



Technical Assistance Consultant's Report

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Regional: Support for ADB-Civil Society Organization – Developing Member Country in Southeast Asia Cooperation
(Financed by the Technical Assistance Special Funds)

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For Asian Development Bank

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Asian Development Bank

Support for ADB-Civil Society Cooperation in Lao PDR

Final Report

October 2014

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. There is general recognition by both the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and many of its stakeholders in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) that strategic engagement with civil society represents an opportunity to increase development effectiveness, drive more innovative and efficient projects, and manage risks. However, the social and political climate in Lao PDR requires that careful consideration is given to any strategy to ensure that engagement aligns with the existing capacities and missions of all stakeholders and is conducive to increased long-term transparent collaboration among the government of Lao PDR, ADB and civil society players.

2. The following report outlines specific actions the ADB Lao PDR Resident Mission (LRM) may take to support a scalable, long term constructive approach. Overarching the recommendations outlined below is a recommendation that ADB reframe its civil society engagement efforts within existing governance initiatives such as the Governance and Anticorruption Action Plan¹ and the ADB Policy on Working with NGOs². Because of its sensitivity, the civil society engagement discussion often serves as a distraction to this work that ADB is already supporting and which provides an entryway to experiment with new approaches to civil society engagement. By reframing ADB-CSO collaboration efforts within ADB and Government of Lao PDR policy frameworks, anxiety and doubt about the risks of civil society collaboration can be reduced and the rewards better understood. A common understanding among all stakeholders should be reasserted that the primary goal of collaboration is the delivery of effective, innovative and efficient projects that benefit the people of Lao PDR; advocacy and capacity development of civil society organizations (CSOs), while important, is better supported by other development partners.

3. The LRM has engaged with civil society in a range of contexts since its first collaboration in Lao PDR, although the depth and type of engagement has varied. While there are many opportunities to increase engagement, a focus on clear and transparent communication to address areas that are currently barriers to collaboration is necessary. For example:

- It is important to adapt common language related to civil society to the Lao context. For example, while the term CSOs is often used to refer to both international and national civil society groups, in Laos the Government and other stakeholders equate CSOs with national Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) and international CSOs are referred to as international nongovernment organizations (INGOS). It is important for ADB staff to make this important distinction in the Laos context.³
- Partnerships require mutuality, a recognition that both players are contributing to and benefitting from the relationship. Mutuality allows the potential for collaboration to be trusting, transparent and innovative. ADB has demonstrated a strong and constructive capacity to support mutuality in its government partners. In order to constructively

¹ ADB. 2005. Second Governance and Anticorruption Action Plan (GACAP II). Manila.

I. ² ADB. 2001. COOPERATION BETWEEN ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS. MANILA.

³ For the purpose of this paper and to reinforce generally accepted terms within the Lao context, the term Civil Society Organization (CSO) is used to refer to local CSOs. These include NPAs and other organizations and community groups based in the Lao PDR that are addressing social issues. International CSOs are referred to as INGOs.

engage with civil society, ADB staff and consultants will need to bring this same level of mutuality to its engagement with civil society stakeholders. It is a shift away from “informing” or “consulting” and towards dialogue.

- This shift will also require dedicated efforts to develop an ongoing, closed-loop communication style among key players. For example, after consultations, ADB staff and consultants may share with stakeholders how their feedback helped shape a project design. This reinforces mutual learning, transparency and trust.

4. **Recommendations for moving forward-**

- Shift the way stakeholders view each other, and ultimately, the way they work together, by developing a foundation of equity, transparency and mutual benefit.
- Civil society engagement is not the responsibility of a single individual or small group of individuals. Rather, opportunities for engagement happen throughout ADB, thus accountability for engagement must be reinforced throughout leadership, staff and consultants.
- Leverage participation in Lao civil society working groups to stay abreast of developments that may affect projects, identify opportunities to streamline development efforts and to assess partnership opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with key civil society partners to increase the effectiveness of ADB’s Governance and Capacity Development for Public Sector Management efforts.
- Build capacity of Lao PDR civil society stakeholders to understand and engage in ADB’s business processes.
- Build capacity of consultants and Project Managers to recognize the value of civil society engagement, and ways forward for effective collaboration.

5. **Study Purpose-** The purpose of this report is to outline how ADB, the Government of Lao PDR, INGOs and Lao CSOs can work together on ADB-financed initiatives moving forward with the intention of leveraging the best resources and expertise available, particularly at the grassroots level to deliver effective, innovative and efficient development projects. The report may also serve as a resource for future planning and a framework for civil society engagement.

6. **Methodology-** A series of one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions and a workshop were conducted to explore:

- a. What areas of civil society engagement already exist between ADB and civil society stakeholders?
- b. What opportunities currently exist for future engagement?
- c. What would engagement look like at its best given where Lao PDR’s civil society is in its development and given the business processes and development objectives of ADB?

Given the objectives of this assessment , a “strengths-based” approach, one that focuses on discovering what is already working and using what is working as a foundation to build toward the ideal future was chosen. Methodologies that support this strengths based approach including Appreciative Inquiry, and World Cafe were used in facilitating group discussions and in conducting interviews to increase participation and ensure that all voices had the opportunity to be heard. In total the feedback from 80 stakeholders from Lao CSOs, INGOs, and development agencies are included in this report.

7. **Overview of ADB and its Business Operations in the Lao PDR-** In keeping with the ADB’s global strategic vision, the operations in the Lao PDR are designed to help the government diversify

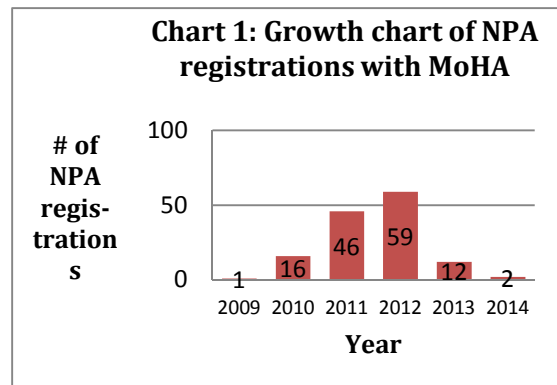
the economy in a sustainable inclusive manner through agriculture and natural resources, education, energy, urban development, and public sector management. The country operations center on the four priority sectors of agriculture and natural resources; education; energy; and water supply and sanitation, using the cross cutting concern of effective public sector management to promote inclusive and sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

II. BACKGROUND: CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE LAO PDR

8. In April of 2009 Decree 115 on Lao NPAs was signed by the Prime Minister, making it legal for the first time to organize and address social issues in the Lao PDR. Since then 136 Lao Non Profit Associations (NPAs) have been registered by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). In addition there are over 150 INGOs working in the country. Other civil society players are limited, but include chambers of commerce, professional associations and religious organizations.

9. Lao civil society is still in the early stages of development and the majority of NPAs lack both institutional capacity and financial resources. They are, thus, reliant on financial and capacity building support provided by the international Development Partners (DPs) community. Barriers related to governance, fundraising, and grant and financial management, along with complex application and management processes and English language requirements prevent most NPAs from winning multi-year institutional grants. Most NPAs are funded by small, project-oriented grants that do not generally adequately cover human resource and operational expenses. For some, this means relying heavily on a volunteer workforce with limited skills and experience and high turnover rates. Breaking away from this reinforcing cycle of limited funding and capacity is critical if local NPAs are to become legitimate partners in promoting more inclusive and equitable development that is required to address the complex and critical social issues facing Lao PDR.

10. Back to back events in December 2012 sent shockwaves through both the local civil society and international development communities. There was the disappearance of Mr. Sombath Somphone, founder of PADETC, one of Lao’s oldest and most well regarded CSOs; and the sudden expulsion from Lao PDR of Anne Sophie Gindroz, Country Director of the INGO Helvetas. Since then, official registration of NPAs has fallen markedly.⁴ Current revisions underway to Decree 115 will likely further restrict the role of NPAs to service delivery and tighter controls on funding and management may be implemented. The INGO Guidelines on Taxation is also under review and has raised concerns within the development community that the proposed changes will increase oversight and administration of funds.



11. Dialogue between the respective ministries and the civil society community to resolve areas of concerns is expected to continue, but the “endgame” is unclear. ADB needs to remain alert to the impact of these pending changes both on its project planning in country and on government-civil society partnerships.

⁴ Chart 1 – Source: Learning House for Development, Lao PDR 2014

12. Thus, the main issues which may influence increased engagement are:
- The highly restrictive and regulated oversight of government in civil society, particularly among Lao NPAs and CSOs;
 - Lack of trust, transparency and mutuality prevalent among some Government and civil society stakeholders and among ADB staff and consultants and civil society stakeholders;
 - Lack of awareness of and capacity to identify opportunities for collaboration between ADB and civil society and for civil society to then also work within ADB's business processes.

III. THE CASE FOR ENGAGEMENT

13. Civil society plays a much-needed role in the country. First, NPAs are able to reach out to address critical social issues affecting the most vulnerable populations in ways that other DPs, private institutions and the government cannot. Second, they can draw on networks of relationships and grassroots experience that in turn provide valuable insights into what works in the Lao context. Third, they can build and facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and coalitions in ways that international DPs and consultants rarely can.

14. For example, in a recent focus group discussion on ADB's Sustainable Transport Project, members of the Lao Tuk-Tuk Association and the Lao Taxi Drivers Association, two registered Lao NPAs shared feedback on the proposed sustainable Tuk Tuk design. The design was particularly appropriate for transporting a maximum of two adults, while Tuk Tuks in Vientiane are often employed when the number of people or product exceeds what can be put on a motorbike. The proposed design would not adequately accommodate the need to transport three or more adults and large quantities of products. Handicap International, an INGO, also contributed research on road safety and the unique needs of the disabled to access a public transport system, feedback which if incorporated into the final project design would extend the reach of the public transport system to better serve an underserved community in Vientiane.

15. ADB has been engaging with civil society stakeholders in other countries with success. There is recognition within the ADB that projects were innovative and ran more smoothly, local stakeholders, particularly those at the grassroots level, were better informed and more supportive of the projects where ADB successfully collaborated with CSOs and INGOs.⁵ For example, extensive consultations with local communities during the design of the Nam Theun 2 hydro power project⁶ likely reduced the number of concerns and safeguards issues with the project. Despite this, CSO and INGOs represent an underutilized resource in ADB's development projects; more meaningful engagement is needed if ADB is to fulfill its commitment outlined in its Strategy 2020 and Midterm Review of Strategy 2020.⁷ ADB has an opportunity to leverage its experience and success in developing strong collaborative partnerships with the government, and extending those successes to civil society. Engagement must be based on meaningful stakeholder consultations early in the project cycle so that the best ideas emerge and pave the way for cost-efficient and effective implementation. When motivated by mandates rather than revenue, CSOs represent a much-needed check for ensuring that development projects achieve their social value. This "social accountability

⁵ ADB. 2006. Special Evaluation Study on The Involvement of Civil Society Organizations in ADB Operations. Manila.

⁶ ADB. 2005. Greater Mekong Subregion: Nam Theun 2 Hydroelectric Project. Manila.

⁷ Midterm Review of Strategy 2020: Meeting the Challenges of a Transforming Asia and Pacific. See <http://www.adb.org/documents/midterm-review-strategy-2020-meeting-challenges-transforming-asia-and-pacific-r-paper>

mechanism” represents an opportunity for development actors like ADB to strengthen good governance while also managing risks throughout the project cycle.

IV. ADB AND CIVIL SOCIETY COLLABORATION KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Finding 1: Misunderstandings exist between ADB and civil society

16. Lack of awareness and misconceptions regarding respective roles and mutual accountabilities among government, ADB and civil society stakeholders, along with lack of transparency, have fuelled misunderstandings and limited new opportunities to collaborate. For example, some ADB staff members consider the Lao Women’s Union, a union with strong ties to the government of Lao PDR, as a CSO, when in fact it is a mass organization (see below for description). It would be useful for greater clarity and consistency if ADB staff and consultants use Lao context specific language in their discourse, outreach and consultation efforts on civil society related issues. Specifically:

- ❑ **CSOs** – in Lao PDR the term *CSO* refers broadly to:
 - NPAs - Non Profit Associations and foundations, either formally registered with Ministry of Home Affairs or in the process of registering. Examples include Gender and Development Association (GDA), and Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (NORMAI). NPAs often include professional associations, like the Lao Taxi Association, or farmers’ associations. Capacity varies dramatically from one NPA to another.
 - CBOs – Community Based Organizations (CBOs), which may include informal and formal farmers groups, women’s groups and others
 - Training Centers – which may include both non-profit, social enterprise and for profit entities. Examples include Digital Divide Data (DDD) and Participatory Development Training Center (PADETC).

At times, universities research centers, religious organizations and other institutions may also support civil society, for example, through conducting research or organizing an event that benefits the community among its members.

- ❑ **Development Partners** include agencies that collaborate with national stakeholders in the achievement of development goals and include multi-lateral organizations (including all UN agencies); bi-lateral organizations such as DfID, Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and JICA; multilateral development banks like the ADB and the World Bank; and INGOs. Plan International, Handicap International and CARE are among those who have worked in Lao PDR the longest.
- ❑ **Mass Organizations (MAs)**- During the 2012 Asia Europe People’s Forum in Vientiane, the Lao PDR government used the term to refer to the large unions in the country, to differentiate them from national civil society groups. With strong ties to the Lao PDR Party, these Mass Organizations often partner with civil society to address development issues. These include the Lao Women’s Union, Lao Center for National Construction, Lao Youth Union and others.
- ❑ **Private Sector**- As foreign direct investment increases at dramatic rates, far out performing overseas development assistance, the private sector is actively engaged in development, though often operating with different assumptions and expectations than those held by “traditional” donors. In Lao PDR, private sector actors include large mining and hydropower

companies, as well as smaller business ventures, such as Sunlaobob, a renewable energy company.

Recommendations

- 16.1 Shift the way stakeholders view each other, and ultimately, the way they work together, by developing a foundation of equity, transparency and mutual benefit.** Independent best-practice research on effective partnerships recognizes that sustainable and positive collaboration is based on establishing a foundation based on equity, transparency and mutual benefit.⁸ For ADB, there are opportunities to support these principles, without major resource investments or systems changes. In most ways this is not a shift in what is done, but how it is done. ADB is already engaging in civil society stakeholder consultations. The shift is to do these in a way where these consultations do not run the risk of being a “box-ticking” exercise and rather are a venue for genuine collaboration. While not resource intensive, shifting behaviors that support more strategic and meaningful engagement will be challenging. It will require shaping new perspectives and establishing principles of mutuality (mutual respect, mutual accountability, and mutual capacities) within ADB’s culture and, at the same time encouraging the same from civil society stakeholders requires sustained commitment from leadership and a long view (See Annex 1, Step 1: Country program strategy/identification of projects).
- 16.1.1 Develop a shared understanding of key terminology.** When engaging with Lao civil society stakeholders, ADB staff and consultants must use generally accepted terminology and to avoid terms that create misunderstanding or that may be misconstrued.
- 16.1.2 Design and implement a communications strategy to increase trust, transparency and capacity.** Develop a strategy that will help key stakeholders recognize ways to engage with each other in a targeted and effective manner, to identify potential partnerships, to share knowledge and learning, and to more effectively leverage limited resources. Frame this strategy within a governance and development effectiveness framework.
- 16.1.3 Increase understanding of ADB’s business processes.** While ADB is not in the business of building CSO capacity, it will need to help DPs and civil society actors increase their familiarity and confidence in using ADB business processes, if it is to maximize civil society engagement opportunities. That is, it will need to support them to align their institutional capacity with ADB’s business priorities.
- 16.1.4 Develop and clarify models for ADB/CSO collaboration.** Clarify expectations and opportunities by building a shared understanding of the roles and accountabilities of key stakeholder groups (government, civil society, and ADB), while also accepting that collaboration must happen within the framework on how each already operates.
- 16.2 Build capacity and understanding within ADB of the Lao context.**
- 16.2.1** Invite the INGO Network and Learning House coordinators to Manila to meet with ADB’s Project Officers and key staff and discuss the civil society landscape in Lao PDR, the value of engaging with the various technical working groups, and opportunities to leverage the influence and networks of the sector working groups to drive better projects. Consider making these meetings in Manila an annual event to help staff stay abreast of the rapidly changing context in Lao PDR.

⁸ “The Partnering Tool book – An Essential Guide to Cross Sector Partnering”, Tennyson, Ros 2003-2011, The Partnering Initiative (IBLF)

B. Finding 2: Civil society engagement within ADB is currently centralized

17. For civil society, engagement resides at all levels of the organization and among all stakeholders. Internally, at LRM, staff generally viewed engagement as primarily the responsibility of LRM's NGO Anchor. While the NGO Anchor plays a key role, the LRM management team will need to support a shift in how staff views the NGO Anchor's role and how to leverage the NGO Anchor's limited time to benefit their projects. This will require a shift from "doing" to "facilitating." The constant pace of change makes it improbable that one person can be an expert on all organizations and their programs. Thus, by identifying and facilitating entry points for staff to engage with stakeholders the NGO Anchor can encourage more direct ownership of relationships among those with a vested interest in working together. By maintaining key relationships with the networks, the technical working group focal points, and a few leading INGOs (particularly those with MoUs with ADB⁹), the NGO Anchor is well positioned to leverage engagement opportunities for staff within her limited resources.

Recommendations

- 17.1 Review the INGO Network monthly newsletter.** Identify and share news about upcoming events that are relevant to the project officers' sector or to LRM leadership. Encourage missions to coordinate/align key events when possible. Send only targeted information relevant to individual staff members (not the whole newsletter).
- 17.2 Identify new engagement opportunities and widely disseminate.** Work with mission leaders to identify new developments, research or other opportunities within ADB that may be valuable to DPs and CSOs and ensure information is shared. For example, the Lao PDR based education project officer shared results of ADB's labor market assessment in an INGO/Learning House special meeting. Often information can simply be shared via email to the INGO coordinator or posting on the INGO Network site. These opportunities will provide value to the civil society and DP community and demonstrate a commitment to mutuality.
- 17.3 Stay abreast of new developments,** particularly relating to project plans and facilitate engagement between key ADB staff and civil society actors. Attend mission-briefing meetings with the CD and PO or commit to other ways to maintain a broad understanding of the projects to better facilitate opportunities.

C. Finding 3: Working groups are excellent civil society entry points

18. Regular and sustained engagement with civil society and DPs will be necessary throughout the project cycle to support transparency and mutual benefit, while also being mindful of leveraging synergies that maximize impacts and minimize demands on people resources. Because working groups attract most major players working on a specific social issue, engagement with both Sector Working Groups and Technical Working Groups provide highly efficient opportunities to quickly meet key stakeholders and assess those with the capacity and expertise needed on ADB funded projects (see Annex 4 "Sector and technical working groups").

19. They also play a major role in supporting development effectiveness in Lao PDR. In key technical working groups, the DPs meet to discuss development effectiveness opportunities among their various programs that complement and overlap. Issues faced by all DPs are also addressed, such as the differing Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) policies of DPs that affect their collective ability to engage effectively with their Government counterparts. Meetings vary depending on the

⁹ Of the three INGOs with whom ADB has a formal relationship- WWF, IUCN and Plan- one has a regional office in Lao and the other two operate large programs in Lao PDR, representing a significant Lao-specific opportunity for ADB for partnership and collaboration.

working group and the priorities being addressed, but the project officers and senior management can be informed about upcoming meetings by sending a request to the INGO Network Coordinator. Participation by ADB is welcome and it is worth exploring whether the knowledge exchange and partnership opportunities that emerge from their engagement warrant ongoing participation. The technical working groups also informally link to the Government's Sector Working Groups, providing a mechanism for collaboration on often complex issues and opportunities that may be difficult to address in the more formal sector working groups.

Recommendations:

- 19.1 Use participation in technical working groups** as a way to assess the INGO players, and the capacity and technical expertise of INGOs and civil society stakeholders and their potential to contribute ADB-supported projects.
- 19.2** While ADB already currently co-chairs the macroeconomic and infrastructure working groups, there is an opportunity to **use other working groups to engage in discussions with DPs** about future initiatives to avoid duplication and identify points of collaboration. Both ADB staff and DPs may need further education on the most standard ways of engaging so that they are more prepared to recognize viable opportunities when they emerge and so that expectations on what partnership can look like are managed on all sides (see Annex 2, Engagement opportunities).

D. Finding 4: Civil society is active in governance risk management

20. DPs, NPAs and ADB share a commitment to strengthen capacity to enable DPs to increase use of country systems in Lao PDR, especially in areas of procurement and financial management. ADB has supported the Government's public financial management strengthening program through policy reform and capacity development efforts, most recently through the ongoing Governance and Capacity Development for Public Sector Management Program. Also, ADB has supported workshops through technical assistance to strengthen procurement and audit systems. ADB and the World Bank have completed a draft set of harmonized Lao-English standard bidding documents for national competitive bidding, with the documents on track for review and approval by Ministry of Finance in late 2014.

21. But stand-alone governance workshops often do not translate into meaningful, sustained improvements and acceptance. A combined approach of training and workshops accompanied by ongoing coaching and mentoring will increase capacity as government counterparts are more fully supported to apply new learning to real situations. It also allows for monitoring in a way that is constructive rather than critical to further promote learning. DPs, particularly INGOs, in Lao PDR often work with their government counterparts to build capacity and are skilled in this action-learning approach which has a better success record in sustained change.

22. Thus, an opportunity for ADB-civil society engagement is to leverage the expertise of INGOs and NPAs to support ADB's governance efforts and manage risks. INGOs in particular are well positioned to provide such support, particularly at the district level. Reframing LRM's capacity development efforts in this area to include the ongoing support will demonstrate that it takes seriously the Anti-Corruption Law of 2005. For example, Plan International has worked with the Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) to undertake a gender equality analysis of the current MOES Education Sector Plan (See Annex 7- Plan Laos Gender Education Lessons Learned). ChildFund has successfully worked with government and community stakeholders in the areas district socio-economic development planning health and education services, tendering, community construction (See Annex 8- Building Transparency, Accountability and Good Governance). While these annexes provide a few examples of

collaboration for increased good governance, accountability and transparency, there are examples in multiple sectors.

Recommendations:

- 22.1 Engage government counterparts in dialogue using strength based questioning to explore where within their ministries they may already be partnering with INGOs or NPAs** in this area. This will provide the opportunity to better understand where successful relationships between the government and civil society already exist and how they are functioning.
- 22.2 Leverage the Working Groups to identify opportunities for partnership** that support good governance in projects in the design phase by engaging in dialogue with key DPs.
- 22.3 Identify other donor-civil society partnerships for governance risk activities** because several other donors, including UNICEF, have existing models that are already well established.

E. Finding 5: Civil society is interested in learning about ADB

23. During an ADB/CSO workshop (June 2014), the majority of requests from CSOs were for support to develop their institutional and programmatic capacity (see Annex 6, ADB and civil society engagement for poverty alleviation). While ADB recognizes that civil society capacity development falls outside of the scope of its mission and that this role has traditionally been better served by other DPs, there are opportunities to build CSO and DP capacity in understanding and using ADB's business systems. In this way, ADB is contributing to their development.

Recommendations:

- 23.1 Hold semi-annual workshops in the following areas** using a participatory approach to ensure all voices are heard:
 - CSRN registration, the use of ADB's CMS, and navigating the tendering and procurement process (see Annex 3, "Types of Technical Assistance").
 - The ADB project cycle and avenues for engagement (See Annex 1, Project Cycle and Annex 2, Engagement Opportunities)
 - Build on and extend the July 2014 workshop to promote government, CSO and ADB collaborative dialogues to build relationships, share information, and continue dialogue on opportunities for collaboration.
- 23.2 Address barriers that are inhibiting engagement**, for example, by making critical documents available in Lao language, and communicating with DPs and CSOs how to respond to tendering opportunities as an organization rather than as an individual.
- 23.3 Document and share concrete change stories of results achieved through collaboration.** These might include, for example, explaining the entry points in the project cycle where collaboration is possible as outline in Annex 1. Several opportunities are currently in the early stages of the project cycle are worth following and documenting and ultimately sharing with the two local networks, via a workshop, as well as on the ADB website.
- 23.4 Develop and communicate simple and reinforcing messaging on the three primary opportunities for engagement** in all outreach efforts to help DPs and civil society build their understanding on how to collaborate with ADB and self-select opportunities for engagement more skillfully (see Annex 2, "Engagement

Opportunities”). This messaging is an important part of managing expectations and should reinforce that ADB does not provide grants, but supports collaboration through consultations, technical assistance, parallel programming, and DP/NPA partnerships.

F. Finding 6: ADB staff needs support to engage with civil society

G. ADB staff and consultants face competing priorities to design and implement projects and limited financial resources and time. Therefore, a shift toward sustained, meaningful engagement will require systematic support from ADB headquarters and from ADB leadership. Currently staff and consultants do not feel empowered to engage with civil society as ADB systems and processes do not reward staff and consultants for investing in engaging with civil society in a meaningful way. Over the long term, ADB needs to send a clear message on the importance of civil society engagement and provide the resources to make this possible.

Recommendations:

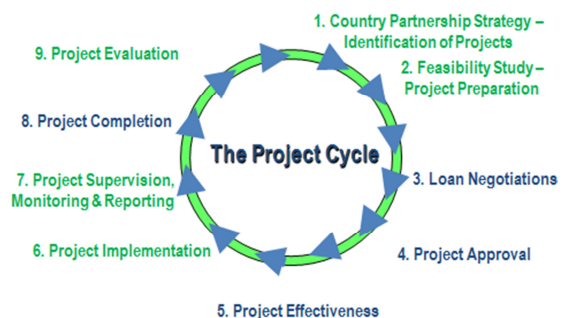
23.5 Reinforce through senior management through ongoing messages on the how and why of civil society engagement

23.6 Encourage dialogue and feedback from staff and consultants on what they need in order to feel empowered to engage with civil society during the project cycle.

23.7 Facilitate meetings between ADB HQ-based Project Officers and other key staff and INGO Network and Learning House Coordinators to learn about the civil society landscape in Lao PDR, opportunities for engagement with the informal working group and opportunities to leverage and influence the sector working groups to drive better projects

23.8 Commit to action-learning capacity building efforts (not stand-alone workshops) as part of technical assistance projects. These are more fully outlined under the CPS/Identification of projects – Recommendations section in Annex 1.

23.9 Develop and clarify models for ADB-civil society collaboration, while reinforcing project cycle management. As noted at the outset, a shared understanding of the roles and accountabilities of key stakeholder groups (government, DPs, civil society, and ADB) must be developed, while also accepting that collaboration must happen within the framework of how each already operates. Nevertheless, the ADB Project Cycle (see chart) could serve as a framework to support collaboration if there was greater understanding of the entry points and modes of collaboration. While opportunities for engagement may exist throughout the project cycle over time, the most significant opportunities reside in a few key stages. These are discussed further in Annex 1 and specific recommendations are identified for different sections of the cycle.



V. CONCLUSIONS

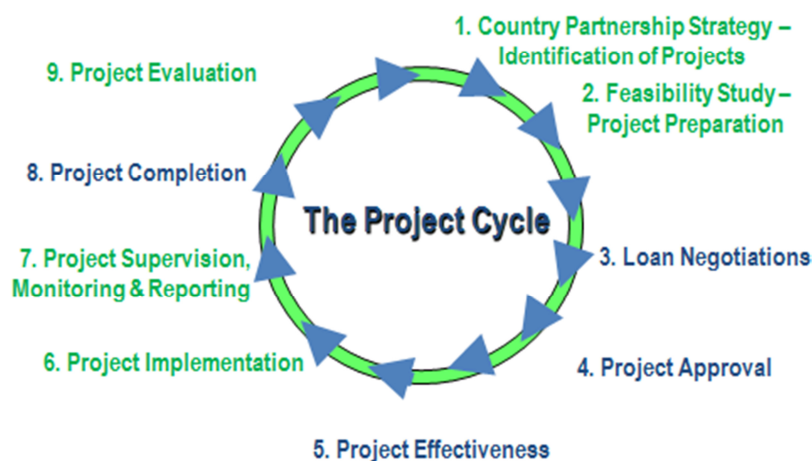
24. The findings and recommendations outlined in this report highlight shifting *how* people work and not just *what* they do. The shifts are required by all players. In some instances the shifts are about understanding that civil society engagement is, not about a shift toward greater advocacy on social issues. Instead it is about simply finding the best resource to drive better projects. In other instances it is about incorporating more participatory processes throughout the project cycle. And, finally, it is also about asking more difficult questions on whether or not we are engaging in ways that lead to mutual partnerships and shared ownership, rather than imposing externally driven solutions and responses that worked elsewhere. Behaviour shifts are inherently difficult and special attention to the systems of rewards, communication processes, accountability mechanisms and ultimately internal systems will be required. ADB consultants and Project Officers are the best positioned to identify and pursue the most appropriate opportunities for engagement while also being able to help mitigate risk.

25. LRM has taken the first step in a much more strategic effort that must take into consideration the unique and sensitive nature of the Lao political context. Key to the success of these efforts is taking a long view, scaling more intensive interventions, while managing expectations with stakeholders.

26. In the next steps, practicing the principles of inclusivity will increase the likelihood that the right solutions are developed. This will mean engaging with stakeholders not part of this review, and yet are a critical in the success of civil society outreach. These include the Lao PDR government, ADB consultants, and HQ-based staff with responsibilities in Lao PDR. Further review on best methods to support the enabling environment with the Lao PDR government will be necessary for sustainability. ADB's heavy reliance on consultants increases the importance of supporting their work as well as that of ADB staff. And, finally ADB staff struggle with conflicting priorities and demands for high quality yet time sensitive deliverables. Unless long term efforts to address those conflicts are addressed, engagement will continue to be challenging. Further discussions with these important target groups are needed to identify the best ways forward.

27. In focus group discussions and interviews conducted during this evaluation, other DPs and civil society actors expressed interest in engaging in productive ways with the government in dialogues about development effectiveness and governance issues. Building on the recommendations given in 9.1 above, ADB could take the lead in a series of stakeholder dialogues, culminating in a strategic meeting – Making Partnership Effective – that would address mutual expectations and accountabilities in a productive manner and open up the space for acknowledging the important role by all stakeholders in achieving the government's development goals. Identification of “ready” partners – those with the capacity to engage, and a shared view of what is possible is key to building toward increased engagement. This readiness, whether among civil society and DPs or among government stakeholders can be efficiently identified and nurtured via the workshops recommended above and in events that include government stakeholder such as the proposed Making Partnership Effective workshop.

II. ANNEX 1: SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO ADB PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT



Step 1: Country program strategy/identification of projects

These first steps of the project cycle represent some of the most significant areas for engagement in ways that are strategic, meaningful and innovative. Once the Lao PDR government identifies development priorities, ADB conducts sector assessments to identify specific needs in consultation with the Ministry of Planning and Investment, sector divisions and within ADB. Separate meetings with line ministries and other Development Partners (DPs) help identify and agree to project priorities in alignment with the government’s strategy. Once agreed, ADB hosts an information event for DPs and civil society. This is a key opportunity for civil society engagement, as while the Lao PDR government influences what sectors and what the priorities are, DPs and civil society have influence on how those priorities are addressed. In informal interviews and focal group discussions, DPs, government counterparts and ADB staff expressed a shared desire to see the results of civil society engagement at this stage to shift from top-down directives and “checking boxes” to meaningful collaboration that may help drive more innovative and efficient projects. In fact, ADB has piloted such engagement with civil society in Cambodia and hopes to replicate it in other countries, as appropriate.

Recommendations:

- ❑ **Shift the approach of CPS meetings with civil society from information sessions to roundtable discussions** so that civil society is engaged rather than informed. Engage a professional facilitator to facilitate these discussions so that ADB staff can build expertise in this more collaborative approach to engagement and to further develop the capacity of ADB project officers and the NGO Anchor in facilitation and effective listening techniques. Consider including INGOs with staff skilled in participatory practices to facilitate these events.
- ❑ **Plan for translation services to be provided at all stakeholder meetings.** While English language capacity is increasing among CSO staff in Lao PDR, often national voices are lost

when complex topics and multiple voices are shared in English-only environments. Assuming that national participants can effectively engage in English-only meetings almost always results in key concepts being lost or misunderstood on both sides of the language barrier. While there are benefits, particularly in regards to time management and ease of facilitation in holding language specific events, the richness of cross cultural collaboration is lost in these events.

- ❑ Once the feedback from these sessions has been incorporated into the draft CPS, whether at staff meetings or other forums, **leadership has the opportunity to share with Lao staff and POs how civil society feedback shaped the final plan.** By providing these concrete examples, LRM leadership will highlight the business case for targeted and skillful engagement. The concrete examples and reinforced messaging are needed to help staff change their behavior and begin to recognize the value of ongoing engagement.
- ❑ Equity (ensuring all stakeholders have a voice), transparency and mutual benefit are further reinforced if **ADB follows up with stakeholders to share how their inputs were considered and incorporated into the final plan.** The technical working groups provide an excellent arena to do this, whether via an invitation to speak at an upcoming event, or to simply distribute the final plan to relevant stakeholders. Closing the communication loop is key to sustainable and meaningful collaboration.

Development of the Country Operating Business Plan (COBP) – using the CPS as a reference, ADB sector leaders conduct a program mission for project ideas which involve extensive consultation with the government. Currently consultations with civil society and DPs are optional. Based on the results, project concepts are identified and ADB invites feedback.

Recommendations:

- ❑ **LRM Country Director to reinforce the value that LRM sees in civil society engagement** via discussions with the project officers (POs) of their plans to engage civil society during their mission upon arrival in Lao PDR. Further check-ins to explore the results of the engagement, key learning that will shape project design, and opportunities seen for future engagement during the departure meeting will help hold POs and consultants accountable for shifting from “box checking” to more meaningful engagement.

*“We invested a lot of time with ADB’s consultants and we find that our advice is ignored. Please let us know what happens.”
-INGO stakeholder*

- ❑ As projects move through the project cycles, **share concrete examples of ways that CSO and DP engagement is resulting in innovation** and smooth project implementation. Making civil society engagement a standard part of the agenda in monthly staff meetings or other arenas will help staff take concrete examples and begin to recognize opportunities to apply the examples to their own work. Staff recognition celebrating those who have risked trying something new will encourage others to do the same.

Opportunities where engagement is just starting and are worth following through the project cycle are:

- The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) silk and tea project currently in the Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) stage. The Lao Chamber of Commerce, social enterprises like Saoban, farmers groups, and others are already playing a role in the design.
- The Sustainable Transport project: The Tuk Tuk and taxi associations contributed feedback on how proposed Tuk Tuk designs could be adapted to be more appropriate for the Lao context, and in the same meeting, they increased their understanding and support of the project. The INGO Handicap International and the Lao Red Cross provided technical feedback on road safety and the needs of the disabled to access the proposed transport system that hadn't been considered.



Figure 1 - Great for people, not for packages

- ❑ The INGO Network, Learning House, and Technical Working Group (TWG) coordinators have comprehensive lists of stakeholders working in each sector. **Provide open invitations via these coordinators and allow stakeholders to self-select to attend meetings on project plans** rather than working only through government counterparts or personal contacts to identify invitees. The NGO Anchor may facilitate this outreach to the civil society networks on behalf of the consultants and ADB staff tasked with engagement (whether project officers or mission leadership), but must be informed of upcoming mission plans in advance in order to facilitate this engagement.
- ❑ ADB has institutional partnerships with WWF, Plan International, IUCN, and the International Federation of Red Cross Societies. Yet, to-date little effort at partnership at the country level has emerged and most Country Directors did not know an institutional MoU was in place. Bi-annual meetings with ADB's Deputy Country Director and NGO Anchor and the Country Directors of these INGOs may support early identification of strategic opportunities, and opportunities for parallel project planning.
- ❑ **Discuss with government counterparts what DPs and CSOs they already are collaborating with.** Opportunities to leverage resources may emerge. Meetings with DPs during the course of this project revealed existing opportunities:
 - ADB and Plan International both have projects in secondary and vocational training. For example, ADB is exploring a project which involves building dormitories. Since dormitories are high-risk areas for trafficking, Plan may be interested in designing a child protection program that works in parallel with ADB's program.
 - ADB's Model Healthy Village project overlaps with Health and Hope Alliance's child nutrition program in the Xien Khuane province. Where villages are part of both projects, there are some early indications that the nutrition project is more successful. Explore whether the same is true for ADB's project and work with the District Health Ministry accountable for both projects to explore how to leverage opportunities for future success.
- ❑ **Further exploration on how consultants are engaging with civil society** and DPs and how they are being rewarded for meaningful engagement is needed, given ADB's heavy reliance on consultants and the key role they play in the project planning cycle. Both government and DP

counterparts expressed concern that consultants were not adequately held accountable for genuine engagement.

Step 2: Feasibility Study/Project Preparation: The PPTA process is the project design and feasibility phase which is intended to lead to a loan. Consultants are recruited for the project design team with specific expertise on key elements that could impact the project (e.g. expertise on indigenous people, the environment, etc.).

Recommendations:

- ❑ Use the sector technical working groups to hold focus group discussions on planned projects and to publicize tendering opportunities.
- ❑ DPs see an opportunity to pilot projects during the PPTA stage and would like to explore how this might be possible. One DP shared that for \$100,000 he could pilot a project, provide a business case and recommendations on how to scale based on the evidence of the pilot, within the timeframe of a typical PPTA (1 year). Explore in collaboration with DPs, the potential for pilots to be integrated into the PPTA process as part of evidence collection on project viability. And, if piloting is possible, explore the potential role DPs may play in this process. Piloting projects could help answer the question; “Is it feasible, viable and scalable?” based on evidence.

Steps 3, 4 and 5 at present few opportunities for engagement exist in these stages; however once ADB and the government negotiate the loan covenants, the proposed projects are posted on the ADB web-site and at the same time are circulated to the ADB Board. DPs and civil society stakeholders may monitor this information as part of their advocacy efforts.

Step 6: Project Implementation

At this stage the project is turned over to the Government for implementation. Business opportunities for project implementation will be advertised in local media, and on the ADB website. Depending on the nature of the project, business opportunities may be available that match civil society skills, such as community mobilization and training. In the past ADB financed projects in Lao PDR have not included many such financed components.

Recommendations:

- ❑ As mentioned above, communicating via the networks and the relevant sector specific working groups of business opportunities increases awareness of these opportunities within the civil society community.
- ❑ Regularly and informally sharing examples where DPs and other civil society stakeholders improved the quality and efficiency of a project may be necessary to help pave the way for increased government acceptance of their engagement. Communicating clearly with government counterparts that ADB’s tendering process helps ensure that the most qualified resource is tendered no matter whether it is from the private, civic, or public sector may increase understanding and acceptance among government stakeholders.

Step 7: Supervision, Monitoring and Reporting

This stage can happen in two ways:

- **Advocacy focused:** Civil society can independently monitor the ADB financed projects to ensure that the projects are being implemented among ethical and good governance guidelines.
- **As part of project implementation:** Monitoring activities are part of the project design and represent possible business opportunities for CSOs. For example, In Indonesia, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) monitored supplies being used for a road project; in the Philippines, CSOs monitor conditional cash transfers to poor people for the government.

Recommendations:

- ❑ As part of workshops and ongoing outreach, these opportunities should be communicated to DPs and CSOs.

Step 8: Project Completion

This is largely a documentation and procedural step to ensure due diligence that the project was completed as designed. Finances are reviewed, and paperwork is completed. Given the administrative nature of this step, currently there are few if any opportunities for CSO participation.

Step 9: Project Evaluation

Typically 12-24 months after the project is completed, ADB conducts both self- evaluations and independent evaluations to assess the development effectiveness and long term results of the project. A Project Completion Report (PCR) is conducted to provide an objective evaluation on how the project was conceived, prepared and implemented so that key learning can be incorporated into future projects. The PCR typically includes a site visit and but does not include requirements for civil society consultations. However, the final PCR is posted on the ADB website.

Recommendations:

- ❑ For those DPs and CSOs whose missions are affected by an ADB financed project, reach out and cultivate open, trusting and transparent relationships with ADB POs and government stakeholders involved in the project. Good relations and two-way information sharing increase the likelihood that feedback and evidence from the field will be incorporated into the final PCR.
- ❑ When the PCR is posted on the ADB website, review the report and follow up with key stakeholders when necessary.

III. ANNEX 2: ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Engagement between ADB and Development Partners (DPs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) typically occur in three ways:

1. Consultations

Consultations occur in the early stages of ADB's project cycles, mainly in the development of the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) and project identification phase, and during the project design and feasibility phase called the Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) process. The consultation process in both these phases is extensive, often including hundreds of interviews and consultations. It is a critical phase which not only shapes the design of the project but can lead to a loan.

Engagement benefits

- While not typically providing revenue opportunities for DPs and CSOs, those with mandates that address issues that may be impacted by an ADB project under consideration, have the opportunity to provide much needed expertise and alternative points of views that can help shape the design process. Given the size and scope of typical ADB funded projects (frequently in the tens of millions of dollars), these consultations represent a way for DPs and CSOs to leverage the investment of time and resources in a few meetings to impact projects with a development footprint far bigger than anything typically under development in the development community.

Technical Assistance (TA)

ADB provides a variety of forms of TA to their partners. These include; policy and advisory, capacity development, and research and development TA to name a few (see Annex 3, types of technical assistance). TA projects include business opportunities that are open via a transparent and competitive process. And, they are either available to individuals or to organizations. The main considerations that guide ADB's selection process: are:¹⁰

1. Need for high-quality services,
2. Need for economy and efficiency,
3. Need to give all qualified consultants an opportunity to compete in providing the services financed by ADB,
4. ADB's interest in encouraging the development and use of national consultants from developing member countries (DMCs),
5. Need for transparency in the selection process, and
6. Need for increasing focus on anticorruption and observance of ethics.

Whether the applicant comes from the private or public sector is not part of the selection criteria, thus any DP or CSO bidding on a TA contract must compete on quality and cost.

¹⁰ Guidelines on the use of Consultants by Asia Development Bank and its Borrowers <http://www.adb.org/documents/guidelines-use-consultants-asian-development-bank-and-its-borrowers?ref=site/business-opportunities/operational-procurement/consulting/documents>

Engagement benefits

- ❑ The transparent process is designed to ensure that the best possible resource is provided. Depending on their own internal guidelines, DPs and CSOs may apply for either individual or organizational TAs. DPs and CSOs frequently have strong community networks and relationships and grass roots capacity building expertise that is often needed and which differentiates them from their private enterprise competitors. Leveraging this expertise may provide significant revenue opportunities while firmly aligning with an organization's mission.

Parallel or Sequential Programming

In those areas where the objective of an ADB funded project aligns or overlaps with missions of a DP or CSO or a specific program, it is worth a conversation to explore whether efforts by both stakeholders could be further leveraged for greater impact and efficiency by working together. Typically, partners involved in parallel projects maintain separate budgets but co-create one project plan in collaboration with their government counterpart. For example, ADB is considering funding a dormitory project for migrant workers. Plan International recognizes that migrant workers staying at dormitories are at greater risk of being trafficked. Reducing this risk aligns with Plan's mission so it is open to exploring the possibility of developing a parallel program to address those risks. Should this opportunity progress, ADB would lead in funding the infrastructure development, and Plan would work to address some of the social risks that can arise these kinds of projects.

Sequential programming similarly leverages the strengths of both institutions for greater positive impact. In sequential programming, one partner's project may be initiated after the others have been implemented. An interesting example is emerging from the Xian Khuane district of the Lao PDR. In this case, ADB has been funding the Model Health Village project in this area while simultaneously and independently, Humana People-to-People was also implementing a child nutrition program. Though they may not have initially known it, it turns out that ADB and Humana worked with the same point of contact at the Ministry of Health (MoH). A pattern has emerged in the area suggesting that children who were part of ADB's Model Health Village funded project fared notably better in Humana's child nutrition program. They were healthier and stronger based on initial observational data. ADB and Humana both have strong trusting relationships with their government counterpart, and he is demonstrating a high level of readiness to engage further with both partners. Humana has also self-identified as a viable partner. The INGO has developed strong and trusting relationships with their government counterparts in the District MoH, and has demonstrated an understanding on how to work with ADB. Further dialogue between Humana, ADB and the shared counterpart at the District MoH are needed to explore how to apply new learning to future projects and how to continue to increase the benefits of Humana's program by building on the successes of the ADB project.

Engagement benefits

- ❑ When designed well, parallel programming allows both partners to celebrate their technical strengths and leverage them for the benefit of the other partner. And, these types of partnerships can strengthen development effectiveness. For example, ADB's strong government relationships may provide an opening for Plan to further its mission by engaging in dialogue with government stakeholders they may not otherwise meet. Likewise, Plan's extensive network and technical expertise is a unique and valuable compliment to ADB's development objectives and serve as a way to reduce risks.

IV. ANNEX 3: TYPES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) PROVIDED BY ADB¹¹

TYPES	TA Subtype	Definition
Single TA	PPTA	Project preparatory technical assistance (PPTA) is TA for project preparation. PPTA may be processed for a standalone project or program, or a sector development program; a subprogram under the program cluster approach; single sector lending for a series of subprojects; or a multitranche financing facility comprising a series of tranches
	PATA	Policy and advisory technical assistance (PATA) covers TA to finance sector, policy, and issues-oriented studies. It may be on a stand-alone basis or accompanying a project. In some cases it may be project-specific. PATA assists in (i) preparing national and sector development plans and programs, particularly in small DMCs; and (ii) carrying out sector-, policy-, and issues-oriented studies.
	CDTA	Capacity development technical assistance (CDTA) undertakes institutional and organizational capacity development and supports implementation, operation and management of ADB-financed projects. CDTA assists in (i) establishing or strengthening organizations and institutions in DMCs; (ii) implementing, operating, and managing ADB-financed projects; and/or (iii) enhancing knowledge management.
	RDTA	“Research and Development TA (RDTA) involves TA activities conceived to address global or regional development issues which require further analysis or understanding. RDTA is usually processed by the Economics and Research Department, Office of Regional Economic Integration, or Regional and Sustainable Development Department, collaborating closely with other departments. However, in some cases a regional or some other department may lead an RDTA activity, if the regional or other department has specific expertise or is in charge of a focal area.
Cluster TA	<input type="checkbox"/> C-PATA <input type="checkbox"/> C-CDTA <input type="checkbox"/> C-RDTA	Cluster Technical Assistance (C-TA) is group of TAs which includes PATA, CDTA and RDTA and is processed as C-PATA, C-CDTA and C-RDTA which are explained above. Approval of C-TA means approval to all TAs included in it.
Regional TA (RETA)	<input type="checkbox"/> R-PPTA <input type="checkbox"/> R-PATA <input type="checkbox"/> R-CDTA	If a PPTA, PATA, or CDTA covers more than one Developing Member Country (DMC) it is processed as regional TA (R-PPTA, R-PATA or R-CDTA).

¹¹ Types of Technical Assistance Provided by ADB:
http://finmin.nic.in/the_ministry/dept_eco_affairs/MI/Types_ADB_TAs.pdf

**Small
Scale TA
(SSTA)**

- ☒ S-PPTA
- ☒ S-PATA
- ☒ S-CDTA
- ☒ S-RDTA

PPTA, PATA, CDTA, and RDTA can be in the form of small-scale TA (S-PPTA; S-PATA; S-CDTA or S-RDTA). TA is considered small-scale if ADB financing does not exceed \$225,000 and the TA does not require substantial logistical support from the recipient. Small-scale TA is a useful and convenient means of rapidly providing expertise. Small-scale TA is most appropriate for (i) updating feasibility studies; (ii) initiating or completing project preparation work; (iii) addressing narrowly defined development issues; and (iv) financing assessments in an emergency situation as a rapid response tool.

V. ANNEX 4: SECTOR AND TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

The following Working Groups exist under the umbrella of the INGO Network:¹² More details are available at the INGO Network website at www.directoryofngos.org

Sector	Organization	Email contacts
<i>Human Resources & Administration</i>	SNV GDG Room to Read	<i>hr-admin-network@googlegroups.com</i>
<i>Health & Nutrition</i>	Plan International	<i>health-nutrition-working-group@googlegroups.com</i>
<i>Education</i>	Save the Children Plan International ChildFund Laos Save the Children World Vision Aide et Action	
<i>Disaster Risk Reduction/ Management</i>	Oxfam Care International; Save the Children Oxfam	
<i>Land Issues</i>	Care International Helvetas Padetc JVC World Renew CCL Mekong Watch	
<i>Water & Energy</i>	Helvetas Lire	
<i>Agriculture and Forestry</i>		
<i>Child Protection</i>		

¹² INGO Network, Lao PDR 2014

VI. ANNEX 5: INTERVIEW SUMMARY

	Name	Organization	Date	Comments
1.	Anupma Jain	Sr. Social Sector Specialist (SEUW) ADB	June 6, 2014	Interview
2.	Kelly Hattel	Financial Sector Specialist (rural & Microfinance) (SEPF), ADB	June 6, 2014	Interview
3.	Lloyd Wright	Sr. Transport Sepcialit (RSID), ADB	June 6, 2014	Interview
4.	Steven Schipani	Shipiani Sr. Portfolia Mgt Specialist (LRM) ADB	June 6, 2014	Interview
5.	Khamtanh Chanthy	Senior Project Officer (LRM) ADB	June 6, 2014	Interview
6.	Mona Girgis	Country Director, PLAN International (Lao PDR)	June 6, 2014	Interview
7.	Khammon Xaysavanh,	Handicap International	June 6, 2014	Sustainable transport consultation
8.	Eric Remacle,	Road Safety Expert, Handicap International	June 6, 2014	Sustainable transport consultation
9.	Arnold Marseille	Independent Consultant	June 6, 2014	Sustainable transport consultation (lead facilitator)
10.	Bouaexeng Phissalath	Lao Tuk Tuk Association	June 6, 2014	Sustainable transport consultation
11.	Souksomdy	Lao Tuk Tuk Association	June 6 2014	Sustainable transport consultation
12.	Phone Xay	Lao Taxi Association	June 6,2014	Sustainable transport consultation
13.	Khammouane Siphonesey	NPA Co-ordinator , Learning House	June 6, 2014	Interview
14.	Catharine Perroud-Kibler	INGO Network Co-ordinator, INGO Network	June 9, 2014	Interview

15.	Gerard Servais	Health Specialist (SEHS) ADB	June 9, 2014	Interview
16.	David Salter	Senior Natural Resources and Agriculture Specialist (SEER)	June 9, 2014	Interview
17.	Stefania Dina	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD),	June 10, 2014	Interview
18.	Rio Pals	Country Director, Cord	June 13, 2014	Interview
19.	Bastiaan Tuene	Sector Leader Renewable Energy, SNV	June 13, 2014	Interview
20.	Julie Graham	SNV, Country Director	June 25, 2014	Interview
21.	Lainie Thomas	ADB	On-going	Interview
22.	Sandra Nicoll	Country Representative, ADB	On-going	Interview
23.	Adam Starr	Country Director, IUCN	June 16, 2014	Interview
24.	Khamtanh Chanthy	Project Officer, ADB	June 11, 2014	Interview
25.	Chandaworn Bounnad	Associate Project Analyst, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
26.	Phoxay Xayyavong	Project Officer, Health, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
27.	Thiphasone Donekhamyoy	Associate Project Analyst, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
28.	Phomma Chanthirath	Sr. Project Officer Infrastructure, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
29.	Theonakhet Saphakdy	Social & Development Officer (Gender), ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
30.	Soudalay Souannavong	Associate Project Officer, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
31.	Vanthong Inthavong	Procurement Consultant, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
32.	Khounkham Thammalangy	Associate Project Analyst, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD
33.	Phantouleth Loangray	Sr. Economics Officer, ADB	June 18, 2014	Project Officer FGD

34.	Sicisopha Vongthevanh	Sr. Finance and Admin Officer, ADB	June 2014	18,	Project Officer FGD
35.	Phoneniva Phamvongsa	Associate Project Analyst, ADB	June 2014	18,	Project Officer FGD
36.	Soulinthone Leuangkhamsing	Sr. Economics Officer, ADB	June 2014	18,	Project Officer FGD
37.	David Boisson,	French Red Cross	June 2014	11,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
38.	Gharat Raj Gaufam,	Care Laos	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
39.	Emi Weir	CDWDC	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
40.	Luongtep Uslay	CDWDC	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
41.	Thepmany Khounsamuane	SMF	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
42.	Ketkeo Soudachan	PFHA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
43.	Erin P. Ma	Shine Art	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
44.	Houmphanh Rattnavong	ABL	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
45.	Viengkhone	LAOPHA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
46.	Souphon Sayavory	PFHA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
47.	Souphon Jayavory	PFHA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
48.	Adam starr	IUCN	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD

49.	Sisavath	RRDPA	June 20,2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
50.	Soulivanh	ASD	June 20,2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
51.	Gitte Hector	Humana People to People	June 20,2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
52.	Cher Wier	AVOD	June 20 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
53.	Marianne Roliley	Save the Children	June 20,2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
54.	Nathosern Somuichit	Handicap International	June 20,2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
55.	Nigel Goddard	World Vision	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
56.	Mona Girgis	Plan	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
57.	Ymeka Ota	AAR Japan	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
58.	Nancy Kim	The Asia Foundation	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
59.	Collette McInerney	World Education	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
60.	Adam Ousder Beck	Care	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
61.	Somphet Khavong	AEDA	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
62.	Noukone Onevathane	DECK	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD

63.	Sisomphone	Latuac	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
64.	Souvanna Phone	JM Foundation	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
65.	Bouby Phomsavath	ACTD	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
66.	Khanthone Phaunvang	ECCDA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
67.	Kamkham Martinez	Health Poverty Action	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
68.	Lenthichan	FHIBGO	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
69.	Lenekeo Ketavong	CODA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
70.	Catharine Peraud	INGO Network	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
71.	Country Director	Helvetas	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
72.	Kansan Latthanhot	EC-VYDA	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
73.	Bounlap Path	SAEDS	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
74.	Kitty Williams	Aide et Action	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
75.	Maydom Chanthanasinh	Phathoma Phasouk	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
76.	Brigitte Hisselhoff	German Red Cross	June 2014	20,	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD

77.	Bernie Chaves	CRS	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
78.	Kham Khol	SODA	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
79.	Jonathan Garrett	NCA	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD
80.	Michele Roche	RRDPA	June 20, 2014	Collaboration for poverty reduction FGD

VII. ANNEX 6: ADB & CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

A.

Meeting Notes

Invitation to Dialogue:

ADB & civil society engagement for poverty alleviation

Date: June 20, 2014

Participants:

Representatives from the following Organizations: (55 participants) CARE, GCA, HHA, Sisterhood, CDWDE, SMF, PFHA, Shine Art, ABL, LAO PHA, PFHA, IUCN, RRDPA, ASD, HUMANA People to People, AVCD, Save the Children, Handicap Intl, World Vision, Plan, AAR Japan, The Asia Foundation, World Education, AEDA, DECA, LAWAC, JM Foundation, EECDA, Health Poverty Action, FHI 360, CODA, INGO Network, Helvetas, EC-VYDA, Aide et Action, NCA, Phathana Phasourk F, German Red Cross, CRS, SODA, ECA, ACTD, ADB staff (9)

Facilitator: Luisa Peticucci, Consultant

On June 20th 2014 50 NPAs and NGOs met with ADB project officers, and staff to explore ways forward for better collaboration. Following opening remarks by Ms. Sandra Nicoll, Country Director, ADB and a brief presentation by Steven Shipani, ADB's Senior Portfolio Management Specialist, outlining ADBs, vision, strategy and operational overview, three questions were posed to support initial dialogue among participants.

1. *What opportunities are there between ADB and civil society in support of the country's development agenda?*
2. *What needs to happen to support meaningful collaboration? What could ADB, civil society and the Government each do?*
3. *Collaboration will require mutual understanding of each other's unique expertise and operating methods. How is this best done? (Next steps)*

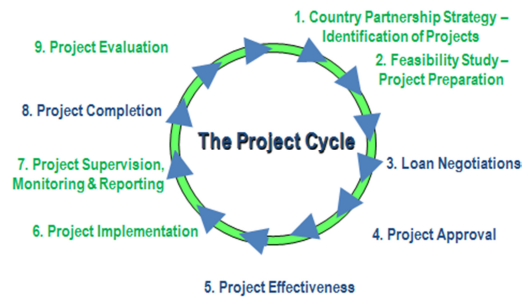
Below is a summary of feedback emerging from the discussions at the workshop:

Question 1: *What opportunities are there between ADB and civil society in support of the country's development agenda?*

Sector specific opportunities in Agriculture, Energy, Education and Health were identified, stressing CSO engagement during the various stages of the project cycle and participation in the technical working groups.

ADB's Project Cycle:

While opportunities may exist at every stage of ADB's cycle, participants highlighted the following as key entry points:



Stage 1 - Identification of projects: Participants stressed the importance of engagement during this stage to ensure that stakeholders are included from all aspects of civil society for better project design, and smoother project management and long term buy-in. In this stage some participants identified “parallel planning” opportunities where existing or potential programs could compliment ADB projects.

Stage 2 Feasibility Study/ Project Preparation: Concerns were raised in this stage as some participants shared that they have been heavily consulted on projects and yet their input was not reflected in the final project plan. Participants asked how much flexibility ADB has to adjust a project's design in this stage. Others who self-identified as key stakeholders in some of ADB projects shared that they had never been contacted by ADB for a consultation

Stage 6 Project Implementation: Participants discussed the implications of ADB providing loans vs. grants and requested more information about ADB's tendering process. Suggestions to ADB to provide workshops on both projects currently being planned and the tendering process were made. Additional efforts to understand this stage more clearly and to identify entry points for collaboration will be needed from all stakeholders

Stage 7 Project Supervision, Monitoring and Reporting: Participants expressed willingness and interest in supporting civil society engagement as part of this stage. “INGOs and NPAs know the on-the-ground realities. Civil society would be able to assess factors for strengths and risks of ADB projects.” Some participants indicated they saw this less as a watchdog function and more as a collaborative opportunity to course correct and incorporate learning throughout the life of the project. ADB was also encouraged to implement a multi-year post project evaluation to help focus on long term ownership, sustained impact.

Participants identified specific strengths of civil society, stressing strong networks which complement ADB's strengths, collaborating with a range of actors, expertise working in sensitive areas and grass roots participation methodologies, while also being uniquely able to reach those most at risk. Participants also mentioned specialised expert thematic knowledge coupled with practical methodologies and tools

Question 2: *What needs to happen to support meaningful collaboration? What could ADB, civil society and the Government each do?*

In regards to ADB's role, participants suggested taking the "long view" to ensure sustainable positive impact, support CSO, ADB and Government collaboration, hold workshops, provide grants to NPAs,

Communicate more regularly and more transparently, look at internal procedures to make them friendlier to CSOs and invest in supporting the emerging Lao CSO community.

In regards to civil society's role, participants acknowledged that there were ways to work with ADB financed loan projects and that they needed to learn and build their capacity to take advantage of those opportunities and conceptualize and implement projects.

Opportunities emerged for ADB & Civil Society to work together including information sessions on the Lao context for ADB staff and consultants, opportunities for CSOs and ADB consulting firms to get to know each other, information sharing, and ADB participation in technical working groups

Question 3: Collaboration will require mutual understanding of each other's unique expertise and operating methods. How is this best done? (Next steps)

ADB: Suggestions to use existing resources available via the INGO Network to educate staff and consultants on INGO and NPA mission and focus including civil society mapping, directory of INGOs and NPAs, and suggestions to translate forms in Lao language.

Next Steps:

Participants suggested continued dialogue, organized and regular communication via existing mechanisms through the networks, working groups and ADBs web site, scheduled workshops, and using existing resources to educate ADB project officers not based in Laos.

Detailed feedback (flip chart summaries):

Question 1: What opportunities are there between ADB and civil society in support of the country's development agenda?

Sector specific opportunities:

- Agriculture:
 - o Engage relevant CSOs in design, MTE and evaluation noting the potential for non-alignment between national food security and food security for marginalized communities
 - o Livelihood program to improve business skills of farmers leveraging C-Bed tools
 - o Opportunity to engage with the DPs nutrition coordination group which includes civil society engagement

- Energy:
 - o ADB intervention community develop program for communities impacted by the hydropower stations
 - o Hydropower/Energy CS engagement re: Impact of hydropower development on rural communities. How can ADB work with CS to ensure government commitments are met?
- Education:
 - o Education in relation to dormitories and access. Work with CSOs with expertise in child protection to mitigate against child protection issues
 - o Noting focus on female education outcomes, opportunity to engage with the MoES Gender inclusion and disability TWG – Co-chaired by an NGO
- Health
 - o Strengthening basic health service
 - o District INGO collaboration with District Health Ministry aligned with the ADB Model Health Village project.

Project Cycle:

- Design/Planning Process :
 - o Ensure all stakeholders are included: e.g. agriculture farmers, energy – environmental CSOs
 - o Engage INGOs/CSO and NPAs in design process. “We are more than technical assistance, we are development partners.”
 - o Community and civil society input
 - o Bottom up meets top down – parallel engagement with civil society. Examples are:
 - School garden project – as a parallel activity to ADBs school building or as part of the ADB financed project Humana’s People to People
 - ADB’s Model Healthy Village project in Xiangkhouang Province and Healthcare and Hope Alliance (HHA) nutrition project. Both HHA and ADB work with District Health ministry – parallel programs may increase overall positive impact vs. those areas where either organization works alone. There is an opportunity for future planning based on this increased impact.
 - o Specific components to be implemented by CSOs in projects with the Gov. of Lao PDR
- Evaluation
 - o INGOs and NPAs know the on-the-ground realities civil society would be able to assess factors for strengths and risks of ADB projects. Involve CSOs in evaluation process

Specific Strengths of civil society engagement:

- Strong networks which complement ADB’s strengths
 - o Civil society has a lot of experience in collaborating with a range of actors
 - o Needs assessments of the poor. voice of the poor communities
 - o Community participation link to grass roots participating methodologies
 - o Public participation opportunities –use CSOs
 - o Face-to-face consultations when projects are sensitive

- Can help solicit input from grass roots level (citizen)
- Contributes financial resources via their own programs and projects:
 - Support fund for project implementation to reach MDGs especially MDG 4&5
 - Support project to improve the quality of care for people in rural areas – marginalized poor people
- Expertise not necessarily available via consultants and private firms
 - Bring in innovation and new ideas based on practice and context realities
 - Awareness raising, advocacy, knowledge sharing and development
 - Wash education or other topics
 - Education gender disability
 - Specialised expert thematic knowledge coupled with practical methodologies and tools

First steps for ADB and CSO Collaboration

- Key to unlock and open the door
- Role of CS is to monitor ADBs commitments in alignment with ADB policy and NSEDP 7&8. ADBs commitment to sustainable development.
- Cross cutting: there are NGO/NPA working groups in most sectors that provide an entry and focal point for ADB. Ed, child protections, nutrition, wash, health, ECED/ECCD, land issues, agriculture, gender
- Ask for ADB to actively participate in the DP sectorial working groups which include CSOs. The opportunity is already there

Question for further discussion:

- How does ADB integrate accountability into their projects? (citizen/beneficiary feedback, transparency, information to beneficiaries)

Additional comments:

- Low skilled Lao youth forced to move to Thailand to do unskilled labour
- Students graduate without the necessary skills to enter the job force
- Infrastructure is not enough
- Improvement of quality of education
- individual empowerment
- Capacity building to CSOs health developing
- micro finance, loan and small grants

Question 2: *What needs to happen to support meaningful collaboration? What could ADB, civil society and the Government each do?*

ADB:

- Take the “long view” to ensure sustainable positive impact

- More 1-2 year post project evaluation to help focus on long term ownership, sustained impact etc.;
- Long term perspective to build capacity local systems to be aware, mobilized and driving accountability for impact
- Ensure impact in the community
- Support CSO, ADB and & Government collaboration
 - Establish a platform for all three stakeholders to discuss design project process
 - Negotiate with the government to allow CSOs to be involved in goals
 - Support government relations with CSO/NPAs
 - Policy environment enabling for CSO participation
 - Budget planning =>transparency => civil society finance review/evaluation
 - Projects that are supported by ADB & GoL should focus more on multi-stakeholder engagement
- Hold workshops:
 - Open projects to brief CSO networks
 - “How to engage with ADB”
 - Fund management
- Request for grants
 - Give grants to integrated sectors
 - Provide funds
 - Provision small grants to CSOs
 - Reduce procedure to access small grants to CSOs
- Communication & transparency
 - More transparency/info on parallel initiatives (ADB&CSOs)
 - Inform regularly via the INGO Network and LHD about opportunities for CSOs (Tenders)
 - ADB: Lao English version for all project forms
 - Work with the Learning House to cooperate and contact CSOs
- Change procedures:
 - Hire CSOs rather than consultant from CSO (Firm vs. individual)
 - Re-formulate guidelines more friendly to CSOs
 - Institute monitoring mechanisms
 - Simplify ADBs procedure for CSO participation. The procedures should be in Lao language
 - Specific policy to work with CSOs and NPAs
 - ADB: support safeguard policies
- Invest in supporting the emerging CSO community for the long term benefit of Laos:
 - Learn more about the role of CSO vis-a-vis-Lao PDRs development agenda
 - Collaboration with INGOs to support CSOs/NPAs
 - awareness capacity and support for civil society to help local level quality and impact of ADB projects

Civil Society

- There are ways to work with ADB financed under loan project

- Opportunity for the CSOs to learn and build their capacity to conceptualize and implement projects
- CSOs can help ensure responsibility and accountability
- Community empowerment
- CSOs as facilitators
- CSOs on the ground information and knowledge
 - o Ensure impact in the community

ADB & Civil Society

- INGO Network and Learning House organize info session on context for ADB staff and consultants
- CSOs and ADB Consulting firms get to know each other – ADB matchmaking, CSO due diligence
- Use CSOs for social environmental impact assessments
- Make available a list of active projects currently underway. LHD could potentially assist with this
- ADB-CSO partnership will make/create a difference in the community
- Find venues for ADB and CS to better understand each other's unique strengths.

Additional comments;

- Urban environmental improvement
- Urban child friendly should be included in the project

Question 3: *Collaboration will require mutual understanding of each other's unique expertise and operating methods. How is this best done? (Next steps)*

ADB:

- Use civil society mapping (Available through the INGO Network) to educate staff and consultants on INGO and NPA mission and focus
- See directory of INGOs and NPAs
- Translate forms in Lao
- Protect against its money causing mission drift

Next Steps:

- Continuing dialogue and exchange of experiences
- CSOs as steering committee members during project life
- Public, private, people partnerships
- Communication:
 - Publicize project design opportunities (feasibility studies) via INGO & NPA networks
 - Entry points for INGO/CSO into ADB project cycle made more explicit. Advertised through existing mechanisms
 - INGO Network to send e-newsletter to ADB
 - ADB invited to attend NGO working groups
 - Workshops/conference with Government of Lao PDR

- ADB project preparation team to consult more with CSOs
- Group areas of NPA activities and then can align them with ADB projects. Working direct with NPAs sector specific ADB opens opportunity for sharing experiences with CSOs
- Build CSO/NPA credibility
- Share best practices from ADB's project experiences
- Invite NPAs whenever ADB has meeting on particular topic with government and INGOs
- Develop a policy that every project that INGOs work on should engage with NPA

VIII. ANNEX 7: INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO COMMIT TO GIRLS EDUCATION IN LAO PDR

A.

Influencing Government and Development Partners to Commit to Girls Education in Lao PDR An example of Plan's influence

Introduction

Plan is committed to ensuring *Girls are empowered to enjoy their rights: they have increased financial skills and economic assets, and their social position and value is recognized in society.*¹³ The BIAAG 2012 Report recommended that *Ministries of Education should commit to undertake a gender review of their Education Sector Plans in order to ensure that all girls successfully complete at least nine years of quality education.* Plan Laos has recently completed a gender audit of the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) Education Sector Plan. This brief, internal document summarises the context, our methods, and lessons learned. As far as we are aware, this is the first gender audit, or gender equality analysis, that has been undertaken by Plan globally of a national Education Sector Plan, and the first gender audit of any sector plan in Lao PDR (Laos).

What Plan did

Plan contracted a gender and education senior expert to undertake a gender equality analysis of the current MOES Education Sector Plan. This was done within a larger mid-term review of the Education Sector Plan. Plan's consultant was seconded to the MOES mid-term review team. Her work took 12 weeks, and she generated a report for the mid-term review and supported the establishment of the MOES Gender, Disability and Inclusion Technical Working Group. This work was funded by Plan Canada, Plan International and AusAID.

Gender Inequality in Laos

Gender inequalities in Laos are less visible than some other countries of SE Asia, in part reflecting the cultural and political contexts. Lao culture is often described as "shy" and quiet, with problems hidden and not discussed openly. Civil society is controlled, and while Laos has opened up to a market economy, state control dominates. This leads to a common assumption that the situation for girls and women is not of concern. We note that whilst Laos has made progress improving gender parity in primary level enrolments in education, gaps remain and Plan's experience in communities demonstrates significant gender inequalities. As in many countries, gender defines all aspects of the lives of girls, boys, women and men, including girls' and women's access to education, health care, employment and political engagement. This subsequently has a direct impact on health outcomes and quality of life indicators for girls and women. Plan's work in rural, remote and poor communities has found:

- In some ethnic groups (eg. Lahu) girls do not attend school until they are 9-10 years of age, as they remain at home to care for younger siblings. By the time they reach early adolescence they are preparing for marriage, usually at 14-16 years of age. This results in as few as 2-3 years of primary schooling, and girls feeling "too old" to be in the younger grades of primary school.¹⁴
- Girls generally have more responsibility than boys to work at home, including water collection, farm work and caring for young siblings. The opportunity cost of sending girls to

¹³ *Because I am a Girl (BIAAG)* is Plan International's global campaign to support the implementation of Plan's Strategy on Gender Equality. It consists of programming, advocacy and marketing and fundraising initiatives. Central to BIAAG is Plan's belief that gender equality is central to achieving our vision for change: a world in which all children, both girls and boys, realize their full potential that respect people's rights and dignity.

¹⁴ Social and Cultural Barriers To Rural Adolescent Ethnic Community Girls Accessing Lower Secondary Schools in northern Lao PDR. Lyndal Pearce for Childfund and Plan International (Lao PDR). November 2011

school is high for families. For many, marriage is more important than completing education.¹⁵

- Over 20% of girls aged 15-18 from the poorest and second poorest quintiles have children.¹⁶
- Different ethnic groups have practices that reflect the lesser role of women and girls in society, eg in Khmu society, women and girls do not prepare food for visitors because menstruating women and girls are not perceived as clean.¹⁷
- Dowry is practiced in some ethnic groups and impacts on the value parents place on girls.¹⁸
- Key health indicators for women are of concern, in particular the Maternal Mortality Ratio is 357/100,000 live births and is 'off track' to achieve the 75% reduction required to meet the 2015 MDG goal¹⁹.

Working in Partnership – Critical to Our Success

UNICEF and UNGEI, together with MOES, hosted a gender mainstreaming training workshop in December 2012. As a partner of MOES and member of the global UNGEI partnership, Plan gave a plenary speech on social and cultural barriers to girls' access to education. This engagement with UNGEI Secretariat and UNICEF resulted in an invitation for Plan to lead a gender audit of the Education Sector Plan.

Plan Canada's engagement with UNGEI and technical expertise in gender, education and the GPE, resulted in seed funding and technical support for the gender audit. Plan Canada jointly represents Plan International on UNGEI's Global Advisory Committee and was a member of the GPE's Girls' Education Implementation Working Group, which is supporting the development and mandatory roll out of gender audits of Education Sector Plans.

A convergence of factors in Laos, outlined below, allowed Plan to pilot a gender audit process which will now inform the global work of UNGEI and GPE:

1. **A partnership framework provided the foundation for the gender audit.** The global partnership with UNGEI and GPE as well as Plan Laos' established partnership with MOES and development partners. Plan Laos is currently implementing an education program in partnership with the MOES and actively participates in several education working groups in Laos.
2. Plan approached the gender audit with **a commitment to addressing inter-sections with ethnicity, poverty and disability**, and established relationships to do this. The consultant worked in partnership with the gender and disability expert on the mid-term review team, and coordinated with an ethnicity expert engaged for the new AusAID education program design.

Sustainability

The gender audit could become a stand-alone activity - a "one off" with no subsequent change, and no ongoing learning and analysis. Plan is committed to sustainable change with the following activities:

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Government of Lao PDR, *Lao Social Indicator Survey 2012*.

¹⁷ Study on Barriers to Accessing Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health Services for Remote Ethnic Groups and Vulnerable Urban women. Suzie Albone for CARE International in Lao PDR. 2011

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Government of Lao PDR, *Lao Social Indicator Survey 2012*.

1. Following the UNICEF and UNGEI hosted workshop in December 2012, Plan was asked to co-chair a new technical working group within the MOES structure – Gender, Disability and Inclusion (GDITWG). This is the first TWG to be established under the Education Sector Working Group structure, and is chaired by the MOES. Plan worked with the MOES to ensure that the consultant’s TOR included support and facilitation of the first GDITWG meeting. This successfully took place, and the MOES is committed to Plan’s ongoing role as co-Chair. Plan’s existing reputation with MOES allowed for deeper more involved partnership, and acceptance of Plan’s role as the co-Chair for this important mechanism.
2. The consultant’s report was crafted in a way that drew out potentially controversial, as well as acceptable findings, but in a non-confrontational and supportive style. This enables the audit report to be a working document, and the findings will be used as the basis for the GDITWG year one action plan. The findings will also serve to inform the revision of the Education Sector Plan and Lao’s GPE application in mid/late 2014.
3. The timing of the gender audit was crucial. As in all sectors, education sector planning is cyclical, however, when a country is a member of the GPE the planning cycle becomes even more crucial because GPE grant applications are dependent on ESP mid-term reviews and subsequent revisions. As a GPE country partner with the intention of applying for GPE funding again in 2014, this gender audit supports Laos to meet the demands of the GPE. The GPE Strategic Plan (2012-15) includes the 2nd strategic objective: *All girls in GPE endorsed countries successfully complete primary school and go to secondary school in a safe, supportive and learning environment*. This includes the indicator to ensure all Education Sector Plans are gender responsive. Plan’s gender audit and the GDIWTWG are critical to ensuring that Laos meets this requirement for the next GPE funding application.

Lessons Learned and Contributors to Success

1. Plan Canada’s commitment to the UNGEI partnership and technical expertise enabled this activity to be realized, and recognized as an important advocacy initiative. Plan Canada’s existing relationships meant the entry point was created, and used.
2. Commitment by a Plan member of seed funding, and Plan International’s commitment to co-funding, reflected a shared vision for this investment.
3. These first two contributors to success reflect a commitment to One Plan One Goal by Plan Canada, Plan Laos and Plan International’s Advocacy and Campaigns Unit.
4. Respecting and addressing the intersections with poverty, ethnicity and disability were essential to ensure credibility, and for robust analysis.
5. This activity was time sensitive. Plan Canada’s technical and initial financial commitment enabled Plan Laos to immediately commit to the gender audit, when this opportunity arose. For this gender audit to be part of the mid-term review, an immediate response from Plan was required.
6. Reports for development partners and the ministry need to be accurate and honest, but non-controversial and acceptable by many (or at least most) stakeholders. This prevents suppression of a report and ensures it can become a “working document”, from which findings can be addressed.
7. Identifying complimentary or follow-up activities to ensure sustainability is critical. Plan remained vigilant of entry points and opportunities, and ensured these were maximized.
8. Timing was critical – we were responsive when the opportunities arose.

IX. ANNEX 8: BUILDING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD-GOVERNANCE

Examples from ChildFund's work in Lao PDR
(Excerpts from email exchange with Chris Mastaglio,
Country Director ChildFund, Lao PDR, September 2014)

District Socio-Economic Development Planning; these plans link (in theory) to the NSEDP. ChildFund is working at the district level to support government to understand the process in place (whilst a government (or donor, depending on how you look at it) process, we are supporting the transition from outcome to output based planning, as well as ensuring that children, youth and women are actively consulted with as part of the planning process. NGOs are uniquely placed to do this at the local level as we are able to work directly with power holders in district administration to support capacity gaps. It should be noted that we have just received permission for these activities, so little progress (other than permissions!) has been achieved to date. It is anticipated this will be a practical engagement around good governance and listening to the voices of all citizens in planning.

Health and Education Services; ChildFund negotiates on a project by project basis (again, something that only local actors can do) to ensure that investment infrastructure is backed up by teacher, doctor and nurse staffing allocations and inclusion in budgets. Without these commitments, ChildFund will not invest in infrastructure. Our ability to monitor and negotiate at this local level has ensured that all infrastructure built to date has been fully staffed from the government budget; this also encourages better planning and budgeting at the local level where planning is matched by budgets.

Tendering; district government holds seats on all ChildFund tendering committees and engages in tendering processes from start to finish. Whilst this often results in challenges around decisions as local influence often becomes a factor in decision making, engagement in the entire process and the practical demonstration of donor requirements and good practice expose officials to practices that over time will become a requirement within the government system.

Community Construction; ChildFund utilizes a community construction model that supports communities to manage aspects of construction such as stock control. This shifts the power from ChildFund to local communities in this regard and builds ownership/responsibility over the process and result. This has seen communities actively engaging in contractor management when shortcuts have tried to be taken and resolving issues. In addition, when stock has gone missing, in every case, communities have solved the issue. This is a strong, practical demonstration of developing capacity and providing exposure to good practice around transparency at the village level.

DRR and Child Protection; whilst the government has on paper policies and strictures for both child protection and DRR, it is evident that little public budget has gone into developing capacity and actioning the structures. ChildFund has worked at the provincial, district and village levels to identify train and mobilize these committees to provide these essential citizen services. Provision of these services also builds community expectations around the role of duty bearers, particularly when framed in the context of national policy commitments and decisions. This is part of a longer term strategy to build citizen demand for services that have been committed to by the government.