



ອົງການສະຫະປະຊາຊາດ ເພື່ອການພັດທະນາ
United Nations Development Programme in Lao PDR

Enhancing Social and Economic Opportunities for Youth in Lao PDR





Project Background

Lao PDR has one of the youngest populations in the region. Close to 60 per cent are estimated to be less than 25 years of age. Projections show a rapid increase in the working-age population and a falling dependency ratio.

Thus, in the medium-term, Lao PDR is set to benefit from the “demographic dividend” to the economy. However, the full benefits of the demographic dividend will be realised only if new jobs allow to keep pace with the working-age population's growth and only if young women and men are better equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge.

This issue is all the more critical for the disadvantaged youth groups, including ethnic groups and female, in rural and most remote areas.

The young population represents a unique opportunity for Lao PDR. The demand for medium-skilled and high-skilled workers generated by the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) cannot be met without addressing the current mismatch between labour market needs and young people’s education and skills.

Lao PDR’s overall Youth Development Index (YDI) score in 2015 is 0.365 with an increasing trend from 2011, meaning five domains of the youth development (education, health and well-being, employment and opportunity, political participation and civic participation

among young people) are moving in a positive direction. Employment and Opportunity improved slightly with improvements in the Adolescent Fertility Rate and Account at a Financial In Lao PDR still lags behind in the Education domain with relatively low scores in all domain indicators. In particular, Lao PDR has been facing the following challenges:

► **Skills gap:** The country urgently needs to upgrade the education and skills of its young population. Lao PDR will not be able to meet the demand for medium-skilled and high-skilled workers generated by AEC entry unless it can resolve the current mismatch between labour market needs and young people’s education and skills.

Project Summary:



Duration:
June 2020 –
June 2022



Geographic coverage:
National level
2 provinces
(Khammouane and Houaphanh)



Focus area:
Livelihoods
and
Poverty Reduction



Implementing partners:
Lao Youth Union, Lao
Women Union, Ministry
of Information, Culture
and Tourism





► **Low productivity:** The agricultural sector, which accounts for around 70 percent of employment, is characterized by low productivity. Unless this is tackled, Lao PDR will not be able to fully develop its potential in the next decade.

Lao PDR will, therefore, need to accelerate measures to upgrade education and training for young people and improve labour skills, set national skills standards and promote mutual recognition of qualifications. Indeed, to realize the full youth's potential, the effective implementation of an overarching youth policy will be needed.

Main Objectives and Outcomes

The project seeks to establish an enabling environment for youth (nationally defined aged for youth – 15 to 30 years old) to realise their potential and undertake an important role in the socio-economic development of the country through enhanced social and economic opportunities, with a special focus on youth employability and social participation.

Contact Information

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The programme has three main focuses:

- Contribute to the implementation of sectoral and national youth policies in the selected provinces
- Increase economic empowerment of rural youth
- Enhance youth social engagement and participation in decision-making processes

The above-mentioned goals and objectives address and directly linked with the following thematic priorities of the Youth Window:

- Supporting youth employment and harnessing the innovation potential of youth.
- Promoting decent work, income-generating opportunities and improved wellbeing for rural youth.
- Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for young people.

The project also stems from national demands and, in turn, contributes directly to specific outcomes in the country's 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020 (NSEDP), UN Partnership Framework (UNPF) 2017-2021/ UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Lao PDR (2017-2021), and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

