

HELVETAS Working Areas in Laos

HELVETAS in Laos works across the country, building long term collaborative partnerships and applying a programmatic approach in our project implementation, optimizing resources and synergies between our projects and with other development actors.

In the area of **Rural Economy**, HELVETAS promotes sustainable agriculture practices including pro-poor and certified organics, facilitates farmers and community based group organization, community managed infrastructures and facilities, fair market access and engagement, as well establishment of revolving funds and development of income generation options.

Governance and Peace involves multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation, facilitating exchange and dialogue at all levels as a platform for more informed decision making, policy development and promotion of governance among and between partners, in particular civil society and government whereby the legal framework continues to be strengthened, supporting the achievement of MDGs and Growth with Equity goals of the Lao PDR.

In the area of **Environment & Climate Change**, HELVETAS promotes inclusive land use planning & management and secure community access. Beyond promoting sustainable agriculture, HELVETAS also strengthens community capacity in NRM and facilitates coping mechanisms which build resilience of small holder farmers and rural communities in an increasingly unpredictable changing environment and climate.

In the area of **Skills Development and Education**, HELVETAS facilitates inclusive access to relevant services, information and capacity development based on target group needs and priorities. HELVETAS also supports informal and formal educational institutions, in particular skills and curriculum upgrading for teachers and students relevant to the agriculture sector

Water and Infrastructure are integrated per community needs and will to self manage. Appropriate technologies favoring local resources are promoted while relevant skills training is provided to ensure target group capacity to manage over the longer term.

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Some Key Achievements



- **Laos Extension for Agriculture Project (LEAP)** supported the development and adoption of the Lao Extension Approach by the Ministry of Agriculture as the National approach to promote 'Extension for Everyone' based on a set of participatory and inclusive principles.



- **Support to Reform of Agriculture & Forestry College (SURAFCO)** is helping the Northern Agriculture College in Luang Prabang lead the way in becoming a model educational institution upgrading teacher capacity, providing comprehensive theory & practical curriculums while integrating gender & socially inclusive policies in recruitment & enrolment practices.



- **Rural Income through Sustainable Energy (RISE)** is promoting eco-friendly, people friendly alternatives to rural electrification, enabling income generation diversification for adults, while helping kids learn better for school, improving community livelihoods all around.



- **Integrated Upland Development in Non-ghet (UDIN)** is targeting 30 of some of the poorest and most remote villages in Non-ghet district, Xiengkhouang, helping communities to improve their livelihoods combining agriculture, NRM, water and infrastructure, and market access interventions.



- **Promotion of Organic Agriculture and Marketing in Laos (PROFIL)** supported the establishment of the first certified organic farmers managed market in Laos as well the establishment of the Lao Organic Certification Body.
- **Enhancing Milled Rice in Laos Project (EMRIP)** proved much more than its name suggested, piloting an innovative equitable private public partnership model between rice millers and rice producers, since being replicated by different partners.

These achievements are made possible by the commitment and participation of our target communities, the good will, cooperation and expertise of our many government and civil society partners, and the insights and contributions of our multiple stakeholders.

“Actively contributing to the improvement of living conditions for economically and socially disadvantaged people”



HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in Lao PDR

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation works in 32 partner countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. As a politically and denominationally neutral association, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is supported by around 100,000 members and sponsors. We envision a world in which every woman, man and child lives a life indignity and security, exercising self-determination, caring for the environment such that it meets the needs of the current generation as well as future ones. This vision is the basis for the organizations mission to help disadvantaged men, women and communities in developing countries.

For more please visit: www.helvetas.org



HELVETAS started to work in Lao P.D.R. in 2001 with the Laos Extension for Agriculture Project (LEAP) funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

HELVETAS in Laos focuses on 4 key working areas:

- Rural Economy
- Governance & Peace
- Environment & Climate Change
- Skills Development and Education

Water & Infrastructure is an added value working area integrated into our projects based on community needs, while Knowledge & Learning are embedded in our working approaches.

HELVETAS Laos is committed to aid and development effectiveness as outlined in the Paris & Vientiane Declarations, and in particular the Accra Agenda for Action and the Istanbul Principles.

For more please visit: www.helvetas-laos.org

“ Many people benefited from investment in agriculture & natural resources development, but there are concerns about social & environmental impact.”

*Dr. Ty Phommasack,
Vice Minister of Agriculture & Forestry*

A Challenging Perspective

The World Bank recently ranked the Lao PDR as a developing lower income middle country, indicating that progress has been made to graduate the country off the Least Developed Countries (LDC) list by 2020. To reach this objective, the Lao PDR is implementing the Brussels LDC plan and adopted an ambitious National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) and National Growth & Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) which are integral to a 'Growth with Equity' framework. With increase of foreign direct investment, commercialization of agriculture, transportation and infrastructure development much has been achieved in *National Growth*, however significant gaps not only remain but in some areas are widening in *Poverty Eradication*. Opportunities and risks are apparent with significant reliance on the country's bio-diverse natural resources serving as collateral to boost GDP capital, with increasing pressure on the very same natural resources (land, forest, water) essential to the livelihood of rural families & their communities.

Working in a fast changing environment like Laos is bringing new challenges for the Lao government, for the local communities and for their development partners.

HELVETAS Laos promotes and engages in equitable multi-stakeholder partnerships with a variety of development partners including fellow INGOs, government, local civil society organizations & networks, and fair minded private sector, development agencies & donors.

HELVETAS Laos through different projects & initiatives is addressing various issues and proposing some alternatives, with strategic interventions targeting rural communities, supporting farmers & community based groups to be better equipped to navigate the changes, negotiate the opportunities and mitigate the challenges ensuring that communities benefit from as well actively participate in and contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

At field level, HELVETAS Laos promotes gender equity and social inclusiveness, prioritizes community needs, supports local ownership, values indigenous knowledge and invests in environmentally sound and community sustainable practices.

HELVETAS Laos seeks to build skills, knowledge and resilience at community level while developing joint strategies for informed decision & policy making at all levels.



Local & International
Government &
Non-governmental
Civil Society
Multi-stakeholder Partnership
Community Participation
Basic Resource Access
Resilience & Empowerment
Informed Decision Making
Capacity building
Training
Equity between & for all
Gender Inclusion
Cultural & ethnic diversity
Pro-poor
Organic
Food & Land Security
Education for all
Basic health
Energy efficiency
Natural Resource Management
Poverty alleviation
Sustainable Growth

Partners in Development

We wish to express our appreciation & acknowledge the following:

The generosity and kindness of HELVETAS members and contributors, amongst others:

- The Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation (SDC)
- The European Union / Commission (EU/EC)
- The Fédération Gènevoise de Coopération (FGC)
- The McKnight and Blue Moon Foundations

And all our implementing partners, in particular:

SNV; CCL; GDA; SAEDA; PADETC; HJA; LHD; the Ministries of Agriculture & Forestry, Education & Sport, and Energy; & the National Leading Board for Rural Development & Poverty Reduction; and related departments and divisions at province & district levels.