

**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS  
DEMOCRACY FUND**

**Acknowledgements**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### (i) Background

The project ran from 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2014, with a total grant of USD 200,000. It was designed by the Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC), and was implemented in six provinces (Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, Sayaboury, Xiengkhouang, Oudomxay and Khammouane) of Lao PDR. It was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNR) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). The target population consisted of 30 youth groups, i.e. 60 youth leaders and 960 youth members. As defined in the Project Document, the overall objective was to provide capacity building in democratic and participatory processes regarding the management and use of natural resources, using information and communication technology (ICT). Accordingly, PADETC and MNR/MAFF have identified the following key objectives:

- f* Capacity of youth groups developed in analytical and media advocacy skills; using ICT in the field of bio-diversity preservation and land management issues;
- f* Participation of youth in sustainable development policy-making realized at provincial, district and village level, in particular with regards to bio-diversity

and biodiversity knowledge in local community development processes.

The grantee reserved the largest proportion of the budget (50%) for baseline surveys, meetings, and training enabling youth group leaders and teachers to transfer analytical and advocacy skills, bringing the average unit cost per trainee to approximately USD 75. Spending for advocacy and outreach (6%) was moderate, but the average production price of USD 10 per unit (e.g. comics and text books) is surprisingly high. These high unit prices, and the observation that PADETC appeared completely unaware of its weak communication

Due a lack of foresight the grantee also missed the opportunity to better address the  
SDU WLF L S D W L Q t e r m / E q u i p m e n t N e e d s O R Q J

*f* Therefore, continued and improved outreach will be needed to ensure  
W K H \ R X W K \ V V X V W D L Q n H i g h q u a l i t y R e e f f i c i e n c y A p p r o p r i a t e n e s s a n d  
ownership of local resources management.

(iv) Recommendations

*f* In accordance with our observations on effectiveness and impact,  
we

## II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

### i. The project and evaluation objectives

7 K L V U H S R U W F R Q W D L Q V W K H H Y D Y O U T H A G E O F D E M O C R A T I C S U R M H F W  
Change through Knowledge and Information Acquisition and Exchange in Laos 7 K H S U R M H F W  
ran from 1 April 2012 ±30 June 2014 (including a three-month extension), with a total grant  
of USD 200,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 20,000 for monitoring and evaluation).

The project was designed by the Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC), and was implemented in six provinces (Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, Sayaboury, Xiengkhouang, Oudomxay and Khammouane). It was implemented in partnership with the Physical and Arts Education Department of th

(iii) Development context

6 LQFH WKH HVWDEOLVKPHQW RI WKH /DPR in 1975, during HPRFUDWL the FRXQWdth of development from a post-colonial and post-war country proved challenging, especially in the Lao context where its small population of diverse ethnic and cultural groups tended to live in small rural agriculturally self-subsistent and socially self-reliant communities. With its limited management and financial c D S D F L W L H V WKH FRXQW government faced difficulties to improve basic social service delivery systems, develop







## IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### (i) Relevance

#### Baseline Situation

The six provinces targeted by the project (cf. map below)<sup>7</sup> represent those in which the grantee over the past years had been most successful in establishing cooperation with youth, educators and community leaders. Collaboration between PADETC and the Ministry of Education in these provinces had been continuous since 2000. At the outset of the project, provisions of the government's seventh Social Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) paved the way for adaptation of the management of natural resources to specific local needs, and to steer their use in a self-responsible and participatory manner. The grantee identified this as a specific opportunity for involving the youth, in order to improve the efficiency, appropriateness and ownership of local resources management - both among the citizens living and the

the promotion of locally sustainable and bio-diversity preservation practices.

The project response

Within the framework of the present project, evaluators found various examples of relevant project design, which addressed the baseline aspects:

#### 1. Capacity Development

This component comprised of a package of training activities, essentially designed to turn youth group leaders into multipliers facilitating the dissemination of information and the transfer of skills to the S U R Minda beneficiaries, the youth group members.

With this objective in mind, the purpose of leadership, rights-

which were systematically presented in an easy to follow structure describing (a) objective, (b) local context (including location, community, socio-economic characteristics, and findings concerning environment, culture and quality of life), (c) mapping (geography, land use identification, seasonal calendar, development potential), and





as Local Wisdom DVD, and disseminated via Lao TV. The title of the  
HYDOXDWRILHOGY

The annual project events finally were an opportunity for selected youth participants to meet, exchange and learn from each other, mostly by presenting and showcasing their tangible outputs (field practicum presentations; comic and text book competition awards). Animated teachers, community members, and provincial and district authority representatives. Acknowledging that the incorporation of bio-diversity and indigenous knowledge learning effectively leads to the identification of solutions for pressing local issues, participants agreed that continued involvement of the youth in this process would be of benefit to improved local community development.

(iii) Efficiency <sup>9</sup>

When the AEPF and when the leader went missing in timely fashion with UNDEF deteriorated significantly. What is regrettable is, that the



investment, in particular when considering the potential long-term benefits of applied biodiversity preservation and land management knowledge.

Spending about USD 47,000 for salaries of professional (28.4% for a project coordinator, a field researcher, and two field staff) and administrative (2.2% for assistance in administration and finance) staff, the J U D Q W r h h a j staff costs amounted to more than 30% of the total budget. This is acceptable, given that D Q D G G L W L R Q D O U H V R X U F H S H U V R Q V youth development and action research team were provided free of charge. With 4%, the J U D Q W i s c e l l a n e o u s expenses to run and administrate the project were low. The gr D Q W H % a n o c a t i o n for project equipment was also insignificant (existing computer hardware was used, with the exception of the purchase of two laptops and two high resolution cameras).

It is important to note that, with the exception of salaries (USD 2,227 overspent for professional staff), savings were made along all budget items. Most significantly, the merger of certain training activities generated reduced costs of USD 15,709 in the meetings and trainings budget category. Overall

involvement in action research, field practicum, as well as the production of comic/text books and short movies) but actual reporting did not reach the target figure of 768 end-beneficiaries.

- x Instead of the targeted 60% of youth who participated in the project, only 33% (315 beneficiaries) are reported to have networked electronically in order to exchange ideas and share knowledge on bio-diversity and land management.

#### Policy Formulation

- x Compared to the targeted 80% of youth who participated in the project, only 48% (376 end-beneficiaries) have reportedly developed the capability and remain interested to use their new analytical, media and ICT skills for the purpose of active participation in local land management decision making processes 7 K L V I L Q G L Q J L V E D F N H G X S E \ W K assessment that the environment for youth action in favour of bio-diversity promotion has been less enabling than assumed at the time of signature of the UNDEF project document.

- x Instead of the targeted 90 youngsters, 198 youth group activists (60 youth leaders and 138 youth group members) have reportedly completed a field practicum in one village in each of the six provinces. Remarkably, the local and provincial authorities concerned have considered these inputs, that contain numerous useful suggestions of which almost all relate to natural resources management, in the village development planning process.

#### Curriculum Development & Awareness Raising

- x Both bio-diversity and indigenous knowledge topics (local customs and traditions) have made their way into the education curriculum of 17 primary schools in all 6

**Key issue addressed: Lao youth had limited opportunity to exchange about biodiversity and land management issues, and lacked the necessary research and communication capacities to engage in village development planning processes**

Phanmaly Sysomphone, who teaches at Hinboun Tai Secondary school (Hinboun district, Khammoune province) , was invited to the training in her capacity as voluntary leader of several youth groups. Working on the baseline surveys and using Google GIS data to determine the village perimeter and zones of the village provided her with new technical skills and local insights. Having REWDLQHG JXLGDQFH WR OHDG KHU \RXWK JURXS PHPEHUV proved interesting and particularly useful for the stu GHQWV DQG WKH ORFDO FR farmers we learned about the issue of low rice productivity during the dry season, caused by snails which destroy rice seedlings. PADETC informed us about organic fertilizers to help to biologically control the VQDLOV ^ \$ \RXWK JURXS DVVLVWHG D SLORW H[HUFL RQ WKH WHDFKHU ¶V RZQ ULFH SORWV 7KH EHQHILWV RI WK all villagers have adopted the organic approach on their rice fields. Unorganised waste disposal was an issue identified by another of her youth groups. Following a meeting with the youngsters, the village authority agreed to construct a designated waste disposal facility. Group members also felt that for future gene UDWLRQV WKH SUHVHUYDWLRQ RI ILVK LQ WKH QH

**Key issue addressed: Lao teachers lacked methodological skills and insight into local customs and traditions to integrate indigenous knowledge into the primary school curriculum**

Phimpha Xayakosy, who teaches third, fourth and fifth year graders at Samket primary school (Sikhhot district, Vientiane Capital), highlights that she was unclear how to work with indigenous knowledge prior to her participation in the training. Proudly presenting to evaluators a copy of the three curricula she conceived (see image above), she has submitted these drafts for grades 3 to 5, which I prepared with the help of the

**(v) Sustainability**

Evaluators came across issues that risk undermining the sustainability of the project's results. While the project's achievements are not to be disputed, additional efforts will be therefore required, in order to ensure the sustainability of the present achievements:

a. Continuation and expansion of environmental and indigenous knowledge promotion

Although central- and provincial-level staff members of the Ministry of Education emphasized the development of the youth, they were also quick to point out to evaluators that high staff mobility among teachers was posing a threat to this achievement in the long-term. Teachers themselves also mentioned the risk of loss of knowledgeable staff capacity, as they regularly move on to new positions. In their discussions with evaluators both groups of interview partners therefore argued that an extension of the J U D Q W H H ¶ to all Teaching Staff of the previously targeted primary and secondary schools would be needed to ensure continued youth engagement and the promotion of biodiversity and indigenous knowledge. 2 S H Q O \ H [ S U H V V L Q J W K H L U D S S U H F L D W L R Q I R Ministry ( 7 & ¶ V D F K representatives in addition to the above made a strong recommendation for the grantee ¶ V project to be rolled out to schools located in areas previously not covered by the project (N.B.: the grantee has been working with schools across the country ¶ 17 provinces since 1996, establishing so far a total of at least 55 youth groups). At the time of this report PADETC and its partner were, however, neither prepared to present their strategy for a possible future expansion, nor had they conducted a donor screening for matching their financing needs.

b. Coverage of material needs: equipment and subsistence

Throughout all meetings and at the school locations visited, evaluators found themselves confronted with teachers who expressed future material needs. They claimed that lack of continued funding prevented them from offering practical exercises (e.g.

All of the above issues indicate a lack of foresight both on the part of the grantee and its implementation partner. The participating equipment (to continue electronically capturing, communicating and exchanging the results) is a critical sustainability issue, which evaluators believe could have been solved prior to project completion. If PADETC would have timely anticipated that they would achieve 14.3% in project budget savings (USD 25,773), they could have tried to suggest to UNDEF an adjusted spending of funds for improved sustainability purposes (e.g. for the purchase of a laptop and a digital camera for each of the 30 participating schools).

\* The funding for basic consumables is threatening indigenous knowledge education at primary schools and creative writing and drawing activities both at primary and secondary schools. Taking into account that many of these actions also generate marketable products (e.g. rice baskets, food products and publications), it also surprises that school personnel rarely felt encouraged to sell them, thus generating income to cover future financial needs.

#### (vi) UNDEF Value Added

According to the grantee, PADETC identified the United Nations Democracy Fund as a logical partner due to its objective to foster democratic governance, and because youth represents one of its key focus areas. Before, UNDEF for us was the preferred partner to pilot a new approach, namely the involvement of the same youth in local and environmental governance and the development of the rural areas.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

i. **7KH JUDQWLQJ** Analysis of the baseline situation (weak implementation of government provisions encouraging self-responsible and participatory management of natural resources) was confirmed by surveys among secondary school youth group volunteers and primary school teachers. Accordingly, the project was designed (1) to assist young people with the documentation of local sustainable and bio-diversity preservation practices, and (2) to incorporate these in the education system. While the grantee foresaw to train secondary teachers in the transfer of analytical and media advocacy skills to their youth group members, training for primary school teachers aimed to provide guidance in the collection of relevant local heritage and bio-diversity preservation knowledge for integration into the education curriculum. It is our view that **the project represented a relevant effort** to involve youth in democratic and participatory processes regarding the management and use of natural resources. Our findings show that (a) the capacity development component was programmed WR HQKDQFH WKH \RXWK OHDGHU capacity to support rights-based development knowledge as well as the transfer of leadership and multimedia skills; and that (b) the policy formulation component assisted the identification of bio-diversity issues and general development challenges, in order to support the \RXWK OHDGHU preparation of suggestions how to mitigate potential negative effects. The SURMHLQ development component finally was meant to gather locally relevant cultural, societal and environmental details appropriate to replace specific parts of generic educational information in the national curriculum for primary schools.

ii. Although the project had to cope with delays, evaluators noted that WKH JUDQWLQJ implementation efforts





## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

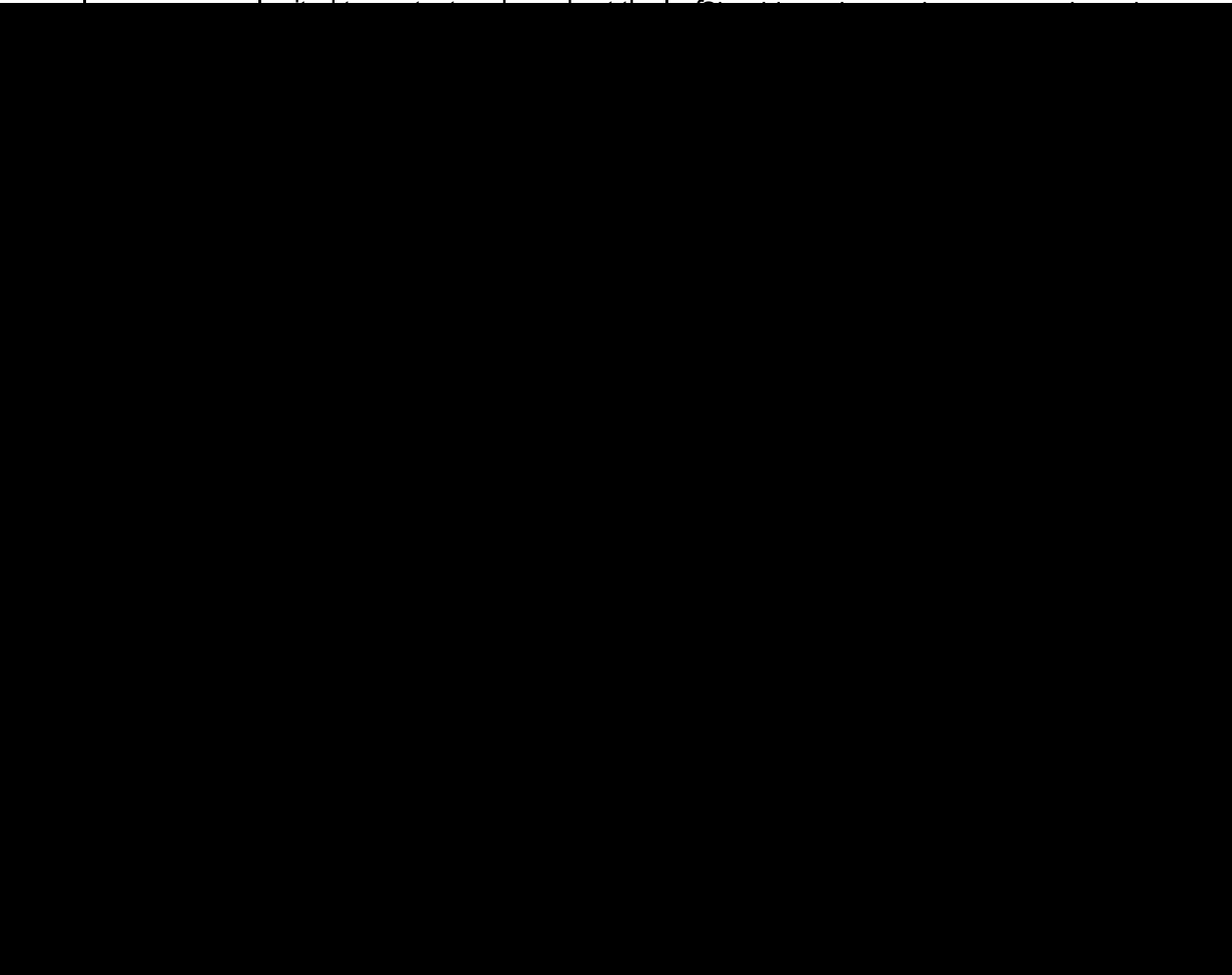
To strengthen the outcome and similar projects in the future, evaluators recommend to UNDEF and project grantees:

i. The fact that the approach and methodology of PADETC included the conduct of baseline research and the formulation of outcome indicators is highly commendable, as this enhanced the SURMILEVA/ and significantly facilitated the assessment of effectiveness and impact. Evaluators, however,



**IX. ANNEXES**  
**ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS** tQq2

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented,	<p><i>f</i>Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</p>



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 H S U R M H F W '  
 s envisaged by the  
 progress towards

## ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

### UNDEF:

- f* Final Narrative Report
- f* Mid-Term Report
- f* Project Document
- f* Milestone Verification Reports
- f* Financial Utilization Report
- f* 3 URMHFW 2 IILFHU 1 V (YDOXDWLRQ 1 RWH

### PADETC:

- f* Field Practicum Report, Chomphet High School, Khoun district, Xiengkhouang province (14 to 17/10/2013)
- f* Primary School Curricula (grades 3, 4, and 5), Syphom Primary School, Khoun district, Xiengkhouang province (2013, 2014)
- f* Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge Comics (8 booklets, awarded 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes as part of a project competition)
- f* Local Wisdom ± Youth and Lessons Learnt from Communities (booklet containing DVD with 30 video spots and printed biodiversity and indigenous knowledge anecdotes)

### Government sources:

- f* Decree of Associations, Decree Number 115/PM (approved by former Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh, April 29th, 2009); for the text of decree, see [http://www.iccsi.org/pubs/Lao\\_PDR\\_Decree\\_Law\\_On\\_Associations.pdf](http://www.iccsi.org/pubs/Lao_PDR_Decree_Law_On_Associations.pdf)
- f* Handbook of Association, as provided by the Civil Society Division, by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), which is assigned to provide the registration of CSOs in Laos
- f* 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015), [http://www.unpei.org/sites/default/files/e\\_library\\_documents/7th\\_National\\_Socio-Economic\\_Development\\_Plan\\_Lao\\_PDR.pdf](http://www.unpei.org/sites/default/files/e_library_documents/7th_National_Socio-Economic_Development_Plan_Lao_PDR.pdf)

### Other sources:

- f* 37KH (FRQRPLFV RI 7UDQVLWLRQ LQ /DRV IURP 0RIL 15 2015) OLVP WR \$6 (\$600,000) by Yves Bourdet (Cheltenham, UK, Edward Elgar, 2000)
- f* 3, QWHUQDWLRQDO SRYHUW\ DQG ; Contributors by Stephen Ellis and Ami Probandt, Andrew White, and Yiwen Mao (2010)

## ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

27 October 2014	
PADETC Office, Vientiane	
Gran W H H ¶ V 3 U R M	Deputy Director and Programme Manager, PADETC
Kolaka Bouanedaohueang	Deputy Director and Programme Manager, PADETC
Houmphanh Khammavong	National Project Coordinator, Head of Division of Physical and Arts Education, Ministry of Education and Sports
Bouavanh Sidala	Technical Expert, Education Development Unit, PADETC
Vathana Phunkham	Head of Research Unit, PADETC
Bouachanh Thanouvong	Technical Expert, Education Development Unit, PADETC
Beneficiary Interviews: Vientiane Capital and Khammouane Province (at PADETC Office, Vientiane)	
Phanmaly Sysomphone	Teacher / Youth Leader, Hinhboun Tai Secondary School, Khammouane Province
Phimpha Xayakosy	Teacher / Youth Leader, Samket Primary School, Vientiane Capital
Thongmee Insisiengmay	Teacher / Youth Leader, Nongbuek Lower Secondary School, Vientiane Capital
Somephone Keoune	Head of Unit, Physical and Arts Education, Vientiane Capital Department of Education and Sports
28 October 2014	
Beneficiary Interviews: Xiengkhouang Province	
Thongphiew Sipunya	Deputy director, Provincial Department of Education and Sports, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
Vilaysinh Oudomsouk	Deputy Head of Unit of Physical and Arts Education, Provincial Department of Education and Sports, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
Khaan Sysavanh	Technician, Information Unit, Provincial Department of Education and Sports, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
Soudsady Sysophone	Teacher / Youth Leader, Phonsavan Secondary School, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
Sengsomboune Lorbiayao	Pupil / Youth Group Member, Phonsavan Secondary School, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
Boudsady Xaypunya	Pupil / Youth Group Member, Phonsavan Secondary School, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
Sounedueane Sinhsamay	Province Project Coordinator, Head of Unit of Physical and Arts Education, Provincial Department of Education and Sports, Paek District, Xiengkhouang Province
29 October 2014	
Beneficiary Interviews: Sayaboury Province (conducted at Xiengkhouang Province)	
Thongphanh Chanthavong	



