
2011 Gender & Inclusiveness Action Plan

1) HELNETAS Institutional Vision & Values

- . HELNETAS has the **vision** of a society, which grants everyone, both men and women, the right of self-determination and enables them to participate in shaping their social and political environment.
- . HELNETAS adheres to the **fundamental values** of acting on the basis of human rights: Helvetas promotes equality between men and women.

2) HELNETAS Laos Mission, Values and Principles

2.1 Mission

To work in partnership with a range of Lao partner organizations including civil society, and donor agencies to promote sustainable livelihoods for rural people within the framework of the millennium development goals (MDG's) and the government's national social and economic development plan (NSED). HELNETAS Laos will seek opportunities for working at the grassroots level in a manner that is inclusive and participatory, bringing immediate benefits to rural women and men and generating innovations and experience that can be the basis for improved policy making.

2.2 Core Values

The values that underpin our inclusive and participatory approaches in our offices and in the field:

Everyone matters.

Everyone has a say, and there isn't only one way.

Everyone is a student and teacher.

Everyone can communicate – not using the same or any words doesn't mean a person has nothing to say.

Everyone can contribute – we need to recognise, encourage and value each person's experiences – personal & professional.

Everyone is not the same – our differences afford us learning opportunities which in turn strengthen our collective impact.

2.3 Working Principles

- . HELNETAS Laos is a gender, culture, race, creed, political and religion neutral un-bias organization, promoting inclusion & tolerance, respect and fair treatment for & between all employees, partners, contributors, participants and target groups. All forms of discrimination by or against the above mentioned are prohibited, and will be held accountable.
- . HELNETAS Laos Laos is committed to promoting a safe and professional working environment for all its employees, partners and target groups.
- . HELNETAS Laos Laos is committed to productive & sustainable partnerships by building respectful, mutually accountable collaborations with multiple types of organizations, whether they are governmental, non- governmental, local or international.
- . HELNETAS Laos is committed & accountable to its target groups, ensuring to work with the willing, to plan & implement activities and projects which are needs based, pro-poor, inclusive, participatory, sustainable, culturally, fiscally and environmentally responsible, promoting the independence and empowerment of its target groups.

3) Gender & Inclusiveness: what & who do we mean?

- . **Gender** by definition refers to culturally based expectations of roles and behaviours of both men and women
- . It distinguishes between the biology of sex and the socially constructed tasks and functions attributed to men and women in society.
- . **Inclusiveness** by definition refers to treating all groups or all members of a group equally and without exception
 - How this translates into how we work: where and when there is a will – there is a way
- . *Comprehension*: the willingness to learn about & from different social groups
- . *Composition*: the willingness to target and include different social groups
- . *Acceptance*: the willingness to work with different social groups
 - HELNETAS Laos promotes Gender & inclusiveness where all people are valued, differences are respected, and basic needs are met promoting dignity, irrespective of age, sex, ethnicity, physical and/or educational capacity, socio-economic status or area of residence (poor; urban/rural; remote)

4) HELVETAS Laos 2010 Gender Review:

4.1 Key Findings

Three key shortcomings were highlighted throughout the Gender Report, affecting all projects more or less:

- 1) Programs and projects were not planned in an engendered manner
- 2) Human resource distribution in composition but more importantly in position and responsibility level between men and women imbalanced
- 3) Capacity of both staff and partners

4.2 Key Recommendations

- 1) The program and projects should work to develop Action plans with specific attention given to project & partner staff capacity building, focusing on cultural gender roles, responsibilities and how these are changing, and where there is scope and opportunity to improve.
- 2) Program and projects should be encouraged to not settle for and give into counterproductive & counter-inclusive socio-political and cultural archetypes and stereotypes, rather should aim to pro-actively encourage shifts, using to their advantage HELVETAS policies, and existing GoL policies, laws and decrees, in respect to gender and social inclusion: men, women, poor, disabled, ethnic, uneducated/illiterate etc. This should be employed first at PO & project level to set the example, and in turn seek ways to further implement and deepen at partner and target community level.
- 3) Map out existing knowledge and experience among staff and partners, and develop HR development plan, allocating budget to support the gender mainstreaming process specifically in regard to training & empowering staff and partners; this is especially relevant in the absence of explicit criteria, indicators and goals, ensuring that both staff and partners are better equipped to analyze ongoing & planned activities, and to identify areas for improvement, mitigating missed opportunities
- 4) In the event new projects and initiatives are developed, plans should be formulated to address gender interlinked interventions and inclusiveness at staff, partner, and community levels
- 5) Identify appropriate partners who can help fill the gender and inclusion gap, counterbalancing limited capacity and lack of experience amid project staff and existing partners.

5) HELNETAS Laos 2011 Gender & Inclusiveness Action Plan

5.1 Joint Actions:

Why	What	Where	When	Who
Address the cross-cutting issue of lack of capacity for project staff and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductory training: 2 day workshop - Develop a directory of HR resource persons 	Vientiane (PO/EMRIP/PROFIL; LEAP/NAFES) Xiengkhouang (RISE/UDIN) Luang Prabang (SURAFECO/Agric-College)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Introductory Training sessions completed by end of March 2011 - Directory template uploaded and open on Helvetas Laos Share space by end of Feb 2011 	<p>PO will facilitate organization</p> <p>Helvetas Laos Gender Focal point will develop and upload template/ all projects to contribute</p>
To build capacity of local staff; to streamline communication on Gender & Inclusion matters, and to localize & help to more systematically mainstream Gender and Social inclusion interventions and related planning & M&E of projects and development of the Laos Program framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . 3 Thematic Groups established & operational: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Gender & Inclusiveness 2) Change & Resilience 3) Partnerships & Civil Society . Projects identify focal point persons for each thematic group 	Locations TBD per the group	<p><u>4 times a year/ per grp.:</u></p> <p>Gender & Incl: Jan; Apr; July; Oct</p> <p>Change & Resilience: Feb; May; Aug; Nov</p> <p>Partnerships & CSO: Mar; Jun; Sep; Dec</p>	At least one representative from each project and PO
Institutionalize Gender & Inclusion M&E & reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Project Site Monitoring visits by Helvetas Laos Gender Focal Point(s) . Internal review progress 2x a year at mgt level and include Gender progress in program and projects reports (2x year) . External review every 3 years 	PO & projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring in May & Nov to feed into annual reporting - Internal review/report: projects and program reports include gender section; Mgt meeting in April and Oct will review progresses. - External Review: Every 3rd Sept / next one due in 2013 (to feed into that years' annual report) 	<p>Helvetas Laos Gender Focal Points in consultation with PO & project focal points</p> <p>At management level, CTAT/TPM together with PO and Gender focal points</p>
Sensitize & inform existing & potential partners about HELNETAS Laos policy and strategy for Gender & Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Gender & Social Inclusion Leaflet (Lao & English) . Website section dedicated to cross-cutting thematic issues including Gender & Inclusiveness 	PO & projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Draft by Feb 2011 - Translated to Lao Draft by Mar 2011 - Circulated to Gender & Social Inclusion focal group Apr 2011 - Circulated to projects Jun 2011 - Finalized Jul 2011 - Printed Aug 2011 - Website activated Feb 2011 	<p>Helvetas Laos Gender Focal Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Agnieszka . Boualaphanh

5.2 PO & Projects:

Project Office	Rationale	Actions	Indicators	Results
PO	1) Capacity building on Gender 2) Imbalanced team composition - Training Opportunities 3) Internal cohesive understanding	1) Training (TBD methodology/conclusion PO/projects 2) Admin/Finance expand scope of participation - English, - Field visits 3) Cross-project discussions	1) M and E progress 2) Balanced training participation 3) Quarterly thematic exchanges + thematic leaflet	1) Staff capable to implement/M & E 2) Women admin/finance acquired new knowledge related to development context 3) Shared vision/understanding
LEAP	1) Gender not included in Project Design 2) Gender actions not internalized 3) Partner capacity	1) Include in hot spot planning 2) Upgrade social inclusion M&E methodology and tools 3) Sub- CAW NAFES Partnership Training	1) 50% improved participation by women 2) Tool for M& E of gender 3) Sub-CAW train Prov./Dist. Partners	1) Gender mainstreamed into Hot Spot activities 2) Social Matrix M&E Tool institutionalized 3) Partners can plan, implement & evaluate gender independently
PROFIL	1) Team capacity building 2) Imbalanced women participation in XK 3) Ethnic diversity	1) Training and workshop based on site needs 2) Analyze 3) Khmu agriculture learning gender	1) Pilot action plan implemented in BKS 2) Action plan Development 3) Pilot activities and participation	1) Staff have capacity 2) Improve women participation 3) Training course development
RISE	1) Capacity building 2) Activities not engendered 3) HR Composition	1) Training and tools 2) Gender inclusive activities development 3) Target ethnic women + capacity of existing women HR	1) Staff trained + min 2/local partner 2) # of engendered = activities implemented 3) Ethnic women in management	1) Tools developed and used 2) Women & disadvantaged GRPS benefits 3) Women staff gain capacity
UDIN	1) Project objective not engendered 2) Capacity building 3) Poor targeting	1) Integrate gender planning in M and E 2) Training of staff and partner 3) Gender analysis	1) Tools developed for M and E of gender 2) Tools developed and used 3) Community-based plan developed and M&E implemented	1) Engendered implementation 2) Improved capacity 3) More inclusive targeting poor women
EMRIP	1) Capacity of staff 2) Capacity of target group 3) Common interest and understanding in TEAM	1) Training 2) Carry out assessment (completed in 2 provinces - SNV) 3) Internal exchange	1) Staff and millers train farmers 2) Action plans developed 3) Common understanding	1) Engendered implementation 2) Balanced participation of farmers 3) Staff gender aware and acknowledgement
SUFRACO	1) INCL. Participation of students 2) Improve enrollment (women) 3) Teachers composition more inclusive	1) Private sector cooperation 2) Promote enrollment and support of women students 3) Increase ethnic diversity and gender balance of teachers	1) 50% of new teachers are women 2) 50% of teachers trained are women 3) Workshops organized: 3	1) 3 more partnerships 2) Increased enrollment of women and disadvantaged 3) Curriculum included gender semester 3-4

6) Resources

- Human/ Organizational:

- 1) HELNETAS Laos Gender Focal Points
- 2) MAF Gender Division partners (For more information contact [Agnieszka](#))
- 3) [Gender and Development Group](#) (GDG)
- 4) [Lao Bar Association](#) (LBA)
- 5) [Lao Disabled People Association](#) (LDPA)
- 6) [Lao Network of People Living with HIV/Aids](#) (LNP+)

- Reference/Information:

- 1) [HELNETAS Laos Share Space:](#)
Folder path: Information & Reference Documentation/ References & Reports by Development Sector/ Gender & Inclusiveness
- 2) United Nations: [UNIFEM in Lao PDR](#)
- 3) [National Assembly](#) Website: Lao Constitution and Laws
- 4) Various reports on Gender and the status of women in Lao PDR (for more information contact [Agnieszka](#))

- Tools/Methodology

- 1) [HELNETAS Laos Share Space:](#)
Folder path: Information & Reference Documentation/ References & Reports by Development Sector/ Gender & Inclusiveness

7) Glossary

- Gender

The term refers to culturally based expectations of roles and behaviours of both men and women (and is not interchangeable with women). It distinguishes between the biology of sex and the socially constructed tasks and functions attributed to men and women in society.

Unlike the biology of sex and with it its biologically determined functions (e.g. child bearing), **gender roles** and norms can change because they are socially-constructed and not “natural”.

However, often men and women cannot play the roles they want or access the resources they need. In particular women face difficulties accessing and controlling resources and their social and economic contributions are undervalued.

- Gender relations

Means looking at the attribution and organisation of roles, responsibilities, resources and values attached to women and men. Gender relations are power relations and attempts to change them to improve gender equality are often perceived as threats to “traditional roles”.

“Traditional roles”, however, are usually hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women and represent the interests of a particular, rather than all groups in a society.

- Gender equality

Does not mean equal numbers of men and women in development activities, nor does it necessarily mean treating men and women exactly the same. It is not the aim that men and women become the same, but it signifies the commitment to work towards a society in which neither men nor women suffer from poverty, and in which men and women are able to live equally fulfilling lives.

- Engender

Refers to the systematic integration of gender concerns into each activity.

- Practical gender needs

Refer to the access to resources and opportunities to perform existing gender roles better, whereas **strategic gender needs** arise from the wish to change the customary gender roles including the division of labour as well as power relations and are strongly linked to decision-making and empowerment.

In order to make sure that attention is given to gender aspects during an evaluation, the same need to be reflected not only in the objectives of the **Terms of References**, but appropriate questions to investigate differences in participation, benefits, changes in gender relations etc. have to be included.