



Women's Leadership in Climate Resilience

Drawn from the experience of community-based project – Lao PDR



Young women generation are collecting and have food from the area near the village and dried it to store for a longer time and plant some vegetables, Photo by GDA



Presented by: Manivanh Suyavong, Director of Gender Development Association, Laos
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Context: Gender and Climate change

- Over 70% of people's lives rely on natural resources, with agriculture being the most important source of income, however, climate change has hampered economic progress in Laos because vital industrial sectors rely on natural resources.
- Water scarcity and groundwater depletion can affect agricultural output, and Ethnic women are more prone to food instability and malnutrition. Their ability to manage and mitigate climate-related shocks to their livelihoods is hampered by systemic inequities and a deeply unequal power structure.
- Food scarcity and the multifaceted repercussions of extreme poverty, which cause familial stress and worsen alcohol and drug abuse, have also been connected to a rise in gender-based violence, particularly in rural and distant ethnic communities.



Key Findings on Traditional Climate and Livelihood Adaptation for ethnic women in Lao PDR

- Women are using their existing knowledge and experiences in adapting to climate change.
- Project participants became more aware of climate change as they became more aware of the difficulty they face both directly and indirectly in the community.
- Even though their lifestyles and understanding of ethnic cultural customs differ, they share agricultural activities and year-round outputs.

Some Challenges

- Many people are still lack of knowledge about climate change, adaptation and response.
- Low level of women represented in village leadership level, only 2,36% women village heads.
- Climate change has resulted in low yields, insufficient incomes and at the same time the diversity of crops, insufficient long-term food security.
- People are still not given clear and up-to-date information on events, which is very important to prepare an adjust in a timely manner.



Some Lessons

- Promote knowledge on climate change and disaster to ensure understanding, response and adaptation to the community's livelihood and environment.
- Gender leadership mainstreaming in climate resilience. Develop an easy and clear print media format for climate change adaptation to give ethnic women access to a wide range of information.
- Promote technical knowledge of agriculture – food processing, animal husbandry, disease prevention.
- Ensure people in community can access to up-to-date information to deal with adapt in timely manner.



Women represent a high percentage of poor communities that are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood. In rural areas, women have limited access to and control of environmental goods and services; they have negligible participation in decision-making and are not involved in the distribution of environment management benefits. As a result, women are less equipped to be resilient in climate change.

This can be seen in the Feuang District of Laos where small-scale female farmers are being impacted by climate change with droughts destroying vital crops and air pollution compromising their health.

Ms. Phimphone is among thousands of other women in Laos experiencing these issues that are threatening their livelihoods.

I have been growing limes for 4 years, and the weather has not been like this. This year's weather is much hotter and drier than last year's. There is little rain, so the agricultural product or plant is not good. It is very different if the year has rain and the weather is not dry;



Then the limes will be beautiful and have a lot of juice. This is affected by the drought, which makes the limes not beautiful and reduces the yield by 40-50%

When it doesn't rain, we have to water the lime garden more than before, and it has forced us to work harder to take care of our lime production by using more water to water the garden, which increases our expenditures.

Because we don't have electricity at our farm, we have to pump water that uses oil to pump water, which increases the cost of production even more and our income is reduced.

In addition, the dust in the air now affects our health, making the body unable to adjust to the changing weather. The dust that exists now makes it difficult for us to breathe because the air does not circulate, which has never happened before. It happened because people slashed and burned for agricultural activity."



Ms. Phimphone realises she will need to adapt to the changing climate to protect her livelihood and farming future.



Name : Ms. Phimphone
THAMMAVONG
Age : 45 years
Ethnicity : Lao
Occupation : Farm (lime)
Location : Sammeun Village, Feuang
District, Vientiane Province

GDA in partnership with the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) and NGO International Needs Australia (INA) are working to improve women's adaptation to climate change through our Promoting Gender Equality in Climate Resilience Project in the Vientiane Province of Lao.

Climate change is a very serious threat, and its consequences impact many different aspects of our lives.

The impact of climate change is not only an environmental problem.

It is a problem that affects everyone in the world, especially the agriculture and economic sectors.





Traditional knowledge of how ethnic women understand climate change and how they adapt to climate change with agriculture, food processing to keep them longer, planting vegetables for food security and earning income in rural communities.



**Khopchai
Thank you !**

