ADWLE village training on women rights and gender equality.

WHERE

SPACES

Key results

- Village authorities and men acknowledge knowing more about women's rights, and in some cases learning that women have rights.
- Targeted village representatives and community members report that their community meetings are more inclusive and functioning better due to more awareness of laws and rights, and capacity to fulfill their roles and responsibilities accordingly.
- With more understanding of laws and rights, accompanied by leadership training, there is evidence of more women claiming their space and speaking up during village meetings.

Most significant change(s)

- Improved local governance in the targeted areas has resulted in Community led spaces being more open and inclusive, contributing to a more safe and secure everyday community life.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- The spaces we create and the participation we facilitate in the context of our interactive trainings can serve as a practical and replicable example for communities, to jointly foster and benefit from over the longer term.
- Spaces become more open, less contested or exclusive when those occupying community spaces have more shared confidence (information, knowledge, skills, resources), and therefore more shared trust and power.

ຄວາມສະເໝີພາບ, ຄວາມເທົ່າທຽມ ແລະ ຄວາມຍຸຕິທຳທາງດ້ານບົດບາດຍິງ-ຊາຍ

<p>Inequality Creating unequal opportunities</p>	<p>Equality? Creating equal opportunities</p>
<p>ຄວາມບໍ່ສະເໝີພາບ:</p> <p>ແມ່ນຄວາມບໍ່ເທົ່າທຽມໃນການເຂົ້າເຖິງທາງສິດ, ຜົນປະໂຫຍດ ແລະ ໂອກາດອື່ນໆໃນການພັດທະນາ</p>	<p>ຄວາມສະເໝີພາບຍິງ-ຊາຍ:</p> <p>ແມ່ນຄວາມເທົ່າທຽມກັນທາງດ້ານ ສິດ, ຜົນປະໂຫຍດ,ຄວາມຮັບຜິດຊອບ, ການຕັດສິນບັນຫາ ແລະ ໂອກາດໃນການພັດທະນາໃນທຸກຂັ້ນເຂດວຽກງານຂອງສັງຄົມ ແລະ ຊີວິດຄອບຄົວ.</p>
<p>Equity Creating fair and just opportunities</p>	<p>Justice Creating equal opportunities</p>
<p>ຄວາມເທົ່າທຽມລະຫວ່າງຍິງ-ຊາຍ:</p> <p>ໝາຍເຖິງ ຄວາມຍຸຕິທຳໃນການປະຕິບັດຕໍ່ແມ່ຍິງ ແລະ ຜູ້ຊາຍ, ອີງຕາມຄວາມຕ້ອງການຂອງເຂົາເຈົ້າ. ຄວາມເທົ່າທຽມກັນລະຫວ່າງຍິງ-ຊາຍ ອາດລວມເຖິງການປະຕິບັດທີ່ເທົ່າທຽມກັນ ຫຼື ແຕກຕ່າງກັນຕໍ່ຍິງ-ຊາຍ ເພື່ອໃຫ້ເກີດຄວາມເທົ່າທຽມກັນໃນດ້ານສິດຜົນປະໂຫຍດ, ພັນທະ ແລະ ໂອກາດ ຂອງແມ່ຍິງ ແລະ ຜູ້ຊາຍ.</p>	<p>ຄວາມຍຸຕິທຳລະຫວ່າງຍິງ-ຊາຍ:</p> <p>ໝາຍເຖິງ ການແກ້ໄຂລະບົບເພື່ອສ້າງເງື່ອນໄຂໃນການເຂົ້າເຖິງສິດ ແລະ ໂອກາດໃນການພັດທະນາທັງຍິງ-ຊາຍ ເຊິ່ງບໍ່ແມ່ນການໄປສົ່ງເສີມຝ່າຍໂດຍຜິດພາດໃຫ້ມີຄວາມເທົ່າທຽມກັນ ແຕ່ເປັນການແກ້ໄຂທີ່ບັນຫາ ແລະ ກຳຈັດຫຼາກໆຢ່າງທີ່ຈະກໍ່ໃຫ້ເກີດຄວາມບໍ່ສະເໝີພາບ ຫຼື ຄວາມບໍ່ເທົ່າທຽມກັນໃຫ້ໝົດໄປ.</p>



IEC Material explaining gender equality

OUTCOME 2

The National Assembly (NA), through the Women Parliamentarians Caucus (WPC) and Provincial People's Assemblies (PPAs) are strengthened to improve oversight of government institutions in legislative, programmatic and process reforms to enhance women's rights and gender equality.

WHO

(...) the topics that they had trained all related with their duties, roles and responsibilities. It also aligned with their organization's implementation plan. This is because the key mandates of PPA are to be the representatives of the Lao people who are responsible for protecting the rights of people. Particularly, as the members of WPC, their crucial mandates are to protect the rights of women and children. Therefore, it was very important for them to be familiar with the CEDAW convention (...).

Final Evaluation Report

ACTORS (Duty Bearers)

- National Assembly (NA), Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), and Provincial People's Assemblies (PPAs).
- Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women (LNCAW); and the Lao Women's Union (LWU)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Baseline

In complement to a needs assessment of the NA conducted by the UNDP National Assembly Strategic Support Project (NASSP), Women's Voices conducted a comprehensive capacity needs assessment at the outset of the project, in Lao language. The survey was anonymous except for identifying the type of institution and location the respondent was from of e.g. government or NPA, Vientiane or Province based. Based on the results, we can conclude there was a strong degree self reflection and therefore openness. This also implies a genuine interest in the topic and the opportunity to know and do more as actors and duty bearers. Some key results, included:

- In general, basic CEDAW knowledge was poor
- Insufficient knowledge about CEDAW and related National legal framework and regional ASEAN human rights framework.
- Limited understanding on roles and responsibilities of different institutions in Lao PDR including government, civil society and UN among others.

- Limited capacity and resources to fulfill their mandates in respect to CEDAW commitments.

Additionally, some differences could be noted between the Vientiane based respondents and the provincial based respondents, in degree of awareness, knowledge, skills, confidence, and capacity, considering also that the PPAs were still a relatively new entity.

WHAT, WHY AND HOW

ATTITUDES, SKILLS, WILL, INTERESTS and RESOURCES

Key results

- 15 NA members and over 240 national level LWU, MoJ and MoFA representatives have increased knowledge and capacity to fulfill their mandates in relation to gender equality, women's rights and CEDAW
- 25 WPC members and over 200 government staff including LWU are able to better carry out their oversight mandates.
- 78 PPA members in target areas are more equipped to organize public hearings and address their constituents' concerns and complaints, in particular from women.

Most significant change(s)

- An MoU between the NA, government (LYU) and the two NPAs, clarified and officially confirmed delegation of roles and responsibilities, as well coordination across levels between government, parliament and civil society actors e.g. NA /PPAs and LWU focus on provincial and district levels while NPAs focus on village level.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- Carrying out an anonymous capacity needs assessment encouraged more objective self assessing and therefore more relevant capacity development planning and execution from the outset of the project.
- A kick off CEDAW orientation workshop involving NA, PPA, LNCAW, LWU and NPAs at the outset of the project established a foundation of trust, confidence and will to cooperate and follow up with action learning and 'on the job' approaches.
- Capacity development which strengthens the ability of a stakeholder to fulfill his/her mandate increases confidence and therefore will and motivation to carry out ones mandate, and to do so more efficiently and effectively. In such way, the project is not an imposition or add on, or even a threat, but rather a supportive instrument.

- Leveraging respective mandates and complementary resources, contributed to improved oversight and promotion of the protection of women's rights, gender equality and access to justice in Lao society. In turn, constituents were strengthened in their capacities and self-confidence to voice their concerns and expectations on the issues related to their legitimate rights as afforded by national legislation and international conventions like CEDAW which the government of Lao PDR is a state party to. Thus, the Action contributed to improve the status of fundamental human rights and the implementation of the Rule of Law in Lao PDR at national, provincial, district and village levels.

WHERE

SPACES

Key results

- Village level public hearings, actively involving over 2450 villagers (of which 50% were women) were organized by the PPAs in the targeted communities, contributing to strengthened trust and relations, a more reliable interaction and communication channel between the PPAs and their constituents.
- National level discussion platform involving over 1100 participants of which over 50% were women staff from the NA/PPAs, LNCAW, LWU, MoFA and MoJ increased information and knowledge sharing as well coordination among them on the implementation of laws and CEDAW, as well addressing challenges and identifying opportunities in fulfilling respective and joint mandates/ obligations.
- The LNCAW is better equipped to draft the upcoming CEDAW report, and is doing so in pro-active and official cooperation with the two NPAs, ADWLE and GDA.

Most significant change(s)

- Due to more safe and inclusive spaces for interaction between PPAs with communities, and among duty bearers at district, provincial and national levels, awareness of people's and women's real issues and responsiveness to address these issues from the grassroots to the highest level oversight body, has significantly improved quantifiably and qualitatively.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- Invited spaces facilitated by duty bearers which served to raise awareness and knowledge about different laws, women's rights and gender equality resulted in benefits which reached past the direct participants themselves, who then transferred and in many cases applied their knowledge not only within their own family spaces but also other village or productive group spaces they were a part of. This led to communities applying their learning about laws and gender equality to the improvement of livelihoods and their community's development also.
- Spaces which are normally closed even between different hierarchal levels of duty bearers, can be re-shaped jointly by those same duty bearers when there is more self confidence and mutual confidence, in one's own ability to perform one's mandate and to support and/or benefit from someone else's improved ability to perform his/her mandate in complement.
- Make use of existing spaces and through processes which build confidence, trust and shared purpose, spaces can and are progressively expanded to become more invited spaces not just between state and non state actors, but also across hierachal lines.



An outreach and consultation activity being carried out by a PPA member at community level



An outreach and awareness activity about women's rights and other laws conducted by a Lao Women's Union Representative with community members.

OUTCOME 3

Regular dialogue platforms are established between CSOs and communities and the National (NA), Provincial People's Assemblies (PPAs), local government institutions, to improve oversight and informed promotion and protection of women's rights, gender equality and access to justice

WHO

(...) The Lao CSOs now have a more working partnership with the Government. For example ADWLE and GDA supported the LNCAW and WMC to conduct a number of CEDAW workshops. Working trust has been built between the Lao Government and these Lao CSOs (...).

Final Evaluation Report

ACTORS

Duty bearers and rights holders

Baseline

- Little or no implementing, monitoring or oversight capacities, tools and resources.
- Little or no cooperation or coordination between duty bearers across institutions and hierarchal levels and in turn with CSOs/NPAs.
- Little or no involvement of different duty bearers and CSO/NPAs in CEDAW related data collection, policy dialogue or reporting processes.

WHAT, WHY AND HOW

ATTITUDES, SKILLS, WILL, INTERESTS and RESOURCES

Key results

- Several training manuals and IEC information materials produced and used, namely a CEDAW training manual for different stakeholders including Government line ministries and provincial staff. As a result, the knowledge on gender equality and women's human rights was improved among the trainees.
- At least 29 recommendations were submitted in the 2019 national CEDAW report with inputs from GDA and ADWLE. In addition, the Directors of both NPAs stated that this was the first time NPAs contributed strong recommendations which were acknowledged by the National Assembly and have been recommended for inclusion in the 10th CEDAW report due for submission to the CEDAW Committee in 2023.

- Subsequently, these two NPAs were invited by the National Assembly to participate in its intersession.
- National level policy dialogue platform established, during which evidence based case studies were discussed produced by ADWLE/GDA focusing on i. women's leadership; ii. human trafficking; iii. violence against women; iv. single mothers/parents; v. informal sector and vi. Early marriage
- Three Provincial Level dialogue platforms served as regular spaces for peer led mentoring, knowledge and capacity development using concrete cases from the field. These platforms also improved coaching and oversight between NA senior members and PPA members.
- VMCs now benefit from strengthened links to Department of Justice, PPA and LWU representatives, who can readily provide guidance and information. This has helped to improve the effectiveness and profile of VMCs.

Most significant change(s)

- There are regular dialogue platforms and spaces at all levels which are more open, invited and inclusive, for concerned duty bearers, NPAs and rights holders to exchange and continue fostering shared objectives and coordinated actions according to their roles, responsibilities and mandates related to women's rights and gender equality.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- A project in its convening role and capacity to tap into resources (human, physical, financial, in kind etc.), can bridge important spacial, hierarchal, and resource gaps which act as a barrier to interaction and cooperation between actors, which in the end prove to be more circumstantial than fundamental.
- In the latter case, system actors, be they duty bearers, NPAs and rights holders become more willing and ready to contribute their own resources and budgets to move forward as the burden, risk and responsibility are more shared and as a result diminished.
- The diversity among different stakeholders should inform the type of training, methodology, resources and communications used, considering also role, responsibility, hierarchy and education levels.
- Cultural and traditional norms and ideologies need to be factored into behavioural change dependent actions, and in turn enough time, as such processes require trust and confidence building at individual, societal and institutional levels, among others.

Cross-cutting

Actors

Academia and media

The Institute for Legislative Studies (ILS) and the National University of Laos (NUoL)

Key results

- The NA's Institute for Legislative Studies (ILS) enhanced its repository of handbooks, legal resources and data, contributing to the institutes' profile and capacity development as well relevance as an information and training provider to NA and PPA members among others.
- The National University of Lao PDR (NUoL) Faculty of Law and Political Sciences upgraded its research and study capacities and programs in the more specialized aspects of women's rights, gender equality according to international law and conventions, like CEDAW.
- Through media communications such as newspapers, TV and radio programs organised by the LWU, the project reached approximately 500,000 indirect beneficiaries within the project lifetime on topics related to women's rights and gender equality.

Most significant change(s)

- The two highest academic legislative institutes in Lao PDR are able to produce and verify in a coordinated and complementary manner, evidenced based data for more timely and reliable reporting on statistics and issues affecting Lao women and girls according to both national and international law commitments, including CEDAW.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- At a global level, and in Lao PDR, availability of reliable and up to date gender data continues to be challenged by gaps, often linked to lack of coordination, and a disconnect between the relevant research, executive, legislative, implementing and oversight institutions. Therefore actively involving whilst linking these academic institutions is essential for informed policy dialogue, improved law making and more access to justice among others, for women and girls, to their benefit and that of their communities, and society at large in Lao PDR.
- In Lao PDR, where media is state owned, resourcing the LWU to leverage its official mandate and diffuse information on a range of critical gender topics and rights issues, allowed for a more successful and expansive outreach, far beyond the three provinces.

Sustainability

Systems

Institutions and frameworks

Key results

- The key institutions with direct or relevant mandates related to women's rights, gender equality and CEDAW were actively involved throughout the project cycle management, from national to village level, strengthening implementation and mutual accountability vertically and horizontally.
- VMCs produced their own anti-GBV action plans
- Training modules and related resources covering CEDAW, GBV, gender equality and women's/ girls' rights among others exist and can support further work and reporting on these issues and more.
- Preparations for the Lao CEDAW report due in 2023 are underway, involving officially Lao NPAs.

Most significant change(s)

- Parliamentary, government and civil society institutions have a clear and successful cooperation framework established, which can be replicated across the country with same and more NPAs. This replication was already initialized with several of the manuals used in the context of other projects and by other NPAs.

Key lessons learned / good practices

- Involving duty bearers and institutions with relevant mandates is essential.
- As confidence and trust are built, so is ownership, and therefore the will and commitment within and between institutions to the quality and success their respective and joint work.
- Working with existing structures and where a certain degree of trust and familiarity exists which can be built on is important.
- While the focus was women's rights and gender equality, this enabled for other rights and legal issues to be addressed, with a broader communal and societal benefit.
- Cooperation with complementary programs/projects contributes to better resource management, better results and less dependency on the action.

'(...) LWU and Department of Justice at district and provincial level, reported that they have adequate technical capacity and confidence to continue conducting trainings for the VMCs and villagers (...).'

Final Evaluation Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Onboarding program for NA secretariat and department staff via ILS (if not covered by other NA support programs)
- Language and digital training for NA, secretariat and department staff via ILS (if not covered by other NA support programs)
- Leverage committees to expand on rights topics e.g. merging of WPC and CSCA can be a challenge but does not change that there will be individuals who participated in and benefitted from Women's Voices project.
- Follow up CEDAW reporting 2023 process, continue to strengthen gender sensitive data collection, re-search, analyses and reporting capacities among duty bearers and NPAs.
- Follow up and consider actions related to the research and case study topics covered: Stereotypes and harmful practices, VAW, human trafficking, forced/fraudulent marriage, unsafe abortions, informal employment and labor/economic rights.
- Link with or integrate more Paralegal and Legal Aid clinics, safe houses, health clinics (public, private and CS supported)
- Link with or integrate more involvement of village security, police and other 'law enforcement' agencies including gender and rights training for these.
- Leverage capacitated VMCs with increased awareness and knowledge; follow up their GBV action plans and self initiated peer to peer learning and exchange.
- Link with the Lao Youth Union (LYU) e.g. sensitizing next generation together with NuOL
- Consider potential to integrate civic engagement, rights and digital media and social platforms e.g. promotion of women, girls' rights and gender equality, prevention and addressing of online exposure to risks: harassment, violence, trafficking etc. Cross reference with other online platforms e.g. school/academic institution websites or student portals, employment/job search platforms, police helpline/information portals etc.
- Consider integrating women's economic empowerment (WEE) and financial inclusion. Can be done under the GBV umbrella e.g. [economic violence against women](#); target financial and other private sector institution CSR to contribute to emergency and start up funds for women/ youth affected by violence.
- Consider integrating more women's and youth leadership (confidence, voice, representation, civi engagement and participation approaches (leverage LWU, LYU, women members of PPAs, VMCs or other committees etc.)
- Expand availability of training modules and information resources in priority ethnic languages
- Adapt, replicate and scale within same provinces and/ or to new; including via and with more NPAs



Training of Trainers (ToT) on gender equality, village mediation methodology and procedures for VMC members on 7-9 July 2020 in Paek district, Xiengkhouang Province. The participants included provincial judicial officials, provincial LWU, district judicial officials, district LWU, cabinet officials and VMC from 6 target villages, for a total 46 people of which 26 were women.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

2. ຫຼັກການຄົ້ນຄວ້າ (Steps of Research Model)

- ຄຳນຳການຄົ້ນຄວ້າ**
1. ຫຼັກ (Topic) ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຕາມ ຕາມ ຕາມ
 2. ຈຸດປະສົງ (Objective)
 - ✓ ສືບສອບ ຫຼື ສືບສອບ ຫຼື ສືບສອບ ຫຼື ສືບສອບ
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 3. ວິທີ (Methodology) ວິທີ ຫຼື ວິທີ ຫຼື ວິທີ ຫຼື ວິທີ
 4. ວິທີຄົ້ນຄວ້າ (Data source) ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ
 5. ສູນຄວາມ (Sampling) ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ
 6. ຕາມ (Sampling)
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 7. ຕາມ (Main questions)
 - 1) ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ
 - 2) ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ
 - 3) ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ ຫຼື ຕາມ



ກິດຈະກຳ: ຈັດກຸ່ມ
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HELVETAS Social Reserach
Training Manual (Lao Language)

AWDLE Capacity
Assessment Report:
CEDAW Implementation
in Lao PDR
(Lao/ English languages)

GDA Village Leadership Training
Manual (Lao Language)

GDA VAW Handbook
Gender ToT
(Lao Language)

MORE INFORMATION

- <https://www.helvetas.org/en/laos>
- <http://adwlelaos.org/>
- <https://gdalaos.org/>
- <http://www.na.gov.la/index.php?lang=en>
- <https://www.moj.gov.la/>
- <http://laowomenunion.org.la/>
- <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/laos>
- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/asiaregion/pages/laindex.aspx>

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