

Poverty Reduction Fund targets Xaysomboun for development

**Sangkomsay
Bubphanouvong**

The Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF), under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, joined other ministries on Thursday to discuss plans to address poverty eradication in Xaysomboun province this year.

During the meeting at the Office of the Central Committee in Vientiane, the Fund detailed efforts in developing Ome and Ao villages in Xaysomboun province's Anouvong district and improving people's living standards.

Deputy Head of Office of the Central Committee of Lao People's Revolutionary Party, Mr Chanthaboun Lattanavong, Executive Director of the PRF, Mr Chit Thavisay, as well as senior officials from ministries and state organisations attended the meeting.

The project involves officials drafting the necessary work plans and documentation from February 14 to March 15 so that advice can be dispensed in the communities to improve crop and livestock production.

This will be followed by the organising of volunteer groups in the villages from March 16-29 to assist the project and training courses



Mr Chanthaboun Lattanavong addresses the meeting at the Office of the Central Committee in Vientiane on Thursday.

for local volunteers and on finance at the district level from March 31 to April 3.

Mr Chanthaboun said the project was part of overall efforts to upgrade Xaysomboun province's industry and put the economy on a sustainable footing.

Xaysomboun was established as the 18th province of Laos in 2013 and is of strategic importance to national defence and public security.

The province's lack of economic infrastructure, and the local population's reliance on nature for survival and lack of capabilities in commercial production were cited as challenges to socio-

economic development.

To address this, the government established a policy in 2019 to develop the province's economy through cooperation between various government and private sectors.

In the past, the PRF organised 442 groups to assist communities in 73 villages of Nong, Xepon and Thapangthong districts in Savannakhet province.

Activities included the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry conducting training courses to boost crop production and livestock rearing to improve residents' incomes.

Researchers from the National University of Laos (NUOL) and other institutions in the region gathered from January 30-31 to discuss poverty eradication and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The Poverty Reduction Fund under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry hosted the first meeting of the Joint Research Programme on the Impact of Community Driven Development Approach to Rural Development of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Countries at the Confucius Institute, NUOL.



Officials attend a weeklong education workshop to discuss a new project.

Experts partner to strengthen education in local communities

**Keoviengkhone
Bounviseth**

Lao education officials and overseas development partners are joining forces to strengthen school communities in a bid to improve the quality of education and lifelong learning.

They are collaborating in the "Strengthening School-Community Partnership for Quality Education and Lifelong Learning" project by developing institutional capacity-building tools for village education development committees.

The project will run for 21 months and involve inter-centre collaborative action research through the Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) and

SEAMEO Regional Centre for Community Education Development (SEAMEO CED).

SEAMEO CED and development partners, including SEAMEO INNOTECH Philippines, the Australian RMIT University and DVV international, are currently holding a workshop in Vientiane from February 10-14.

Representatives of line sectors along with education officials from five provinces are attending the workshop to discuss the project.

The workshop is highlighting the project objectives, which are to develop tools and resources designed to strengthen village education development committees as an important school community partnership structure that supports

educational innovation and the improvement of quality education and lifelong learning in Laos, in collaboration with SEAMEO CED.

The components of the 21-month project relate to building the institutional capacity of village education development committees as a mechanism for promoting and improving school-community partnerships.

Project components include participatory action research to develop capacity building tools and knowledge products, and prototyping and pilot-testing of capacity-building tools.

The project will monitor and evaluate the use of capacity building tools, and scale-up and sustainability planning for the tools' development with the Ministry of Education and Sports and SEAMEO CED.

The project aims to develop a set of tools and resources that can be used by the ministry and SEAMEO CED to build the capacity of village education development committees as an important structure for promoting and supporting school-community partnerships that espouse educational innovation and improvement of quality and lifelong learning.

In addition, village education development committees will help develop a set of institutional capacity building tools designed to help them perform their roles and responsibilities as a conduit for improving the quality of learning in school, as well as addressing the learning needs of other community members, including out-of-school children, youth, and adult learners.

Medics get lessons in diagnosis, management of mental illness

**Viengdavanh
Banphahaksa**

The Swiss Laos Hospital Project is building the knowledge of Lao

professionals in the fields of psychiatry and mental health through a three-day training course taking place from February 12-14 at Mahosot Hospital.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the hospital's Director General, Dr Phisith Phoutsavath, and Head of Unit, Public Psychiatry Clinic Lugano, Dr Emilio

Bolla.

The 46 participants come from the Mental Health Department at Mahosot Hospital, Children's Hospital and Mittaphab Hospital, as well as students from the University of Health Sciences.

Addressing the course participants, Dr Phisith said the Swiss Laos Hospital Project had provided specialists in psychiatry to broaden the knowledge of medical professionals at Mahosot and other hospitals on the treatment of mental health disorders.

He urged participants to make the most of the occasion and to learn from the Swiss psychiatrists for the benefit of the mental health profession in Laos.

The training course is the second for mental health specialists following a three-day session that was delivered in October last year and funded by the Swiss Laos Hospital Project.

This week course participants are learning about the recognition and management of early psychosis, and substance abuse, and will engage in discussions with Swiss specialists in these fields.

In addition to Dr Emilio Bolla, the Medical Director of the Public Psychiatry Clinic Lugano, Dr Rafael Traber, and former Deputy Medical Director of the Public Psychiatry Clinic Winterthur, Dr Toni Berthel are delivering lectures.



Doctors and medical students on Wednesday gather with Swiss instructors at the opening of a course on mental health.

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