

FINAL REPORT

# **LAO PDR : COUNTRY GENDER PROFILE**

MARCH 2006

GENDER RESOURCE INFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE  
(GRID)

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COUNTRY WID PROFILE  
LAO PDR

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DPT	Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus
CPI	Committee for Planning and Investment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child.
CWS	Church World Service
DOF	Department of Forestry
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization, UN
FOMACOP	Forest Management and Conservation Project
F/P	Family Planning
GAD	Gender and Development
GOL	Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic
GRID	Gender Resource Information & Development Center
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
Lao NCAW	Lao National Commission for Advancement of Women
LECS	Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey
LNFC	Lao National Front for Construction
LWU	Lao Women's Union
LYO	Lao Youth Union
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MOC	Ministry of Commerce
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MRC	Mekong River Commission
NA	Not available
NCCA	National Committee for Control of AIDS
NGPES	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
NSC	National Statistics Center
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PMO	Prime Ministerial Order
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RRA	Rapid Rural Assessment
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SFM	Sustainable Forestry Management
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STEA	Science, Technology and Environment Agency
THB	Thai baht
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFA	Village Forest Association
VRF	Village Revolving Fund
WB	World Bank

# 1. Basic Profile

## 1-1 Socio-Economic Profile

Socio-Economic Profile							
Population (2005)		Total	% of Urban Population		Population growth rate (2005)		
	Total	5,609,997	27.1%		2.2%		
	Female	50.2%					
Poverty		National	Rural	Urban			
	Population below the poverty line (2003)	33.5%	37.6%	19.7%			
	Language	Official Language: Lao					
Economic Indicators		GDP/Capita	Growth rate of real GDP		Inflation rate	Gini Index*1	
		2004	2004		(1990-2004)		
		US 420	6.9%		28%	NA	
Public sectors expenditure		Health	Education	Defense			
	(2002-2003) (% of GDP)	5.8%	9.9%	NA			
Industry / GDP (2004)		Agriculture	Education	Service			
		46.6%	27%	25.5%			
Labor Indicators						Minimum Wages(2005)	
	Proportion of workers	Agriculture	Education	Service		290000kip/month	
	By industry total(yr)	81%	5%	14%			
	Female	NA	NA	NA			
2003 – World Bank				Unemployment rate		Male	Female
	Total labor force	1,058,000			urban	NA	NA
	Female	45%			rural	NA	NA
					Total unemployment		
Labor force in formal / informal sector		Formal		Informal		Urban formal sector	
	(% of total labor force)	Urban		NA		Male NA	
		Rural		NA		Female NA	
Decision – making		Female / total				Female / total	
	Members of national Assembly (2006)	25/109 persons		Managers of business sector		186/761 Persons	
	Ministers (2005)	0/16 persons		Government staff (2005)		33,208/91,953 Persons	
	Provincial Governors (2005)	0/18 persons					
	District Governors	3/138 persons					
Female headed-Households (2001)		12.4% in urban areas, 8.4% in rural areas, of which: 2.1% single, 85.4% married, 8.9% widowed, and 0.6% separated					
Law for women			Ratified Year	Details			
	Family Law	1990		Monogamy, freedom of marriage			
	Labor Law	1994		Labor standard and prohibition of work for women during pregnancy maternity leave for women			
	The Law on Development and Protection of Women	2003		Define principles, rules and measure relating to the development and protection of women.			
Ratification and signature of international law for women and international commitments				Ratification	Year		
	CEDAW			Ratified	1981		
	Beijing Platform for Action			Signed	1995		
Policy of WID							
	National Women's Congress(by Lao Women's Union): Evaluation and review of national plan for women						
	Informal policy to promote the number of female leaders in all levels of government since 1995						
	Gender mainstreaming policy within the framework of the NGPES (2004)						
Governmental organization of WID							
	National Machinery	Lao Women's Union		Lao NCAW – 2003			

Rate of Exchange (March, 2006): US\$ 1 = 10,436 kip

## 1.2 Health Profile

<b>Life Expectancy (2005)</b>	Male: 58    Female: 60	Population growth rate	2.0%
<b>Immediate causes of mortality</b>	1. Malaria    2. Diarrhea    3. Respiratory infections		
<b>Expansion of health service (2005)</b>	Population / Doctor	Population/nurse and midwife	
	255/doctor	16836/Nurse and mid wife	
<b>Government expenditure to health (2002)</b>	8.7%		
<b>Infant mortality rate (per1000 live birth) (Year 2003)</b>		<b>Immunization coverage(12-23month-old children (2004)</b>	
Total	86 person	BCG	60%
Under-5 mortality rate(per1000live birth) year 2003		DPT 1	66%
		DPT 3	45%
		Hepatitis B (HepB)	45%
Male	96 person	Oral Polio	46%
Female	85 person	Measles	36%
<b>Family Planning</b>		<b>Contraceptive Method (2000)</b>	
Total fertility rate (2004)	4.7%	IUD	3.0%
Maternal mortality rate per1000 (1990-2004 – UNICEF)	530	Pills	13%
Birth attendance rate(2004)	21%	Periodic / Abstinence	2.0%
Contraceptive prevalence rate(1995-2003-HDR 2005)	32.2%	Injections	8.0%
Age at first marriage (2004)	17.7	Female Sterilisation	5.0%
Infants with low birth weight (1998-2004)	14%	Condoms	1.0%
<b>Reproductive Health care</b>			
Antenatal care (94)	26.7%	Tetanus injection during pregnancy (2004 - UNICEF)	30%
Maternal anemia rate	35%		
<b>Nutrition</b>		Population	
Iodine Deficiency	NA	ORH use rate	NA
Iodized salt consumption	75%	Malnutrition	Male    Female
Vitamin A deficiency (6-59 months)(2003)	64%		
<b>Community Health facility</b>			
Access to safe drinking water (UNFPA 2002)	43%	Access to sanitation facility	18%
<b>HIV / AIDS</b>			
Statistic (June 2003)	HIV infected	AIDS cases	% of pregnant women
	60 person	39 Persons	Unavailable

### 1.3 Education Profile

<b>Education Profile</b>						
<b>Education system</b>		Compulsory education (5year), Primary education (5year)				
Public expenditure on education % of GDP		2.4%				
<b>Adult literacy rate (2003) – NSC 2005</b>		Male	85 %	Female	64 %	
<b>Primary education (2003-2004) – Lao Info</b>			<b>University level (2004-2005) - total 39921</b>			
	Net enrollment ratio	male	84.8%	Net enrollment ratio	Male	24025
		Female	78.8%		Female	15896
<b>Secondary education (2003-2004) (Lower secondary)</b>			<b>Female ratio in higher education (university)</b>			
	Net enrollment ratio	male	56.68%	By Faculty	Humanities	
		female	43.32%		Social	141
				Sciences		
<b>Secondary education (2003-2004) (Higher Education)</b>				Natural		272
	Net enrollment	male	58.48	sciences	Medical	594
		Female	41.16%		Engineering & architecture	76
<b>Education in general – NSC 2004 (in Thousand)</b>						
	Number of schools and teachers	Teachers (person)		Schools (places)		
		28		Primary	8529	
		10		Lower secondary	626	
		4		Higher Secondary	30	
	Access to primary	4000 villages lack access to primary				
	Access to text books	- pupils at grades 1&2 have one set of new textbooks - primary teaching materials and curriculum available in primary schools				
	Training for female teachers	- Some teachers training seemed to be provided by ministry of education regardless of sex. - Government budget for teacher training is insufficient to upgrade quality of teaching.				
	Literacy education for adults	- Only 2% of total government budget for education is allocated to non-formal education. Variety of non-formal education programs were set up with collaboration of various international organization and NGOs.				
Religious & culture concerns on education: family economy, family attitudes, distance to school, culture not foster much thinking about youth's future and family burdens and chores weighed on female educational attainment.						
Impact of government policy reform on education sector: with the new economic reforms, the family cost of education has risen and in some cases become an obstacle to participation in education						

## ***2. General Situation of Women and Government Policy on WID/Gender***

### **2.1. General Situation**

Lao PDR is located in the middle of South East Asian region surrounding by Vietnam, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia. The population is approximately 5.6 million (2005) of which women accounted for 51%. It comprises of 49 ethnic groups. On the basis of the total area of 236,800 square km the present population density for the country is still low.

Due to Lao PDR is a Landlocked and Least Developed Country, the geographic conditions restrict both the quantity and quality of agricultural land and pose difficulties in the development of trade, social infrastructure and transport and communications links. The country faces many unique human development challenges, the majority of the population approximately 80 percent of the Lao people live in rural and remote areas with poor infrastructure, services and low living standard. The remote areas, especially in the hilly regions still remain untouched. Their living condition depends on nature; hunting wildlife, fishing, foraging for forest products and practising slash and burn cultivation for their crops with a low profit in order to survive. Lao women, especially who live in rural areas have burden work every day. They have to get up in the early morning and spend at least 12 hours pounding rice with their hands or feet. After that they have to walk 2-3 kilometres to fetch water and fire-wood with out help from their husbands. It is shown that 30 percent of population live under the poverty line; about 73 percent have income below US\$2 per day and about 25 percent have less than US\$1 per day (WB, 2004).

Beginning from the 1980's the Lao PDR began to implement a policy of renovation. At present the country has experienced fundamental success in the reconstruction and development of the country, as illustrated by the yearly increase in the GDP of US\$500 per capita (2005), by development in the socio-cultural areas, and by the implementation of the constitution and the rule of law as basis of civil society in the lives of Lao citizens. Those factors have created the basic conditions necessary to develop role and opportunities for participation of women from every ethnic group in all areas.

Lao women play important roles in agriculture, small-scale businesses, manufacturing (especially the garment sector), and provision of basic services (especially education and health). Women in urban areas are also finding opportunities in information technology, tourism, and business services. Lao women are also primarily responsible for maintaining their families' food security and health.

Since introducing its New Economic Mechanism in 1986, the Lao Government has been moving gradually from a centrally planned economy to a more market-based system. This economic transition has included the lifting of restrictions on private sector activity, the liberalization of prices and exchange rate, and expansion of trade with neighboring countries and overseas markets. The opening of Lao PDR's economy has accelerated since the country joined the Association of Southeast Asian nation (ASEAN) in 1997.

GMS initiatives, such as the development of transport corridors through the country, are further integrating Lao PDR in the regional economy.

To make more effective progress in reducing poverty and implementing its Socio Economic Development Plan, the Government recently prepared a National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy that the Lao National Assembly endorsed in October 2003. The NGPES includes poverty-focused action plans for four key sectors agriculture/forestry, education, health, and transport-as well as several supporting sectors. Public investments under the NGPES will focus on the 47 poorest districts in the country. The NGPES also identifies several inter-sectoral priorities, including gender equity and environmental conservation, and provides a gender strategy linked to each of the key NGPES sectors.

In this undertaking, the LWU has been instrumental in developing various sub-projects such as: micro finance and micro-credit; women's capacity building; promotion of agricultural and handicraft production as well as small and medium enterprises for women and others. One of the achievements in the implementation of the above-mentioned projects that is currently taken as a lesson-learned and being emulated across the country is the establishment of a village development fund. This activity is being undertaken in 3 pilot project sites located in 3 provinces, 35 districts, 562 villages with a coverage of 6,947 families. The funds are filled from contribution of the villagers, state budget and various social organizations. The village small entrepreneurs can secure loans from the village development fund to develop their own businesses. Furthermore, the villagers are also able to use this fund for the development of the economy of their village according to criteria and through ownership of their own.

To ensure gender equality rights as well as the manifestation of the political will and the efficient implementation mechanism, Lao women have achieved development and continued progress, and have become a significant force contributing to the national socio-economic development. It is gratifying for us to note that the Lao women have occupied leadership positions at all levels from central to local ones. There is an increase of female members of the National Assembly from 8 deputies in the Third legislature (1992-1997) or about 9.4% to 25 deputies in the Fifth legislation (2002-2007), or about 22.9% of the whole Assembly.

The Lao PDR has become a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1981. This testifies the country's political will to work in partnership with the international community for the advancement and protection of the legitimate interests of Lao women in general and women of all ethnic groups in particular. Since then, the Lao Government has vigorously striven to implement the said Convention in consistence with the specificities and realities of the country. In conjunction with the protection and promotion of women's rights in political, socio-economic fields, the Lao Government has given due attention to establishing a domestic legal system that would gradually meet the international standard. Moreover, it has attentively disseminated and implemented existing laws in truly efficient manner.



## **2.2. Government Policy on WID/Gender**

The first Constitution of Lao PDR, adopted in 1991, is a legal guarantee of equality between men and women in politics, economy, culture and society, as well as in the family (Articles 22, 24, 27). In 2003, the National Assembly adopted the revised constitution, in which one article states that “the State, society and family should attentively implement the policy on development and promotion of women’s advancement, protecting women’s and children’s rights and benefits”. The amendment of the constitution is focusing on increasing responsibility in protecting women’s interests and developing women’s advancement. Lao citizens have the freedom of settlement and movement as provided by law. Therefore, attention should be paid to both equity and development. Women of all ethnic groups should receive equal treatment in terms of legal rights, economic and social opportunities.

The principle of equality is reflected in several national laws, such as the Labour Law (1994), which requires nondiscrimination in employment (Article 2) and equal pay for work of equal quantity, quality, and value (Article 39). Female workers shall have the right to at least ninety-days of maternal leave with their normal pay from their employers or from the Social Security Fund. In case of illness resulting from pregnancy the employed mother shall be allowed to take a supplementary leave of at least thirty days at fifty percent of her normal pay (Article 35).

The Family Law (1990) provides generally that “the husband and wife have equal rights in all aspects within the family. The husband and wife together make decisions on their own family matters. Spouses are mutually obliged to love, shows mutual respect and care a joint obligation for child rearing and education and build up a genuine family bond, happiness and advancement” (Article 13). The husband and wife have the equal rights to choose a family name (Article 15). The law also establishing monogamy as the governing marriage system (Article 4).

In Lao PDR, land is owned by the State but all citizens have equal rights to use the land. Land and property laws state categorically that “property that is acquired before marriage received through inheritance, or granted specifically to a particular spouse is not considered as conjugal property”. Land acquired by a couple is supposed to be issued a joint land use certificate or title: (Law on Land, Article 43; Family Law; and Property Law). “Land registration is the record in the land register book, such as: names and surnames of the husband and wife who have received the land use right, land category, land boundaries and area, acquisition manner and land location are recorded in the land register book” (Article 43, Law on Land).

In October 2004, the National Assembly passed the Law on Development and Protection of Women. Subsequently, the President of the Lao PDR issued a Decree which officially promulgated the said Law. This legal instrument has been enacted to ensure and uplift women’s role; to define basic provisions, measures for the protection of the legitimate interests of women as well as the responsibility of the State, society and family vis-a-vis women; it also aims to promote their knowledge and competency, revolutionary morals

and virtues, gender equality; to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women; to prevent and fight against trafficking in women and children; to combat domestic violence against women and children; to create enabling conditions for women's participation; and to be equal force in national protection and development. (The law is comprised of eight chapters and 54 articles). The responsibility of the state, society and family towards women is to encourage knowledge, capacity and gender equality.

Besides, Article 33 stipulates that women and children who are victims of domestic violence have the right to ask for help from household members, neighbours and relatives; or to report it to village authorities; with the aim of educating the violators to end the violence, creating a peaceful and happy family. If domestic violence becomes a serious danger that constitutes a criminal offence. This victims is entitled to report it to police officials for assistance in accordance with the laws. The law also determines clear measures on the rights of victims of domestic violence and trafficking, measures to assist and protect victims, and criminal and civil penalties for offenders. Lao PDR is also developing new laws such as the Law on the Overseeing of the National Assembly and the Law on Enforcement of Court Decision. Law enforcement improves management over the state and society in order to bring about justice for all.

Besides that the Government's commitment to gender equality is also expressed in a number of policy documents, including those on Population, Health and Human Resources. The Lao Government has approved the Development Plan for Lao Women (1998-2003) that includes goals and programs to promote Lao women's legal awareness; to improve their education, skill levels, health, nutrition, and income-generating opportunities; and to reduce their workloads. Recently the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women established in 2003 is developing the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women for the years 2005-2010. In May 2000, the Prime Minister's Office issued a Directive on the integration of sex-disaggregated statistics in policy and planning gender-sensitive development programs/projects. And in January 2005 the Prime Minister's Office issued an additional Notification on the implementation of sex-disaggregated statistics in order for all sectors to widely apply in their real practice.

The National Population and Development Policy (1999) includes a number of measures to improve the status of women in socio-economic development, and expand reproductive health and family services. The NGPES identifies gender equity as a cross-sectoral concern relevant to both poverty reduction and to socio-economic development. The NGPES also includes a gender strategy for poverty reduction that focuses in particular on the four main NGPES sectors.

The Lao PDR is a signatory to a number of international Conventions, which the country is committed to implementing. It acceded to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1969, and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1981 and 1990, respectively. CEDAW prohibits women's discrimination and protects their rights and CRC obligates Governments to protect the rights of children-girls and boys- and to ensure that their basic needs are met. Safe motherhood is also part of the

CRC (Articles 22 and 24). The Government's commitment to gender equality is also expressed in policy documents, including those on Population, Health and Human Resources.

Lao PDR has incorporated the main ideas of these conventions into its Constitution. However, there still remains the need to develop laws to steadily strengthen the Lao legal framework, which suffers from a shortage of experience and human capacity, and limited awareness among the population. The Ministry of Justice is making efforts to raise awareness about the plight of women and their rights. It is planning to include gender training/sessions in legal education (the curriculum for law students) at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, National University of Laos. Gender training will also be provided to crime investigators and judges of the Supreme Court, and raise awareness of people's human rights, especially women, ethnic minorities, children and other disadvantaged people.

### **2.3. National machinery**

To improve the women's status and gender equality, the Lao Government assigned the Lao Women's Union and Lao NCAW as national machineries to implement their functions.

The Lao Women's Union is a mass organizations authorized under Article 7 of the 1991 Constitution to mobilize and protect the rights and benefits of all Lao women and children. It was established in 1955 under the name of the Lao Patriotic Women's Association, initially acted as a uniting front for all Lao women of all ethnic groups and all social strata in the struggle for the liberation of the country.

After the liberation and the proclamation of the Lao PDR on December 2, 1975, the organization changed its name to the Lao Women's Union and expanded its role and mandate to conform with the Socio-Economic Development of the new era. It has the organizational structure from central through grassroot level. The LWU has status as the ministerial level. At present the number of LWU members has risen to 970,000 by the end of 2005. The IV National Lao Women's Congress approved the Lao Women's Slogan: "three goods" meaning: "being a good citizen, being good in development, having a good cultural family".

The roles of the LWU are: to educate women of all ethnic groups on the Constitution, Laws, Legislations and International Conventions related to the rights and benefits of women and children; to protect the rights and benefits of Lao women and children; to mobilize and advocate women to actively participate in the socio-economic development; to take part in protection of fine culture and traditions of Lao women of all ethnic groups.

The Lao Women's Union is the national mechanism for the promotion of equal rights and the advancement of women. The Union has responsibility for overseeing directly or

indirectly the implementation of all Government's policies and programs related to women's development and gender issues.

Over the past 30 years, the Lao Women's Union expanded its activities to support skill training, income generation, and financial assistance for ethnic minority and rural women; good health practices and family planning; awareness-raising about women's rights, including in the workplace and in relation to land registration and titling; the establishment of women's professional associations; and women's advancement in the civil service and the National Assembly. More recently, the LWU started to address emerging issues such as domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, and human trafficking; however, political mobilization of Lao women remains a core mandate of the LWU.

Since 1997 the LWU has been playing a prominent role in advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment through the Gender Resource Information and Development Centre (GRID), through creating gender awareness, and providing gender analysis for Government officials at all levels to facilitate gender mainstreaming. As a technical body, some of GRID's accomplishments include: coordination with the National Statistics Center to collect and promote the use of statistics disaggregated by sex; collaboration with CPI to develop guidelines and to conduct training on gender sensitive planning; gender awareness and skill training for government staff at central and local levels and mass media; quantitative and qualitative research on the situation of Lao women, women's participation in village decision making, gender and land, gender and energy, women entrepreneurs, and other topics; consultation with CPI and line ministries on integrating gender in the NGPES; preparation of a country gender analysis and profile; creation of a web site and production of newsletters, information sheets and brochures, posters, calendars and videos.

In the beginning of 2002 the Lao Government agreed to establish Lao NCAW as the mechanism institution to promote gender equality and Women's Advancement by gaining experience from Vietnam and Philippines to study their respective national machineries for women. Therefore, in April 2003 the Prime Minister issued the Decree No.37 to establish the Lao NCAW officially. The Lao NCAW is different from LWU that the Lao NCAW is a state organization, but both are committed to protect the rights and interests of Lao women and to bring about gender equality in all aspects of life in the Lao society, across various ethnic groups. The Lao NCAW functions as the focal point coordinating closely with local authorities and international organizations in the implementation of the Government's policy on gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. To enable the Lao NCAW to carry out the said activity in an effective manner, the Prime Minister of Lao PDR issued an Order to ministries and local authorities to set up a unit for the advancement of women within their respective organizations. These will be called Sub-Commissions on the Advancement of Women with the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of national laws, policies and plans for the advancement of women by their respective organizations.

The National Strategy for the Advancement of Women for the years 2005-2010 that are in conformity with the Beijing Platform for Action which focus on five main goals: 1). Enhance women's participation in the implementation of the NGPES for the entire population and women themselves; 2) promote the education of women; 3) Improve women's access to healthcard services; 4) Increase the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels; 5) Strengthening those organizations that protect and promote the advancement of women.

Although the Lao women have obtained several achievements from implementing different activities, but it still face some difficulties and challenging that slow down the process of their advancement such as: the lack of human capacity to effectively carry out gender mainstreaming within programs and through training exercises for ministry staff; the lack of accurate sex-disaggregated and relevant gender data to support policy-making; limited budget and resources to support the gender mainstreaming process; and the coordination of gender mainstreaming activities among Government ministries, international donors and INGOs still limited.

### ***3. Current Situation of Women by Sector***

#### **3.1. EDUCATION**

Although Lao PDR has made quantitative and qualitative progress in education over the past several decades, education indicators remain among the lowest in East Asia. There are stark disparities between urban and rural areas, boys and girls, rich and poor. Within urban areas, the gender gap in education has practically closed. Meanwhile, rural areas record some of the lowest educational indicators in the country, and the gender gap continues to widen. Indeed, a significant proportion of children, especially girls and ethnic minority groups in remote areas are out of school. There are more illiterate women than men.

Causes of illiteracy and low attendance among girls and women vary across provinces and among the different ethnic groups. Poverty, traditional beliefs, son preference, language, and remoteness are important factors. Others could be dropping out of school either due to household chores, early marriage or pregnancy. Many poor families do not see the relevance of formal education for improving their livelihoods, and the lack of interest by parents discourages children from attending school.

#### **Government policy**

The Lao Constitution (1991) and Education Law (2000) recognize the right of all citizens to education. They promote the principle of compulsory primary education and the development of education with particular attention to ethnic minority groups, women, those in greatest poverty, and both disable and especially talented children. The most significant document is the Strategic Plan 20 years to 2020, and the five year development Plan for Education. Government wide policies have also impact on

education: in particular, the Prime Minister Decree on implementing Decentralization of Education Sector, the five year Socio-economic Plan and the National Poverty Reduction Plan.

The Lao Government has also ratified international agreements on and related to education, e.g. CEDAW, CRC, and has agreed to the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Most specifically, it has committed to Education for All” (EFA). Under this, the aim is for over all net enrolment rate (NER) of 95% for Primary education by 2015, and lower secondary school NER to be 74%. In 2004, the share of education expenditure in public expenditure is 11,8 % of GDP. The MOE is actually implementing a seven year Basic Education for Girls Project (55 Million \$US) and School feeding in primary school in remote areas that help poor children / girls, particularly ethnic minority groups better access to schooling.

### Literacy

About 40% of the Lao population lives below poverty line and poverty is a major determinant of who goes to primary school for how long and with what results. Overall adult illiteracy in Lao PDR is about 34 percent, with the rate being higher for women (45%) than men (23%) (World Bank EdStats 2002).

Gender gap is still pronounced, particularly among rural households, poor households and ethnic minorities. Important gains were made in urban areas in the last two decades, with the gap between literate men and women quickly closing. These absolute gains have been largest for the poor, in particular poor urban females whose progress in the last few years exceeded that of boys (King and Van de Walle 2005).

Gender disparities in literacy are higher in the highland areas where a large number of ethnic minorities live. At 29%, the literacy rate for poor rural non Lao-Tai women is the lowest of all standing in sharp contrast to 66% for poor rural Lao-Tai women (World Bank 2006). Indicators vary even among the various ethno-linguistic groups, with only 20% of Chine-Tibet women reporting they can read and write a figure that is lower than the 29% quoted for the overall rural poor non Lao-Tai female population.

The major Gender issues in education is that as the level of education increases, the gap widens between the participation of boys and girl in school, especially at university level. Although the Ministry of Education has been making efforts to close the gap, the disparities still exist and have to be overcome.

Table 1: Attendance of students by Education Level in 2004-2005

	Preschool	Primary school	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	University
Total	45,328	831,004	243,137	144,906	39,921
% of Girls	50,2 %	46,16%	43,32%	41,16%	39.8%

Source: MOE, August 2005

## Primary and secondary education

Primary enrolment rates in Lao are among the lowest in East Asia, with the lowest rates being among ethnic minority girls living in rural areas (UNESCO 2003). Eighty percent of villages have a primary school located in that area, out of which only 36% have complete primary schools (all 5 grades) (National Census 2005). The situation in the North region is of particular concern. Nation-wide, 90 percent of schools in the poorest districts are incomplete, and more than 40% of students attend an incomplete school.

The net intake (NIR) has doubled over the last five years in the 46 poorest districts. However, in those districts with high concentrations of ethnic minorities, three of five children aged 6 years are typically not in school. Girls have lower attendance than boys. Only 80% of children attend school at some period, but only half of these complete a basic education. The vast majority of ethnic minority children never make it past second grade.

In rural areas, more than 40% of all girls and 30% of all boys will have dropped out before the end of the fifth year. For non Lao-Tai students in rural areas, nearly 50% of them drop out at the end of primary school. (King and Van de walle 2005).

The lowest rates of primary school enrollment are among non-Lao Tai girls living in rural areas while the highest are among Lao Tai men from urban areas. However, there are notable differences among the various groups. For instance, among the Hmong-lu Mien, 48% of rural girls are enrolled in primary school compared to 66% of boys. As for the Mon-Khmer, 57% and 61% of rural girls and boys are attending primary school. While the gender gap is smaller between men and women from the Chine-Tibet ethnic group, only 33% of girls and 39% of boy living in rural areas are enrolled in primary school. For all three non Lao-Tai groups, the gender gap in primary enrollment is lower in urban than in rural areas.

Table 2: Mean primary school enrollment rates (in %) for children aged 6 to 12 (2002/3)

Ethnic groups	Urban		Rural	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Lao-Tai	90.4	91.9	82.1	80.7
Mon-Khmer	80.1	75.0	61.4	57.4
Hmong-lu Mien	87.8	84.5	66.0	48.3
Chine-Tibetan	86.5	100.0	38.7	32.7

Source: King and van de Walle 2005 based on LECS3

Progression from the primary to the secondary cycle is difficult. About 35 percent of students enroll in secondary education but only about 5 percent complete the full six years, and less than 5 percent of children go to university.

Nationally, female enrolment at lower secondary has remained especially low. Numbers indicate a secondary net enrolment rate for the 11-16 age group of 38 percent for males

and 32 percent for females (UNESCO 2002/2003), a drop of 48% and 42% respectively. While overall net lower secondary enrollment was 48% for urban students, net enrollment was only 25% for rural children.

#### Vocational and Technical education, higher education

Vocational training opportunities are limited. The Ministry has also targeted women in its non-formal vocational training program, supported by the German agency (GTZ). Since women form the majority of the population with little or no formal education, the non-formal approach (which was new to Lao PDR at the time of the project's first phase in 1998) is an important step towards gender equality in the field of professional education and training.

With 51 percent of female students across all training programs, the project has surpassed its own target of 40 percent female participation. GTZ has opened occupational fields traditionally restricted by sex to both women and men. To date, at least 10 % of the participants in dressmaking or food processing training are men, and girls make up 10 percent of each carpentry or construction course. Female trainers constitute 61 percent of the non-formal trainer corps. Although they are predominant in the traditionally women-dominated training domains like sewing, weaving, food processing, tourism services, etc., female trainers have also worked their way into livestock farming and agro-agriculture, while some male teachers have acquired trainer qualifications in dress-making. Vocational training opportunities are limited, and less than two percent of Lao children go to university.

#### Gender consideration development plan and education

The Government is addressing the issue of illiteracy and the existing gender disparities in the education sector through its Plan of Action for Basic Education for All (box 1).

##### **Box 1: The Government of Lao Education Policy**

- Universalization of the quality of basic education at the primary level and continued expansion of participation at lower secondary level, ensuring that all people have the opportunity to apply their education to serve the socio-economic program;
- Eradication of illiteracy, thus providing poor people with a means of helping to improve their quality of life;
- Expansion of vocational, technical and higher education to meet the demands of the new labor market and to improve economic rates of return on human capital investment;
- Training of skilled workers, technicians, professionals, and intellectuals to have the capacity to apply modern science and technology to serve development needs; and
- Gradual improvement of the quality of national education to international standards.

The policy of the Lao Government is “to eradicate illiteracy among multi-ethnic people nationwide.” In particular, emphasis is placed on females and educationally disadvantaged groups living in the remote areas that need basic education to resolve their



daily problems. However, non-formal education efforts are hampered by the limited or a lack of non-formal education personnel, the shortage of textbooks and teachers' guides for basic education and vocational training, among other things. Additionally, people are reluctant to learn because of underestimating the significance and usefulness of learning; poverty; and the need for many children to gain vocational skills to generate income.

The Ministry of Education has made efforts to mainstream gender into programs. A central program has been the Girls' Basic Education Program that targets primary education for ethnic minority girls, which is supported by the ADB.

In the education sector, gender concerns will be addressed through:

- Addressing gender gaps in literacy, school enrolment and completion rates, particularly among different ethnic groups;
- Increasing the availability, quality and relevance of primary and secondary education for girls, particularly poor and ethnic girls;
- Ensuring that vocational and technical school programs are accessible to women, particularly poor and ethnic women;
- Establishing approaches to non-formal education that are highly beneficial to women including drawing upon lessons from past and current projects for increasing the number of ethnic teachers; improving the relevance of primary school materials and providing incentives for girls to attend school; encouraging provinces and districts to develop locally appropriate materials to supplement the core curriculum; and to schedule primary and secondary school classes to encourage school attendance. Other approaches include distance learning and "bridging" courses to enable students (particularly women) to enter vocational and technical schools.

### **3.2. HEALTH**

In health, Lao has made progress over the past 10-15 years in reducing infant mortality rates, decreasing the prevalence of underweight children, and increasing the number of children who are immunized. The rates are, however, much higher in rural area than urban and in the more remote provinces. Most of these children are dying from communicable diseases, primarily malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, and epidemics such as dengue fever, measles and meningitis.

The number of population with safe water and sanitation has risen, but the urban-rural gap remains wide. While maternal mortality rates have decreased, they remain among the highest in the region. Like in education, access to health services decreases dramatically as one move outside urban areas, with the gap widening between rural and hard-to-reach rural areas, and this situation particularly affects ethnic groups that tend to be concentrated in remote areas, including women who bear the responsibility of the family's health care and whose reproductive health is critical. In the capital and big towns the traffic accidents become a serious health issue and HIV/AIDs tend to be on the increase.

The country's geography in great part defines access to health facilities, especially during the rainy season. According to the 2005 National Census, only about 8% of the villages had their own health center. Data from LECS III suggest that it takes an average of 92 minutes to access a health facility in Lao PDR, with the range going from 108 minutes for rural residents to 19 minutes for urban ones. Similarly, it takes 3 hours to reach a health facility in the highlands compared to an average of 48 minutes in the lowland areas.

### Government Policy

The Government of Lao PDR is making a concerted effort to prevent the spreading of the disease and implementing six priority programmes:

- Health prevention and Promotion Strategies
- Curative and Rehabilitation Strategies
- Consumer Protection Strategies
- Human Resource Development for Health Strategies
- Health's Operational Research and Health's Legislation
- Health Administration Strategies.

The basic concepts of "Health Strategy to the Year 2020" are the followings:

- Full health care service coverage and health care service equity;
- Development of early integrated health care services;
- Demand-based health care services; and
- Self-reliant health services.

The country's NGPES, focused on poverty and the 47 poorest districts, also prioritizes health, including expanding the service network for the health promotion of the people in rural areas, improving and upgrading the capacity of health workers, ensuring an appropriate gender balance, and providing incentives for retaining them where there are shortages. Among other things, the strategy also emphasizes promoting maternal and child health in rural areas. The Government has developed a National Strategic Framework and National Action plan (2002-2005) for its HIV/AIDS National Program, which is coordinated by the National Committee for Control of AIDS Bureau (NCCAB), and has established peer education, life skills training and other behavioral-changing activities.

Table 3: Health personnel

Number of staff	Total	Females	Males
		11,037	6,342 ( 57.46% )
Central level ( 18.59% )	2,052	1,235 ( 60.18% )	817 ( 39.82% )
Provincial level ( 32.60% )	3,598	2,213 ( 61.50% )	1,385 ( 38.50% )
District level ( 38.71% )	4,273	2,346 ( 54.90% )	1,927 ( 45.10% )
Village level ( 10.10% )	1,114	548 ( 49.19% )	566 ( 50.81% )

Source: Ministry of Health, 2005

## Nutritional status

According to the National Health Survey 40.7% of the children were moderately or severe wasted (too thin for their height), 40.7% stunted (too short for their age), and 40% underweight. More girls were wasted than boys, but boys were more frequently stunted (42.8%), and underweighted (40.5%) than girls (38.4 and 39.3 respectively).

95% of the children are being breastfed. 70% received colostrums. 10% of the children in the age of 6-9 months received appropriate supplementary food, more often in urban than rural areas. Concerning Vitamin A deficiency 28.8 of children age 6-59 months had problem after sunset. About Iodine deficiency the survey found that 76 % of the surveyed household had salt with adequately iodised. 7% of children aged 8-12 years had iodine deficiency, more often among girls, in the south and in rural areas. 26% of the population had moderate anaemia (haemoglobin between 7-10.9 g %). Anaemia was more common in the South, among female, in rural areas, and in children under five. 78% of women observed food taboos for approximately 88 days after delivery. 69% did not eat fish, meat and eggs.

## Reproductive and Child Health

The fertility rate was 5.6 in 1995/ and decrease to 4.9 in 2000. Estimated at 530 deaths per 100,000 live births, maternal mortality rates are strikingly high in the Lao PDR (UN 2004). There is a large disparity in this rate between urban and rural areas, at 170 versus 580 respectively. This dramatic gap may be related to the high rate of home deliveries without medical assistance in rural areas, which is also a cause of child mortality (table 4). According to the data, almost 90 percent of rural women deliver at home, compared to approximately a quarter of urban women. Although high in all three highlands, midland, and lowland rural areas, the rate of deliveries at home are highest among highland women, at 87%.

**Table 4: Place of delivery by ethnicity (%)**

Place of Delivery	Lao Tai	Other Ethnic Group
District or provincial hospital	10.87	3.94
Health centre	0.61	0.38
Private clinic	0.20	0.07
At home with medical staff	10.21	3.42
At home with traditional attendant	16.8	8.44
At home with friends	54.98	70.90
At home without help	6.02	9.73
Other	1.02	3.11

*Source: Primary Health Care Expansion Survey, 1999*

Culture and tradition play important roles in choice of health practices, such as location of child birth, use of birth attendants and sterilization practices. The survey indicated that 35% of women living in non-poor villages give birth in hospitals, compared to 15% of women living in poor villages give birth either at home or elsewhere other than a hospital.

Between 1995 and 2000, the infant mortality rate (IMR) decreased from 104 to 82 per 1,000 live births and child mortality rate (CMR) from 170 to 106 per 1000 live births. This improvement is attributed to the availability of vaccinations to children under five. According to the Ministry of Health, more than 60% of those under age five are receiving vaccination against common childhood diseases. Almost all of the Lao population has now been covered by the immunization programs. Anti-malaria programs have been carried out in villages covering 72 percent of the population and an increasing number of households are using mosquito nets as protection. Nevertheless, higher IMR and CMR are found in rural and remote areas where access to health care is limited (MOH, 2001). People must be adequately informed if they are to take advantage of existing health services, and greater efforts are needed to provide more health information to members of ethnic minority communities (RTI, 2000).

### **Family Planning**

The family planning/birth spacing, safe motherhood and child care programs in the provinces, districts and villages, are covering about 203,436 Lao women and men. The decline of the fertility rate from 7.1 percent in the 1990s to 5.6 percent in 1995 and 4.9 percent in 2000 is an indication that people are aware of birth spacing/family planning methods (NSC, 2005).

The Government has established a safe motherhood, child care and birth-spacing program in order to reduce maternal mortality, infant and child morbidity and mortality by 25 percent. Men are also being sensitized to family planning. While there are no men who have been sterilized, about 337 women were sterilized in 2002. Research done by the Ministry of Health found that in 2002, out of 203,436 people, 17,482 men (8.5 percent) were using condoms, 94,898 (47 percent) women were using contraceptives/tablets, 69,123 (34 percent) received contraceptives in the form of injections and 21,587 had loops.

### **HIV/AIDS**

While low, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is on the increase. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Lao PDR is estimated at 0.5 percent, which is very low compared to the neighboring countries (NCCA, 2003). The country's first HIV positive and first AIDS case were reported in 1990 and 1992, respectively. About 1,094 people are infected with HIV/AIDS in Lao PDR, and about 227 are AIDS positive (UNAIDS). Currently, the eradication of HIV/AIDS is one of the Government's eight objectives for poverty alleviation as mentioned in the NGPES.

As illustrated in table 5, the trend in HIV/AIDS prevalence among females is on the increase (NCCA, 2003), with the percentage of HIV-infected women increasing by an average of 8 percent/year. In 1995, women made up 33 percent of the total number of infected while the percentage estimated from the most recent data was 60 percent. A parallel increase was observed in the number of AIDS-affected women.

Table 5: Percentage of HIV infected and AIDS affected people

Year	HIV Infected people					AIDS Affected people				
	Total	Men	%	Women	%	Total	men	%	women	%
1995	33	22	66.6	11	33.3	24	17	70.8	7	29.1
2002	187	112	59.8	75	40.1	85	52	61.1	33	38.8
June 2003	60	24	40.0	36	60	39	17	43.5	22	56.4

Source: NCCA, 2003

Part of the reason for the increase can be attributed to people's lack of awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS, although there is greater openness among people to talk about the disease. According to one study, while there is a greater degree of awareness, there is little knowledge of the disease (PSI 2002). For instance, 23 percent of respondents did not know that HIV was transmissible by blood. Over half did not know that it could be transmitted from mother to child during pregnancy and breast-feeding. Additionally, in terms of prevention, almost a third of sexually active respondents reported not using condoms.

For numerous reasons, women are especially vulnerable to the disease. Research conducted in 2000-2001 in three provinces indicates that women service workers in entertainment places were the most vulnerable to contracting the disease, with 0.9 percent of women in this category being HIV positive. Only 22 percent of women in this sector reported protecting themselves with the use of condoms. In addition to female service workers, mobile groups such as drivers, the police, military personnel and migrant workers are also considered vulnerable as they are the most likely to engage in unsafe sex. Poverty, ignorance, sexual exploitation, trafficking of persons and migration in search of work or business makes women and girls especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Women's low status, lack of decision-making power and economic dependence – especially of married women – makes it difficult for them to challenge their husbands' extra-marital affairs or insist on condom use. Culture and tradition are also a hindrance to safe sex.

### 3.3. Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries

#### Policy Stance on WID

In order to promote the gender equality in agricultural development, Lao PDR puts emphasis on women's empowerment in [1] food security, [2] environmental protection and [3] human resource development. The ultimate aim is to achieve an agricultural growth target of 5 percent per annum with equally benefits for both women and men. With effort to achieve this target, policymakers and planners need to:

- Collect gender-disaggregated local data and conduct gender sensitive agricultural censuses;
- Formulate gender-sensitive policies and plans based on a gender-disaggregated needs assessment;
- Formulate policies and plans to improve women's access to resources and promote better participation of women in socio-economic development with due sensitivity to cultural identity of ethnic groups concerned.

- Establish gender-disaggregated land titling procedures and land policies (GRID-FAO, 2004).
- Currently, the Lao Women’s Union and international NGOs are implementing some projects to reduce poverty and improve the socio-economic status of ethnic minority women by providing village based revolving funds or micro-credits for business investment and agricultural production (ADB, 2003).

### Human Resources and Agricultural Extension

In Lao PDR, the agricultural and forest extension activity still remain the fewer number of women compared to men workers who visit the field sites. The reasons can be for the fact that they need to work away from families in distant locations, the society has traditionally perceived the agricultural and forest as inappropriate course for their young daughters to study and work, etc. However, some international NGOs, recognizing the importance of women’s role in agriculture, have trained women as agricultural extension workers and have offered them to contribute in improving livelihood at the village level.

Table 6: Number of Agricultural and Forestry Staff (2006) (Unit: person)

Qualification	Total	Female	Male
Ph.D	21	2	19
Master Degree	97	5	92
Bachelor Degree	592	68	524
High diploma	1469	118	1351
Medium level	3433	707	2726
Primary level	1204	307	2726
<b>Total</b>	<b>6807</b>	<b>1209</b>	<b>5598</b>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2006

### Agricultural Work and Income-generating Activities

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Lao economy. Accounting for about 48 percent of the country’s GDP, it employs about 85 percent of the total workforce of 2.4 million people (NSC, 2004). Indeed, most Lao PDR households depend on agriculture and its related sub-sectors such as livestock rearing, fishing and forest exploitation for their living. Income from agriculture is considered as the most importance source of income for most rural Lao. Women farmers are responsible for over half of the agricultural activities and make up 54% of the total agricultural labor force (NSC, 2004). Women took over the traditional roles of men in the farming system – such as ploughing – during the war period and this has in some areas continued to the present times. According to the 2002-2003 Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 3 (LECS 3), both men and women spend similar amounts of time on agricultural work – 2.5 hours and 2.3 hours respectively– and in total (including agricultural work), men spend 5.2 hours on income generating activities (IGA), versus 4.5 hours for women.

In Lao PDR, women contribute significantly to rice production for food security in their families and communities. Women do more than half of the transplanting of rice,

weeding, harvesting, threshing and post-harvest operations. In some areas the traditional task division has changed due to lack of male labor; women are increasingly involved in land preparation, irrigation and preparing bunds and seedbeds. Lao women also play an important role in collecting and gathering forest products for their daily meals, medicinal purposes and cash income. NTFPs contribute an average of 40 to 60 percent of the income of rural upland households, and may reach 80 percent in areas of severe poverty where there are few other income-generating opportunities (UNDP 2001). With regards to aquaculture activity, both men and women share tasks and responsibilities especially in the rural areas. Generally, men are responsible for pond preparation, pond weeding, drying or draining and the regulation of water entry into pond prior to stocking, with the help of women. Liming the pond (when done) is the responsibility of men. Men generally operate pump or pond gate operations and other water exchange practices. In general, women usually prepare feed for fish, such as collecting rice bran, grass and any other available vegetable waste that is fed to the fish. Ideally farmed fish should be fed regularly. Although most women harvest and decide on the fish for daily/weekly family consumption, any overall major harvest of fish is under the control of men.

### **Access to Agricultural and Forest Land**

While women and men enjoy equal access to agricultural and forest land under the law, customary practices tend to over-ride these

Under the laws of Lao PDR, both men and women enjoy equal access to agricultural and forest land. Nevertheless, customary practices – principally through inheritance – often over-ride official laws. This situation is predominantly determined by the matrilineal or patrilineal practices of the various ethnic groups.

The matrilineal practices of the majority Lao-Tai group mean that women most often have control of agricultural land in the areas populated by this group. Daughters and sons are allowed to inherit their agricultural lands, with the decision being left up to the parents. However, it is customary for the youngest daughter to inherit the family agricultural land/home since she usually remains there to take care of the parents, even after marriage.

Among most ethnic minority groups, such as the Hmong-lu Mien and the Khmou (Mon Khmer), the pattern of agricultural land ownership is patrilineal. The family name and property are transmitted from father to son, and the wife takes up “patrilocal residence”, i.e. she has to live in her husband’s house. Men are considered the “owners and administrators of agricultural land,” with women “generally not inheriting any land from their parents.” (GRID, 1997).

Land documents tend to be registered in men’s names. In 1998, GRID in cooperation with the NSC conducted a survey on Lao women’s access to land. Survey results showed the difference in the names/titles that appeared on the land documents and the origin of the land. As can be seen from figures 1 and 2, only 16 percent of land was registered in the wife’s name, although 40 percent of the land came from the wife’s parents. Fifty-

eight percent of land was registered in the husband's name, with only 18 percent of the land having come from the husband's parents.

Part of this situation can be attributed to the lack of knowledge on and difficulty in accessing information on women's land rights. Other reasons, particularly for ethnic minority women from mono-ethnic villages, include illiteracy, the inability to speak and read the Lao language, existing gender differences related to customary land rights, and lack of self-confidence. The generally-held view that men are the head of household, and thus their names appear on administrative documents also contributes to this situation.

### **Access to Financial Resources and Credit**

Ethnic groups determine whether men or women are the household's financial managers. The primary source of credit to rural households consists of family, friends and lending households (33 percent), especially for those far from roads and from more remote areas. The loan size is small, with many of the loans taken for consumption purposes between periods of planting and harvesting. Accounting for almost one half of household debt, many of these loans do not carry an explicit interest rate and were obtained without collateral for short-term purposes. Informal institutions accounted for only 15 percent of lending. Suppliers of inputs and moneylenders are an important source of loans for farmers. Where they operate, interest charged ranges from 42 to 73 percent per annum. Farmers approach these sources mainly for household emergencies and day-to-day survival needs.

In Lao-Tai (Lao Loum) dominant areas (peri-urban and Rural Mekong), between 61 percent and 64 percent of household financial managers are women (UNDP/UNDCF, 1997). Men are financial managers in 61 percent of provincial households and in 63 percent of rural households. This distinction reflects the differences between the matriarchal Lao-Tai groups that dominate in peri-urban and rural Mekong areas, and the patriarchal societies that are more common among ethnic groups of the highland areas. From the survey findings, the primary reason for taking loans is to cover emergencies or unforeseen expenditures. Business investment came second.

Evidence from a number of large markets in Vientiane shows that women do not like to go through formalities to get loans and are too shy to enter a banking institution (GRID 2003). Culturally, they feel ashamed to borrow. They shy away from going to banks to process loans and are rarely familiar with banking procedures, consequently depending heavily on their husbands. Furthermore, most women do not know that they can use their land as collateral for getting loans from banks. As a result, many women put the loan in their husband's name, as he is usually literate and able to deal with all the requisite processes including the loan repayment. Culturally women feel it is shameful to borrow, and they fear that people will discover they are in debt. They therefore prefer to get a quick loan from moneylenders offering uncomplicated lending systems or joining informal savings schemes and credit groups.



Informal credit schemes are an important source of financing for rural villagers. Village Revolving Funds (VRFs) are local village institutions that operate outside the formal financial sector and are neither taxed nor regulated. VRFs are locally managed groups and operate between social and financial organizations. Generally financed by donors or INGOs and including over 1,000 “rice banks,” VRFs provide loans to about 15 percent of rural villages and have grown rapidly in the last ten years. With about 1,640 of them throughout Lao PDR, these locally implemented funds are rooted in some form of financial or commodity (non-financial) lending. They support either income generation activities or food security and improved production for consumption or sale, thus keeping in-line with the non-monetized nature of rural economic activity.

There are also many “livestock banks” and revolving credit funds that are established under integrated rural development projects that lend money. For instance, the LWU is frequently used by intermediary international donors and INGOs. Terms, conditions and other criteria and methods of loan disbursement vary widely from one scheme to another, and among donors and INGO operations. Repayments are made in kind or cash, with or without interest, full or partial principal repayment, etc.

### **3.4. Economic Activity**

#### **Policy Stance on Women in Manufacturing and Mining Sector**

Weaving sector: Since ancient times, Lao women have dominated hand-weaving, and the patterns of Lao cloth reflect the cultural, religious and ritualistic symbols of the ethnic groups, regions, and even villages. Therefore, Lao Women’s Union has a plan to promote preservation of traditional weaving skills and women’s business opportunities in this sector for local market and export.

Labor standard: In recent years, larger private enterprises have been set up with foreign owners or partners including garment factories. Tourism and related services are also expanding in the big cities. Private sector development, particularly involving foreign investment, creates employment opportunities for women and men. The vast majority of workers in Lao garment factories are young women. There were 24,874 industry handicraft establishments in Lao PDR that employ 91,034 workers (MIH, 2003). However, problems in labor standard such as long working hours, low wages have also propped up differently between women and men. Although the Labor Law 1994 stipulates equal wages for men and women, minimum wage, provision of maternity leave, and right to form labor unions, such conditions apply only to public sector workers since there is no enforcement mechanism. Therefore, variations in salaries, wages and other kinds of remuneration are common among female and male workers in the most sectors especially in the private sector enterprises.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare is currently gathering basic data on labor relations for future use in labor policy. With more knowledge of industrial relations and

process of collective bargaining, the Department of Labour will improve significantly in conducting dialogues between workers and management. However, there is no supervisory body for monitoring of labor standards, and labor unions are working on labor dispute mediations. The labour law does make provision for the creation of a Tripartite Labour Arbitration Committee. This has yet to be undertaken by the Government. Women workers tend not to claim their case in the event of nonpayment and delayed payment of salaries. Such trend is more apparent among women who migrates to urban areas in search for work.

### **Labour Force Participation**

At above 70 percent, women's labor force participation in Lao PDR is amongst the highest in the region. Similar rates are found only in Cambodia, where most households also practice subsistence agriculture (Mekong River Commission 2003). Lower female participation rates and greater differences between the rates for men and women occur in Northeast Thailand (below 50 percent in some provinces) and the Mekong Delta (below 65 percent in most provinces) as well as in Phnom Penh and Pailin.

Agriculture, which employs about 85 percent of the total labor force of 2.4 million people, employs about 54 percent of women compared to 48 of percent men. About 38 percent of those in industry are women, 41% in trade, and 57% in the service sectors (UNIDO, 2001). However, high labor force participation rates do not fully measure women's contribution to the economy. Official data are passed on as primary occupations and formal sector activities that involve monetary transactions. The majority of unpaid family workers are women, who are generally responsible for household management – collecting fuelwood and water, cleaning, cooking and caring for children, the elderly and the sick. Additionally, women's trading and small businesses dominate informal sector activities in the lower Mekong Basin. This work is often a secondary occupation for women.

### **Informal Sector**

The majority of those in the informal sector in Lao PDR are women. The lack of education and economic opportunities push women into the informal sector and small scale enterprises, with the majority of those in the informal sector in Lao PDR being women. According to the 1996 National Survey on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), 63 percent of SMEs are owned by women, compared with only about one third (35 percent) by men, with the difference that male-owned enterprises are slightly larger (MIH-GTZ, 1996). Female entrepreneurs have significantly less education than male entrepreneurs; the proportion of female owners with no schooling (22 percent) is almost twice as high as that of men in that category (12 percent).

Women dominate small-scale retail enterprises. The most common sub-sectors for women's commercial micro and small enterprises are retail, vending, and guesthouse/restaurants. In the manufacturing sector, textiles appear to be the exclusive domain of women (24 percent), with men only making up 1 percent of workers (MIH-

GTZ, 1996). Almost 95 percent of women's business use only hand tools, in contrast to 52 percent of men's businesses. Women's enterprises are more likely to be home-based and more likely to be located in the marketplace whereas men's businesses are much more likely to be mobile.

Non-Agricultural activities provide income opportunities for women. Most off-farm activities are undertaken by both men and women, but generally in rural areas women have more opportunities – from weaving (cotton and silk) and embroidery – than men to earn cash income. Many women undertake indigo and mulberry planting for silkworm-raising as well as silk-weaving, which is used for household consumption, local markets and export to foreign countries (about US\$ 5 million per annum).

A number of challenges affect female workers in the informal sector. Multiple responsibilities, compounded by the limited level of education, experience, and access to resources are some of the main challenges they confront. Moreover, women entrepreneurs who run businesses to generate income for household purposes have little capital to invest in business growth. Marketing constraints also pose an obstacle, as women lack the awareness, knowledge and skills related to vocational development, business opportunity identification, simple accounting, and entrepreneurship. Mobility constraints and the limited nature of the domestic market – in terms of the number of consumers and their purchasing power – also pose a challenge. Because of their low level of education and demands on time, women entrepreneurs face difficulties dealing with complicated and time consuming business registration procedures, often lacking the confidence to handle legal documents and to communicate with official authorities. Other challenges include limited credit, complicated lending procedures, villagers' fear of borrowing, and borrowers' lack of collateral.

### **Formal Sector**

In Lao PDR, equal access to employment is provided for in the country's labor law. In 1999, there were about 37,075 workers employed in mining, manufacturing, electricity, and water supply. Of these, 54 percent were women and 46 percent were men. About 70 percent were production workers, 13 percent technicians, 10 percent administrative, and 7 percent seasonal and temporary workers. The highest numbers of production workers were in the textile and garment industry, of which 85 percent are women. If we exclude the garment industry, the number of women employed in the production industry is about 33 percent compared to 67 percent for men.

Despite women's strong presence in the manufacturing sector, many are in low positions that involve neither management nor decision-making, even with the same educational and work qualifications as their male counterparts. According to the same survey, the number of female workers is higher among production, seasonal and temporary workers. Non-metallic mineral products (brick and tile industry) and basic metal products industries employ more seasonal and temporary workers than others. Out of 1559, 800

female employees have worked in these establishments. Women's promotion opportunities are limited by discrimination and the lack of education

Women's lack of education limits their access to employment in the formal sector. If employed, it is even harder for them to climb to management positions. The small size and competitive nature of the labor market also pose a constraint and the number of women with working experience, and educational qualifications for management positions is also small. More often than not, employment and recruitment policies discriminate against women, and recruitment and promotions within organizations are often not-female friendly. Other constraints to women's employment include the lack and/or limited information dissemination on available jobs and women's multiple roles.

### **Migrant Labor**

Migration is becoming an increasingly common choice among Lao workers. With the growth of the cash economy in rural areas and greater transportation links, migration – temporary and long term, domestic and cross-border – is becoming an increasingly common choice among Lao workers. Within the country, short-term migration is common for both men and women, who are usually hired as day laborers to work on farms in neighboring villages. Payment is done in cash or in kind (rice). Migration from rural to urban areas of the country is limited because of government restrictions but internal trafficking in human labor is a growing concern. This is especially so since men and, in particular, women and girls may first be taken from rural areas to the urban areas of Vientiane in the center and Savannakhet in the South, and then trafficked on across the border to Thailand.

Both seasonal and long term migration to Thailand for employment purposes is an established method for families, especially those living near border areas, to diversify income risk. However, until very recently out-migration from Lao PDR was illegal, and it was only in 2002 that a MOU was signed by the Lao and Thai Governments, permitting Lao nationals to migrate to Thailand for employment purposes. Given the very high percentage of young people in Lao (an estimated 40 percent or so are under the age of 15), the lack of wage employment opportunities inside the country and the demand for cheap labor in Thailand, this trend is poised to rise. Urban areas in Lao PDR receive the highest levels of remittance income (LECS II data), and this reflects their higher access to wage migration opportunities.

More girls and women migrate than boys and men. Based on the report “Labor Migration Survey in Khammouane, Savannakhet and Champasack”, done by the Ministry of Labour and Social welfare and ILO, the migrating population comprised approximately 7 percent of the total sample population, of which 56 percent are female and 44 percent are male. In the population age group 10-17 years, there were significantly more girls migrating than boys, with girls facing the highest risks of trafficking and labor exploitation.

Another point that needs highlighting is that youth (18-35 years) made up 74 percent of the migrating population.

#### 4. WID / Gender Projects by other Donors

Project/Programs	Implementing Agency	Donor	Duration	Budget (US\$)	Gender-related Issues	Ref.
<b>Education</b>						
Lao Women`s Union - Training for Employment and Capacity Building	LWU, Provincial Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry	APHED A	2002-2004	150,000 per annum	(1)To reduce poverty among targeted groups in two provinces (Vientiane Capital, and Luang Prabang) by providing vocational training in market-oriented skills for 800 poor women and men. (2)To build the training and project management capacities of women`s and agriculture organisations in Luang Prabang and Vientiane provinces in collaboration with national structures.	1)
General Scope of Activities of IV-Japan in the Lao PDR	N/A	IV-Japan	1994-2009	N/A	(1)Vocational training in furniture making, hairdressing, dressmaking and food processing for disadvantaged people in Vientiane capital; (2) Training in livestock and horticulture productions on commercial basis for local farmers in Xiengkhouang province; (3) Primary School construction in needed areas in the Lao PDR;(4) Cultural Exchange between the two countries Laos and Japan.	1)
CWS Projects	MOE	CWS	1995-2015		CWS project activities are located primarily in the northern mountainous part of the country in the Provinces of Oudomxay, Phongsaly, and Luangprabang. Additionally CWS supports some small project initiatives in the Vientiane Capital,.	1)
<b>Health</b>						
Atsaphangthong Maternal and Child Health (LAO - 175420)	District health offices, MLSW	WVL	2002-2004	280,000	(1)Improvement of Maternal and Child Health services delivery in the Atsaphangthong District through capacity building of public and private health service providers and local health facility improvement; (2) Improving KAP of mothers and women of Child bearing age relating to better care and nutrition of infants and children.	1)
Drug Abuse Control and Poverty Reduction (2)	District Authorities	NCA	1999-2006	123,000 per annum	Drug Abuse Prevention & Detoxification ; Drug Revolving Fund; Health Education & Training; Malaria/Dengue Control & Prevention; Mother & Child Care; Primary Health Care; STD / HIV / AIDS; Traditional Health Care; Training of Health Workers; Water Supply & Sanitation ,Capacity Building; Gender Training	1)
Project of health education and water and sanitation	LRCS	FRC	2002-2006	1,000,000	(1)Training of village volunteers on First Aid and health education (2)Health Education at village level (3)Water and Sanitation	1)
Primary Health Care Project Sangthong District Capital, of Vientiane (477/AE.OI.3)	MOH	MCC	2001-2008	105,400	(1)Improve quality of health services at dispensary and district level through human resource development by improving administrative, management, and technical skills.(2). Increase access to basic primary health care services at the village level through the training of village health workers and traditional birth attendants.(3). Increase community participation and utilization of health services through appropriate health education and promoting health awareness in target villages and schools.(4). Increase access to clean water and sanitation in target villages through wells, promotion of latrines, and hygiene education.	1)
Strengthening Sexual Transmitted Infection (STI) Control in Lao PDR	NCCA	FHI	2003-2007	3,618,800	(1)a rapidly reduce the prevalence of curable STIs through an STI periodic presumptive antibiotic treatment of service women; (2) increase the proportion of service women who adopt primary prevention behaviors (use of condoms consistently); (3) increase the proportion of service women who adopt health seeking behaviors (seek regular screening for asymptomatic STI, seek treatment for STI and comply with treatment of STI); and (4) increase proportion of service women accessing HIV prevention and STI services.	1)
Lao Red Cross-Danish Red Cross Primary Health Care Programme	LRCS	DRC	1998-2013	4,022,554	Danish Red Cross is supporting Lao Red Cross in implementing a Primary Health Care program at village level in the Provinces of Xiengkhuang, Huaphan and Phongsaly. The program is based on a capacity building strategy using participatory methods to assist villagers to identify their particular village development needs within the components of Health, Education and Economics.	1)

Programme d'Enseignement Medical (Phase 2) (2000)	MOH	CCL	2002-2005	360,000	Provide financial and technical support to the Lao partners to implement 2 post graduate trainings in Public Health and in General Surgery.	1)
Social Marketing and Communications for Health	MOH, NCCA, LYU, MOIC, LFTU	PSI	1998-2018	N/A	Conduct innovative and effective behavior change communications to increase health products use among target groups; Expand the availability of high quality, affordable health products throughout the country.	1)
National HIV/AIDS Response (3)	NCCA	NCA	2002-2010	650,000	Promotion of effective prevention and care activities related to HIV/AIDS, in Luang Namtha, Bokeo, Champasack and Sekong provinces in Laos, through participation of Government and local organizations. Capacity building of PCCA/DCCA/VCCA as well as committees.	1)
ReM-WRAHP - Reional Models-Factory Workers' Reproductive Health Awareness and Services Project (6981)	MOH	CARE Laos	2004-2004		(1)Very basic knowledge of sexual reproduction. (2)Risk of sexually transmitted disease (STD), HIV/AIDS infection. (3) High levels of unplanned pregnancies leading to unsafe and illegal abortions. (4)The perception that condoms are not needed in "true love" situations. (5)Late awareness of pregnancy leading to health problems.	1)
Savannakhet HIV Project (LA 105)	NCCA	MSF	2001-2008	N/A	Treating people infected by the HIV while training medical staff and implementing an operational Virology Unit in Savannakhet hospital with lab facilities. Then, scaling in the province.	1)
Lao Red Cross - Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care	Lao Red Cross Society	ARC	1992-2005	257,000 per annum	(1)To promote an effective Lao Red Cross HIV/AIDS prevention and care project; (2)To improved Lao Red Cross Health Division capacity to support HIV/AIDS programming; (3) To improved Lao Red Cross institutional capacity to support health programming.	1)
Community health improvement through implementation of 4 health pilot villages in four districts of Savannakhet Province	Provincial Dept. of Health	HIF	2003-2004	50,000	(1)To improve the health situation of the villagers in the target villages of four districts in Savannakhet Province.(2) To reduce the incidence of common diseases among the population (malaria, diarrhoea, etc);(3) To reduce risks of HIV/AIDS infection within the target population; (4) To develop new behaviour related to health.	1)
HIV/ AIDS and STD Prevention and Management Project	Provincial Department of Health	JICA	2002-2005		(1)to reduce HIV/AIDS and STD incidence in Luang Prabang, whilst the purpose is to reduce vulnerability to HIV and STDs among identified target populations.	1)
Working Women`s HIV/AIDS/STI Response Project	LYU	British Emmasy Bangkok	2003-2004		(1)To strengthen the capacity of Lao Youth Union (LYU) staff at provincial and district levels in HIV/AIDS/STI response; (2)To increase HIV/AIDS/STI awareness to prevent HIV/AIDS/STIs among service women at drink shops/entertainment places/guesthouses; (3)To promote safe sex and proper use of condoms among service women.	1)
Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme	MOE, MLSW, LDPA, NRC	HIB	2002-2005		To provide direct assistance to adults and children with disabilities within the communities through: (1)Physical rehabilitation, social counselling and medical support to individuals at home (2)Establishment of self help groups for problems solving and income generating activities (3)Referral to other organization and services (4)Facilitating accessibility and integration to education (5)Community awareness on needs and rights of PWDs at community	1)
Building a sustainable street children project in Lao PDR	MLSW	FI	2004-2007	369,000	(1)Reintegrate street children into their society (family, culture, school, work) (2)Prevent vulnerable children from having to work or live on the streets (3)Build the capacity of the MoLSW for working with street children and their families in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.	1)
Reproductive Health Services through Primary Health Care Network		UNFPA	2002-2006	4,000,000	Increased availability of a core package of integrated RH services and counseling to women, men and adolescents with a special focus on members of ethnic groups. Services in selected pilot provinces include family planning, antenatal, delivery and post-natal care, reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, prevention of HIV/AIDS and management of post-abortion complications. Nationwide availability of family planning services for women, men and adolescents in the public sector is also sought.	1)

Addressing gender and reproductive health needs through the Lao Women's Union		UNFPA	2002-2006	50,000	The project aims to enhance knowledge and awareness of RH, reproductive rights and gender equality among women, men and adolescents. The strategy especially takes into account the socio-cultural context in which various ethnic groups covered by the project live. The project also focuses on strengthening the capacity of the LWU in implementing community-based RH awareness interventions	1)
Promotion of Adolescent Reproductive Health through the Lao Youth Union network	Lao Youth Union	UNFPA	2002-2006	250,000	the project aims to increase the knowledge and awareness of reproductive health and rights, and gender equality among adolescents and youth by providing them with ARH information including related gender issues. It also aims to strengthen the capacity of the LYU in implementing community-based RH awareness interventions. The main focus of the interventions is on developing quality peer education activities in Savannakhet and Champassack provinces as an effective way to reach both urban and rural, and literate and illiterate youth.	1)
<b>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery</b>						
Paktha Sustainable Agriculture Project (veco-lao-02)	MOAF	VECO	2004-2006	187,000	Improved food security of the target group, through use of sustainable agricultural processes".	
Parklai Forest Conservation and Livelihood Development Project (6988)	Provincial Agricultural and Forestry Office	CARE Laos	2004-2004	N/A	Model for Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) developed and tested. Technologies for improved and sustainable production further identified, and fully tested. District and community capacities for technical and administrative management of projects initiated activities are adequately built to enable sustained implementation post-project. Project generated models are documented and activities to enable future scaled up application of these models undertaken.	1)
Participative planning and Decentralization in Savannakhet province (LAO AG 027)	MOAF	OSB	2003-2008	478,060	For more effective implementation of the decentralization politics by local government (province, district, village) through promotion of participation of the people and good governance of the involved government officials in different development activities in the two focus zones in the province of Savannakhet.	
<b>Community Development</b>						
Community Development Project Saravane Province (02126)	Provincial Department of Agriculture & Forestry	World Concern	1999-2007	N/A	(1)To motivate villagers' active involvement in improving their own quality of life through group organization and participation. (2)To improve villagers' ability to care for themselves through preventative health care initiatives. (3)To improve villagers' ability to provide for themselves, their families, their community, and their environment through effective agricultural practices, responsible sale of forestry products, and small-scale enterprises. (4)To help link villagers to public and private services in the districts and provinces.	1)
Community Based Rural Development Project for Conservation (Lao 1015)	N/A	DWHH/GAA	2004-2006	N/A	The project development goal is the efficient and sustainable use of the natural resources to improve food security and living conditions of the local population and for conservation of the watershed function of the designated headwaters and provincial conservation areas. Project staff is trained to provide better and gender sensitive extension services and community structures are enabled to plan and manage development activities at village level.	1)
Integrated rural development project in Xayaboury Province (1)	Provincial dept. of Health	CESVI	1998-2004		Forest fire prevention, water supply and sanitation. Main goals in the current fourth phase of the project are related to Water Supply and Sanitation activities. Capacity Building; Gender Training	1)
Poverty Reduction Through Land Tenure Consolidation, Participatory Natural Resources Management and Local Communities Skill Building (TA4434-LAO)		ADRA Laos	2005-2008	974,300	The purpose of the Technical Assistance is for nine typical poor rural ethnic minority communities to be socially prepared with secure land tenure and basic health and education and able to manage their natural resources and respond to the opportunities and challenges brought about by improvements to Route 3. The outputs will consist of the following: (i) socially prepared villagers; (ii) land capability assessed, land use planned and allocated; (iii) natural resources sustainably managed; (iv) capacity building for the local government; and (v) dissemination of lessons learned. Gender analysis will be conducted and a gender action plan will be prepared during the	1)



					inception phase of the project.	
Oudomxai Community Initiatives Support Project	Oudomxay Province	IFAD	2002-2010	1,3410,000	(1)improve the ability of the poor, through a process of community mobilization and participatory development, to further their own social and economic development by making effective use of natural resources and available services; (2) transfer simple and proven technologies to increase household incomes and farm productivity through a community-based extension and natural resource management programme to develop alternative livelihoods to shifting cultivation and opium production; (3) rehabilitate and/or construct small-scale irrigation and water control schemes to improve farm productivity for both wet season and dry season crops; (4) provide rural financial services to support investment in on- and off-farm income-generating activities; (5) provide access to safe drinking water and road communications to improve the target group's health, labour productivity and marketing opportunities; (6) provide a school dormitory programme for selected schools to build the capacity of ethnic groups in remote villages; and (7) provide institutional support to local service providers to strengthen their capacity for effective delivery of services to the target group in a demand-driven and participatory manner.The proj	1)
<b>Economic Activities and other Projects</b>						
National Assembly (Phase II)	NA	UNDP	2004-2007		(1)Enhance lawmaking skills and improved procedures in legislative functions; (2) Strengthen the Committee system with clear guidelines and increased capacity for oversight; (3) Improve representation of constituents through more effective channels of communication and by providing information to parliamentarians on key policy issues and topics such as the Millennium Development Goals, gender equality and prevention of HIV/AIDS; (4) Strengthen the human resource base at the National Assembly secretariat; and (5) Rationalize complaints procedures at the National Assembly.	1)
Establishment of the Population Studies Centre at the National University of Laos	CPI, NUOL	UNFPA	2002-2006	250,000	The project aims at contributing to the increased awareness of policy makers and planners about population and gender issues by strengthening the capacity of PSC/NOUL and increasing the availability of research findings and their use in policy formulation and advocacy work.	1)
Promotion of the National Population and Development Policy and Population Planning		UNFPA	2002-2006	500,000	Through the Committee for Planning and Investment (CPI) the project aims to achieve the following outputs: (1)Increased awareness of policy-makers, parliamentarians, planners, administrators and community leaders on the need to promote RH, reproductive rights, gender equality and population and development issues. (2)-Improved coordination and monitoring of population and RH programmes through the establishment of the National Coordination Committee for Population and Development (NCCPD) and integration of the NPDP action plan into national, sectoral and provincial planning and programmes. (3) Strengthened advocacy capacity of CPI, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the media and other partners to promote NPDP and related issues. (4)Active participation of women is promoted in all project activities as well as the issue of gender equality, empowerment of women and male responsibility.	
Integrated support to small enterprises in Mekong Delta countries - Phase II	MIH, LNCCI	ILO	2004-2006		that will improve the environment for and support MSE development at the local level. The model for local integrated MSE development makes use of participatory approaches to develop a dialogue between local and provincial authorities, MSE owners and managers, MSE workers and their unions and organizations, and several other local stakeholders Specific interventions, in such areas as improving local	

					legislation and regulation representation, public/private partnerships, business development services, community-based basic skills training, and improving job quality, labour standards and gender equality within small enterprises are designed and implemented on the basis of the result of this dialogue.	
Lao Economic Acceleration Program for the Silk Sector (LEAPSS) (442-A-00-99-00051-00)	LWU, MOC, MIH	WE/CO NSORTI UM	2000-2004		(1)Strengthens institutional capacity of local and national authorities to support private silk sector activities. (2) Provides greater access to local and international silk and handicraft markets for silk producers.(3). Enhances the coordination and cooperation among silk production groups (farmer groups). (4). Increases the role of women as decision-makers at all levels of the silk sector. (5). Improves quality and yield of cocoons and silk yarn produced by farmers.	1)
Community Action Against Trafficking (CAAT) (2535/A.E.OI.3)	MOE, MLSW	VFI	2003-2008	300,000	(1)To raise awareness of the risks and dangers of the trafficking in women and children in selected communities using existing village-based schools and other networks and through new Youth Groups to disseminate information and to conduct trainings in cooperation with counterparts and other key government officials; (2) To increase women's participation in the political process - especially at the local level - and to build community capacities, as an educative, preventive and protective strategy to combat trafficking; (3) To provide assistance to returning victims of trafficking and exploitation.	1)
Regional Programme on Empowering Women Migrant Workers in Asia	MLSW, LWU	UNIFEM	2005-2007		(1) mapping migration trends and institutional services; (2) policy scans from a gender and rights perspective; (3) developing national migration databases disaggregated by sex, age and others, for appropriate policy and programme formulation; (4)- catalyzing policy, legislative and procedural reforms that ensure women's right to safe migration, return and resettlement; (5) mainstreaming migration concerns into National Development Policies, Plans and Programmes; (6) public awareness programmes; (7) capacity building and advocacy with targeted stakeholders - policy makers, parliamentarians, police and immigration officials, NGOs, migrant workers, etc.	1)
Community Livelihood Development Project	MLSW	CRWRC	2004-2008	770,000	(1)To increase family income through sustainable livelihood development and infrastructure improvements (2) To strengthen the village leadership in managing the village resources in a sustainable and responsible way (3) To achieve adequate basic health for the target group and sufficient clean water (4) To increase access, enrolment and achievement in primary and secondary education.	1)
Bokeo Integrated Rural Development Project	Bokeo Provin. Authority	CONCERN	2000-2004		To strengthen the ability of local government and villagers to plan, manage and replicate small-scale development activities using a participatory and gender aware approach.	1)

1) As it is in the 'Directory of NGOs in Lao PDR 2006'

## 5 WID/Gender Information sources

	Name and Speciality	Contact Address
Government Organization	Lao Women's Union	Manthatoulath Road, Vientiane, P.O. BOX 59 Tel&Fax: (856-21)-214306
	Gender Resource Information and Development Centre (GRID)	Ban Sapanthong Kang Vientiane, P.O. BOX 59 Tel (856-21)-413228, Tel&Fax (856-21)-416343 Email gridvte@yahoo.com
	Ministry of Health	Simeuang Road, Vientiane Tel (856-21)-214006, Fax (856-21)-214001
	Ministry of Education	Kaisone Avenue, Vientiane P.O. BOX 67, Tel (856-21)-214722 Fax (856-21)-216006
	Ministry of Industry & Handicraft	Nang Bone Road P.O. Box. 4708 Tel (856-21)-413000
	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Kaisone Road, Vientiane, Tel (856-21)-212342-44
	Ministry of Justice	Kaisone Avenue, Vientiane, Tel (856-21)-414102
	Ministry of Labour & Social Welfare	Pang Kham Road, Vientiane Tel & Fax (856-21)-314852
	National Statistic Center	Xieng Ngeun Village, Sikhot Dist, Vientiane, Tel. 856-21. 214740; Fax: 856-21. 242022
	National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology	Km 3, Thadeua RD, Tel (856-21)-315500
	Lao National Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Samsenthai Road, Vientiane Road Tel (856-21) 219224 Fax:(856-21) 213223 Website:WWW.lncci.laitel.com E-mail: laocci@laotel.com
	The Lao Federation of Trade Union	87, Lane Xang Ave, P.O. Box 780, Tel (856-21)-212752, Fax (856-21)-212752
International Organization	UNDP	Phon Kheng Road, P.O.Box 345, Vientiane Tel (856-21)-213390-1, 94-97, Fax (856-21)-212029, 214819
	UNICEF	Quarter Wat Nak, KM-3 Thadeua Road, P.O.Box 1080, Vientiane Tel (856-21)-315200-01, 315203-04, Fax (856-21)-314852
	UNFPA(United Nations Population Fund)	Phon Kheng Road, P.O.Box 345, Vientiane Tel (856-21)-413467, or 213390 c/o UNDP Fax (856-21)-412398
	UNHCR	Phong Kheng Road, Vientiane Tel (856-21)-212038~9 Fax (856-21)-213385
	IMF	c/o Bank of Lao PDR, Yonnet Road, P.O.Box 19, Vientiane Tel (856-21)-213106, Fax (856-21)-214986
	FAO	Phonh Xay Road, Vientiane, Tel (856-21)-414503, Fax (856-21)-414500
	WHO	That Luang Road, P.O.Box 343; Tel (856-21)-414264, Fax (856-21)-
	WB Liaison Office	Patou Xay, Nehru Road, P.O.Box 345, Vientiane
JICA	Sihom Commerce Center, 3 rd floor Luangprabang Road, No. 006, Ban Sihom, P.O. Box:3933, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR Tel: (856-21) 241100, Fax: (856-21) 241101, 241102	

	ILO	015 Phon Kheng Road(856-21) 12335/450318, Fax:(856-21) 900292 E-mail: iloised@laotel.com
	SIDA	Sokpaluang Rd. P.O. Box 230 Tel (856-21)-216489 Tel (856-21)-414209 Fax (856-21)-414210
	GTZ	138/11 Ban Thongtoun, Chanthabouly District Tel (856-21)-217554, 243574 Fax (856-21)-217329

NGO name	Address	Contact Numbers
<a href="#">Adventist Development and Relief Agency - Laos (ADRA Laos)</a>	196/20, Luang Prabang Road, Ban Sikhaitha P.O.Box: 5000 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 215276 Fax:(856)-(021) 520053 <a href="mailto:adralao@adralao.org">adralao@adralao.org</a> <a href="http://www.adralao.org/">http://www.adralao.org/</a>
<a href="#">Australian People for Health Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA)</a>	That Luang Road, Ban Nongbone P.O.Box: 2921 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 450264 Fax:(856)-(021) 450264 <a href="mailto:apheda@laotel.com">apheda@laotel.com</a> Website N/A
<a href="#">CARE International in Lao PDR (CARE Laos)</a>	217/18 Sibounheuang Road P.O.Box: 4328 Ban Sibounheung, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 217727, 212991 Fax:(856)-(021) 214 415 <a href="mailto:info@carelaos.org">info@carelaos.org</a> Website N/A
<a href="#">Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)</a>	363, Lao-Thai Road P.O.Box: 4224 Ban Vatnak, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 313071 Fax:(856)-(021) 313945 Email N/A Website N/A
<a href="#">Church World Service (CWS)</a>	047 Saphanthong Rd. P.O.Box: 820 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 313 837 Fax:(856)-(021) 261 841 <a href="mailto:cws@laopdr.com">cws@laopdr.com</a> <a href="http://www.cwslaos.org/">http://www.cwslaos.org/</a>
<a href="#">Comité de Coopération avec le Laos (CCL)</a>	348, Unit 10, That Luang Rd. P.O.Box: 4791 Ban Nongbone, Vientiane Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel : (856)-(021) 412601 Fax:(856)-(021) 413162 <a href="mailto:cclmani@laopdr.com">cclmani@laopdr.com</a> <a href="http://www.ccl-laos.org/">http://www.ccl-laos.org/</a>
<a href="#">Concern Worldwide (CONCERN)</a>	Luang Prabang Road, Ban Haisok P.O.Box: 4374 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 213578 Fax:(856)-(021) 213577 <a href="mailto:laos.info@concern.net">laos.info@concern.net</a> Website N/A
<a href="#">Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE-LAOS)</a>	164/13, Sibounheuang Road P.O.Box: 2795 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 215443, 263463 Fax:(856)-(021) 215443, 263463 <a href="mailto:cidseint@laotel.com">cidseint@laotel.com</a> <a href="http://www.cidselao.org/">http://www.cidselao.org/</a>
<a href="#">Cooperazione e Sviluppo Onlus (CESVI)</a>	Saylom Road P.O.Box: 8949 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	<a href="mailto:cesvivre@laotel.com">cesvivre@laotel.com</a> <a href="http://www.cesvi.org/">http://www.cesvi.org/</a>
<a href="#">CUSO Lao PDR (CUSO)</a>	Ban Phonsavahn Tay No.1 P.O.Box: 3517 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 314630 Fax:(856)-(021) 313755 <a href="mailto:cusolao@laopdr.com">cusolao@laopdr.com</a> Website N/A
<a href="#">Danish Red Cross (DRC)</a>	Setthatirath Road, Impasse, Xiengnhune P.O.Box: 2948 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 219559 Fax:(856)-(021) 219420 <a href="mailto:danishrc@laopdr.com">danishrc@laopdr.com</a> Website N/A
<a href="#">Deutsche Welthungerhilfe / German Agro Action (DWHH/GAA)</a>	Ban Phonsavan Tai P.O.Box: 9817 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 263540 Fax:(856)-(021) 262797 <a href="mailto:gaalao@laopdr.com">gaalao@laopdr.com</a> <a href="http://www.welthungerhilfe.de/">http://www.welthungerhilfe.de/</a>
<a href="#">Family Health International (FHI)</a>	Room 1A/02, Sihom Commerce Center Luangprabang Rd., Vientiane	Tel:(856)-(021) 241113, 241131 Fax:(856)-(021) 241140 <a href="mailto:Vone@fhilaos.org">Vone@fhilaos.org</a>

	Capital, Lao PDR	<a href="http://www.fhi.org/">http://www.fhi.org/</a>
<a href="#">French Red Cross (FRC)</a>	Setthathirath Road, Ban Xiengnhune P.O.Box: 2948 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 241042 Fax:(856)-(021) 241042 <a href="mailto:crf.lao.cdm@crf-lao.com">crf.lao.cdm@crf-lao.com</a> Website N/A
<a href="#">Friends-International (FI)</a>	Phai Nam Road, Ban Sisakhet P.O.Box: 10688 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	(856)-(021) 261389 Fax N/A <a href="mailto:laos@friends-international.org">laos@friends-international.org</a> <a href="http://www.friends-international.org/">http://www.friends-international.org/</a>
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<a href="#">World Education/Consortium in the Lao PDR (WE/CONSORTIUM)</a>	10 Fa Ngum Rd., Ban Phiavat P.O.Box: 6782 Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Tel:(856)-(021) 214524, 222439 Fax:(856)-(021) 217553 <a href="mailto:consolao@laopdr.com">consolao@laopdr.com</a> <a href="http://www.worlded.org/">http://www.worlded.org/</a>

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## ***7. Definition***

### **Technical Terms**

#### Gender

Analytical concept to clarify the social role of men and women and interrelation between them. Sex (biological) is basically impossible to change, while gender implying the role of men and women and their interrelationship is likely to change according to social notion and sense of values.

#### Informal sector

Part of economy consisting of small competitive individual or family firms listed in the labor indicators. According to the definition of ILO, those engaged in this sector have simple technology, insufficient amount of capital, unidentified business location, minimum number of employees (or none of them), lack of legality and registration, and no capability of bookkeeping.

#### WID (Women in Development)

Concept of development incorporating women's participation into development processes, taking it into account that women are active agents and beneficiaries of development.

#### Reproductive health/rights

Health/Rights concerning sex and reproduction. To be able to live safe and satisfied sex life, and to have freedom to decide whether, when and how many children to deliver.

#### National machinery

Administrative organization to promote equal participation between men and women, and to implement and strengthen policies related to women, and to supplement organization for women.

#### Empowerment

To empower individuals or groups in political, economical and social sense

#### Affirmative action

Prioritized positive measure to promptly correct the difference, in the case that discriminated groups are placed in extremely unequal conditions to other groups, due to the discrimination accumulated in the past

#### Access and control

Access is to be able to use resources and services for the economic activity, or to have a right to exercise them. Control is a right to decide how to manage resources and services or to own them.

#### Reproductive activity

Activity to reproduce for the next generation including to give a birth and raise the children, and to sustain the daily life, for instance, washing and cooking

## Indicators

### Inflation rate

Instead, GDP deflator is used.

### Gini coefficient

Aggregate numerical measure of income inequality ranging from 0 to 1. 0 means perfect equality, and 1 perfect inequality. Larger than 0.4 are supposed to be high inequality.

### Percentage of Women's Income

There are no appropriate data comparable to each country. UNDP works out that the women's income is 75% of men's in non-agricultural sector.

### Total fertility rate

Average number of children whom a woman delivers in all her life

### Under-one mortality rate

Annual number of infants who die among 1,000 newborn babies within 1 year after the birth

### Under-five mortality rate

Annual number of infants who die 1,000 newborn babies within 5 years after the birth among

### Maternal mortality rate

Annual number of mothers who die among 100,000 cases of delivery because of pregnancy

### Percentage of births attended by trained health personnel

The rate of births with the help of doctors, nurses, midwives, trained health personnel, or trained traditional midwives

### Percentage of infants with low birth weight

The rate of newborn children of which the birth weight is less than 2,500 grams

### Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) use rate

The rate of using oral rehydrate salt or substitute solution for under-five infants having diarrhea

### Enrolment ratio of primary and secondary school

Total enrolment ratio (or gross enrolment ratio) is the rate of pupils going to school with no respect to school age against population at the school age. Net enrolment ratio is the rate of pupils going to school at the school age against the people at the school age.