

## **OXFAM IN LAO PDR**

**The Internal Quarterly Newsletter** 

ISSUE 3 (June - August 2024)



## INSIDE

#### **JUNE 2024**

- 1. Oxfam and LWU together conducted the National Consultation Workshop In LPB
- 2. Oxfam and the LFTU together reflected on the achievement and updated progress of the project
- 3. Oxfam celebrates International Labour Day.
- 4. Oxfam and NAFRI officials launched a new CSA Project in March 2024.
- 5. Oxfam and MoNRE visited in LPB Province
- 6. CLV IT Assists the staff in updating the Window and Okta...

#### **JULY 2024**

6.	Oxfam and MEM together conducted the National
	Consultation Workshop on DGET Report in Lao PDR.

- 7. Oxfam and LFTU together conducted a project closing meeting on ENL to Vulnerable Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Lao PDR.
- 8. Oxfam together with grantee representatives attended on Project Journey Write-Shop in LPB, Lao PDR
- 9. Oxfam together with LFTU conducted a project closeout meeting in Salavan, Lao PDR.
- 10. Oxfam together with MEM held a National Dialogue in Vangvieng, Lao PDR
- 11. Oxfam joined the National Social Protection Symposium in Vientiane, Lao PDR

#### **AUGUST 2024**

12.	The 3rd ASEAN Women Leaders Summit: "Strengthening
	Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN Community
	Post-2025" and the Pre-Summit Events

- 13. Empowering Trade Unions in ASEAN Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience for Migrant Workers
- 14. Oxfam in Laos and LFTU organized collective bargaining training for Informal workers
- 15. Co-organise the 2024 Ecothon &ASEAN Sustainable Learning and Exchange, Coaching & Mentoring Session in Lao PDR

15. Beneficiary Stories

## 1-5

## 6-11

## 12-16

17



Photo: Group photo on National Consultation Workshop in Luangprabang, Lao PDR.

Oxfam and LWU together conducted the National Consultation Workshop in Luangprabang Province, Lao PDR.

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Oxfam in Laos in collaboration with the Lao Women's Union and the UNESCAP, successfully conducted the National Consultation Workshop on Valuing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work and Investing in the Care Economy in Luangprabang, Lao PDR from June 4-5, 2024, with enthusiasm to address imbalanced care work by prioritizing policy initiatives and implementing care policy in Lao PDR. The event gathered valuable input and suggestions from 12 ministry representatives, developing partners and representatives from Lao Civil Society (CSO).



Photo: Oxfam in Laos ND is giving a speech



Photo: Participant is sharing in Group work



Photo: Group of participants are sharing their lesson



Photo: Group photo on meeting coordinator and progress reports in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

Oxfam and the Lao Federation of Trade Unions together reflected on the achievement and updated progress of the project in Vientiane Capital, Lao DPR.

Between June 11-13, 2024, Oxfam Lao PDR's the provide essential livelihoods support vulnerable affected communities by the COVID-19 pandemic Project, under the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand together with the Department of Labor Protection, the Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) held a meeting on the coordinators, reporting progress, lessons learned sharing and implementation plans for projects provide essential livelihoods to support vulnerable communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the 1 past year in Vientiane Capital. The previous implementation has seen positives results and is visible to the society distributing food by storage equipment, hygiene equipment and some funds to the project's target

group of over 2,200 households, covering 15,000 people, of which 55% are women.

The purpose of this meeting is to summarize the results of project's implementation and lesson learned, progress and challenges in the past year.



*Photo: The chairman is giving a speech at the meeting.* 



*Photo: The facilitator is explaining how the project works to the audiences.* 



Photo: A group photo celebrates International Labor Day in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

Oxfam in Laos celebrates International Labour Day with a marathon and a commitment to workers' rights.

On May 1st, 2024, Oxfam in Laos, along with our partners, proudly participated in a mini-marathon organized by the Lao Federation of Unions celebrate Trade to International Labour Day. This significant event brought together approximately 8,000 participants from various working sectors united in across Laos, their gratitude for the vital contributions of workers both within the country and worldwide.

During this celebration, we reaffirmed our dedication to enhancing social protection for all workers, with a special emphasis on informal women workers. We stressed the importance of these workers having access to the Lao PDR's social security scheme and being able to exercise their labor rights. These efforts are crucial to ensuring fair and decent working conditions, as well as improving occupational health and safety.

In alignment with our mission, Oxfam in Laos has produced a guide titled "Leading by Example: Good Practices for Labour Law Compliance and Workplace Safety," featuring Saffron Coffee Company in Luang Prabang. This guide showcases admirable labor practices and serves as an inspiration for other employers to understand the significance of adhering to labor laws, creating a fair environment for all workers.



*Photo: A group photo in front of the main backdrop.* 



Photo: A parade is walking on Lanxang.avenue, VTE.

Saffron Coffee Company exemplifies outstanding compliance with labor laws and international standards. Their internal regulations include health insurance, overtime compensation, holidays, and а non-discrimination strong policy. These policies ensure that their staff work in a safe environment and are treated fairly, setting a high standard in agri-food sector.

By promoting such practices, we aim to ensure that workers in both formal and informal economies can access decent work and social protection. Upholding labor laws and respecting workers' rights are essential steps towards driving social and economic development, recognizing that workers are fundamental, and they deserve dignity, fair and equality and no exploitation.

## Oxfam in Laos and NAFRI officials launched a new Climate Smart Agriculture Project in March 2024.

The European Union (EU) has approved 1.5 million euros for implementing a project in Laos to promote smart agriculture to respond to climate change and to address the needs of vulnerable women and youth famer's group.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the project was signed in Vientiane by Oxfam's National Director in Laos. Mr. Thasphorn Butsaling, and Director of the Lao National Agriculture and Forestry Institute (NAFRI), Dr. Chanthakhone Boualaphanh.

The project will be implemented in 15 villages in seven districts of which three districts, Xepon, Vilabouly and Champhone are in Savannakhet province and four districts, Xiengngeun, Nan, Chomphet and Phoukhoun are in Luangprabang province.



Photo: The chairman is giving a speech at the meeting.

The project is expected to directly benefit a total of 300,000 farming families and 100,000 other people, especially through the provision of techniques, knowledge and skills related to Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). It is also expected to improve yields.



Photo: Group photo on MOU signing ceremony of CSA Project in Vientiane, Lao PDR.



Photo: Group photo in front of Pak-Ou's Dam, LPB.

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## Oxfam in Laos and MoNRE visited and monitored in Pak-Ou District, Luangprabang Province.

From June 13–15, 2024, the Oxfam team, in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment of Luangprabang province, the Office of Natural Resources and Environment of Pak-Ou district, the Lao Youth Union, the Lao Women's Union, and the Office of Agriculture of Pak-Ou district, joined together to follow up and site visit the farmers who received funding to raise livestock in Pak-Ou district, Luangprabang province.

Through monitoring and evaluation, it was seen that the youths and women of the target group at the district level have developed and strengthened their knowledge in group production techniques, management's techniques, and leadership skills, which covered more than 184 people (92 women).

In addition, the youths and women who participated in this activity were given leadership roles in the village organization committee of 25 people (11 women), and women also played a greater role in decision-making, which saw an increase in income from the original about 15–18 million kip/year.



*Photo: Group photo in front of the livelihood site in Pak-Ou district, LPB.* 

### CLV IT assists the staff in updating the window and setting up the Okta verified in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

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From June 17–21, 2024, the CLV IT have been visited Oxfam's office in Vientiane, in-term of assisting and updating the new functions, particularity the Okta verified and Window 11. However, by doing this, Oxfam's staffs will accessing the upto-date functions and able to work smoothly as we.

The propose of the training was to make sure that every single Oxfam's staffs is functional and ready to working with new trends.



Photo: Bopha is explaining about the Okta application.



Photo: A group photo on National Consultation Workshop in Vangvieng, Lao PDR.

Oxfam and MEM together conducted the National Consultation Workshop on Draft Gender in Energy Transition Report in Lao PDR.

The increase in population and economic growth has all led to an increase in energy consumption as well. Most of the sources of energy production in the world are from fossil energy, which is the energy that releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and is the main cause of climate change.

Therefore, Oxfam in Lao PDR together with the Department of Energy Efficiency and Promotion, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) held National а Consultation Workshop on Draft Gender in Energy Transition Report in Lao PDR, between July 01 - 02, 2024, in Vang Vieng, VTE province, which plays an important role in the promotion of energy transition by focusing on the transition to using renewable energy sources or clean energy through equal participation in society.

Throughout supporting by DFAT, Oxfam in Lao PDR is taking the initiative to define a 5-year action plan with partners from the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) and CSO partners in the scope of genderrelated energy transition work in the country.



Photo: The participants are brainstorming into the Group work



Photo: Participant is presenting their Group work

#### Issue: 03

#### Throughout discussion on the meeting day, it was one of the agenda to learn the direction of energy transition to clean energy that is friendly to the environment and safe. At the same time, the transition will also provide opportunities for women to actively participate to ensure that the transition is not only sustainable but also equitable and inclusive.



*Photo: A group discussion and planning on Energy Transition in Laos.* 

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#### June-August 2024

In addition, this meeting is also a forum to discuss the situation of energy transition in Laos and set guidelines together with relevant parties in order to prepare information to support the ASEAN meeting with an agenda on energy transition and gender roles in 2024 that Lao PDR will host.



*Photo: A group representative is writing benefit on gender in energy transition in Laos.* 



*Photo: A group photo on project closing meeting at Lao Federation's Officer in Vientiane.* 

Oxfam LFTU together and conducted а project closing meeting on Essential Necessary and Livelihoods Support to Vulnerable Communities Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Lao PDR.

During the outbreak of COVID-19, communities throughout the country have been affected, especially the farming communities living in rural areas, which have been affected both economically and socially. Therefore, Oxfam in Lao PDR together with the Dep-

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-artment of Labor Protection, Lao Federation and Tread Union (LFTU), organized a project closing meeting on Essential Necessary Livelihoods and Vulnerable Communities Support to Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Lao PDR on July 5, 2024, at the Lao Federation's Office, Vientiane, with all related partners participating both in person and online.



Photo: Participants are joining via online.

#### Issue: 03

Throughout the discussion at the meeting, the participants expressed their opinions, pointed out the positive and weak points, and suggested ways to the draft improve report on the implementation of the project to support Essential Necessary and Livelihoods Support to Vulnerable Communities Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Lao PDR.



*Photo: A program lead is presenting of project's achievement since implementing until the end of period.* 



Photo: A group photo on Project Journey Write-Shop in Luangprabang.

Oxfam together with grantee representatives attended on Project Journey Write-Shop in Luangprabang, Lao PDR.

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From 2-4 July 2024 in Luang Prabang, Voice in Laos facilitated a Project Journey Write-Shop which was attended by grantee representatives that their projects were implemented completely including: People with Disabilities Development Association, Bamboo and NTFP Development Association, Namjai Community Association, Takienglaos, Xonphao, Dakdae, IWWA, DSDT and WECARE.

The Project Journey Write-Shop aims to facilitate the exchange and sharing of ideas on crafting a Project Journey.

This narrative format captures significant highlights, key experiences, outstanding outcomes, and changes as well as voice and stories of the rightsholders throughout their Voice Project's implementation.



Photo: A voice from Xonphao's director.

#### June-August 2024



Photo: A voice of representative from NCA.

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Photo: A voice of representative from Bamboo & NTFP.



Photo: A group photo on the SOLAR project closing in Salavan Province.

## Oxfam in Laos together with LFTU conducted a project closeout meeting in Salavan.

To enhance the living conditions of coffee and tea farmers in the southern region of Laos, where the majority still lack access to Social Protection and Occupational Safe and Health (OSH). Therefore, Oxfam, ILO, CSO and partners have implemented an EU funded project on Advancing Social Projection and Labor Rights and Entitlements in the coffee and tea sectors (SOLAR 2022-2024) in three southern provinces, namely Champasak, Salavan, and Sekong. This program has significantly contributed to the National Strategy Social Protection (NSPS), especially on extending coverage of social security to small scale farmers, promote safe working environments, and decent work for all.

On July 26, 2024, <u>Oxfam in Laos</u>, together with the Department of Labor Protection, the Lao Federation and Trade Unions (LFTU), and civil society partners, held a meeting to close the project in Lao Ngarm District, Saravan Province. The project's closing summarized the results through the implementation of the project and evaluated the success of the project, as well as exchanged comments from the relevant parties.



Photo: Oxfam's staff is explaining to the villager.

#### June-August 2024

#### Issue: 03

In addition, implementing partners also present their achievements, share their opinions, and point out the challenges and issues related to the implementation of this project.



*Photo: A group representative is presenting about the achievement and challenges.* 

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*Photo: A quote from Implementation Management Committee (IMC) in Salavan province.* 



Photo: A group on the National Dialogue on Promoting Gender in Just Energy Transition in Lao PDR.

### Oxfam in Laos together with MEM held a National Dialogue in Vangvieng, Lao PDR.

Last week, Oxfam in Lao PDR together with the Department of Energy Efficiency and Promotion, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) held a National Dialogue on Promoting Gender in Just Energy Transition in Lao PDR, from July 30 –31, 2024 in Vangvieng, Lao PDR.

This dialogue aims to discuss on gender issues and status in energy transition in the Lao PDR. If focuses on developing a clear strategy and action plan to address specific obstacles that hinder women's participation in the energy sector that was recently study by Oxfam in Laos.

Additionally, the results seek to enhance communication, collaboration, actions and ways forward for inclusion gender in energy transition in Lao PDR., which will elaborate in detail for the next 4 years programme.



#### June-August 2024



Photo: A panel discussion on Promoting Gender in Just Energy Transition.

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Photo: A panel discussion on Fair Finance in Laos.



Photo: A panel discussion on expanding social security in a context of high informality at ICTC, Vientinae, Lao PDR.

### Oxfam in Laos joined the National Social Protection Symposium in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

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On July 31, 2024, The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), proudly announces the first-ever National Social Protection Symposium. landmark This event gathers key stakeholders and development partners from both local and international levels address the theme: "Protecting to Informal Workers and Rural Dwellers under the National Social Protection Strategy".

The symposium reflects on the National Social Protection Strategy, which was first adopted in 2020 with the guiding principle of leaving no one behind through the three main pillars of Health Insurance, Social Security, and Social Welfare.



Photo: Oxfam is giving a bag to the Vice Minister at the National Social Protection Symposium.



Photo: Group photo on The Pre-Submit in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

The 3rd ASEAN Women Leaders Summit: "Strengthening Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN Community Post-2025" and the Pre-Summit Events

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Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have played a central role in establishing regional priorities toward the region's stability. Hence, ASEAN has prioritized the goal of achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls by 2030, as outlined in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. The SDGs specifically include gender equality as a stand-alone Goal 5, as well as integrating gender equality as cross cutting priorities underpinning other SDGs.

In 2024, Lao PDR assumed the ASEAN Chairmanship for the third time under the theme: "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience". Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the key priorities under "Enhancing Resilience" component. To this end, from 21-22 August 2024 the Government of Lao PDR host the Pre-Summit Events before -

the 3rd ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit which will be held on 23 August 2024, this year has as its theme "Strengthening Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN Community Post-2025". This summit was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Vientiane, Laos.

This summit is aims to build on these previous discussions and declarations to explore in more details the specific challenges affecting women and girls in relation to the care economy across ASEAN countries in order to produce a Declaration at the conclusion of this 3rd ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit, which will be considered by ASEAN Leaders at the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits to be held in October 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.



Photo: Group photo of Oxfam team on The Pre-Submit in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

Oxfam is participating in the ASEAN Women Leaders pre-summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR, focusing on "Strengthening Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN Community Post-2025." We are for grateful continued our with The ASEAN partnership Secretariat Lao Women's Union and United Nations ESCAP to drive regional efforts on promoting a care economy, building on last year's Regional Forum on Care in ASEAN. highlighting progress on We're unpaid care work, best practices, and the critical connection between care and climate. Our joint efforts aim to drive increased investment in care services and infrastructure, and the adoption of care-responsive policies across ASEAN. Together, we're working towards a future where care work is recognised as foundation the of resilient communities and a thriving ASEAN.

On day 2 of the ASEAN Women Leaders pre-summit, Chaipasird Phunphouvanna, Program Manager Gender Justice Lead from Oxfam in Laos, emphasized the importance of supporting marginalized women and girls involved in care work, and the need to address poverty and inequality by working together to build an inclusive care economy in ASEAN Laos and the region. Partnerships are central to Oxfam's work, and by collaborating with others, we can create lasting, meaningful change.



*Photo: Chaipasird represented Oxfam during the panel discussion.* 



*Photo: A group of Chairman on* a workshop "Empowering Trade Unions in ASEAN Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience for Migrant Workers".

### Empowering Trade Unions in ASEAN Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience for Migrant Workers

Marginalize workers, especially migrant workers often face numerous challenges, including exploitation, lack of legal protection, and limited access to essential services. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent regional conflicts have further exacerbated their vulnerabilities, urgent highlighting the need for coordinated action to protect their rights and well-being. So, a workshop on Empowering Trade Unions in ASEAN Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience for Migrant Workers took place on 22-23 August 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR.



*Photo: Oxfam's Comms material is displaying in the workshop* 



Photo: Oxfam is presenting the importance of Social protection

Oxfam has shared the importance of social protection for migrant workers, including health care, work injury benefits, sickness benefits and for migrant workers. Emphasize the implementation of the ASEAN declaration on the portability of social security benefits for migrant workers, and leveraging bilateral and multilateral agreements to ensure equality of treatment of nationals and non-nationals regarding coverage and entitlement to benefits in the destination country.



Photo: A group of Trainees are raising their certified certificate after completed the training workshop

# Oxfam in Laos and LFTU organized collective bargaining training for Informal workers

Collective bargaining is very important for informal workers who face challenges, numerous including exploitation, time, product prices, safety, and limited access to essential services due to lack of social protection. To address this issue, it is very necessary to have knowledge and skills in collective bargaining to protect their legitimate interests. Therefore, on 26-29 August 2024, the Fighting with women against inequalities and for socioeconomic justice in food systems: Improved Social Protection and Labour Rights For Women Workers In Asean's Agri-Food Sector, in collaboration with the Street Net International organization organized collective bargaining training for Informal workers at the Laotel Hotel.

The workshop was chaired by Ms. Chanhpen Maniseng, the Director General of the labor protection department of the Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU),

and the trainees are from the National Lao Trade Union and the Provincial's union, Civil trade Lao Society Oganizations, representative the tea and coffee producers groups, rice groups, livestock groups and villagelevel labor protection groups from Bokeo, Saravan, Khammouan and Vientiane provinces, participated in total 30 men and 16 women.

This training exchanged on the skills and knowledge of collective bargaining informal economic sectors, roleplaying exercises, and the joint development of collective bargaining plan for informal workers.



Photo: Trainees are discussing their group work



Photo: A group of Participants participate the 2024 Ecothon in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR

## Co-organise the 2024 Ecothon & ASEAN Sustainable Learning and Exchange, Coaching & Mentoring Session in Lao PDR

Oxfam in Laos has one activity of Co-organize learning and sharing business events with existing business networks, these including: i) Youth Business Network, ii) Women Business Network, and iii) Business Network. To extending coverage of essential cash and livelihood support to vulnerable communities in Lao PDR, On 29 to 30 August 2024 at Laotel hotel, the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Industrial and Commerce (MoIC) organize an event on learning and sharing with these networks to encourage high-quality sustainable value chain development.

Oxfam in Laos has shared the topic on Putting Gender Equality at the heart of National and Global consumption and Production transition, focus on the Challenge, Objective and Role of Oxfam in laos, Economic Empowerment Program to Promote start-up business in Laos and oxfam's linking and learning across ASEAN and the Asia Pacific.



*Photo: Chaipasird, Program manager, Oxfam is presenting* the topic on Putting Gender Equality at the heart of National and Global consumption and Production transition

## **Beneficiary Stories**



Soutiphone Sidavong Coffee researcher devotes herself to training farmers Souliphone Sidavong is a coffee researcher. Her passion for coffee cultivation and farmer empowerment has led her to teach local farmers about crop care and the importance of membership in the national social security scheme through training sessions supported by the SOLAR Project – a European Union-funded initiative implemented by the ILO and Oxfam. Souliphone teaches farmers about new coffee seedlings and ways to protect their plants against insects and diseases. Through her efforts, farmers are also learning about occupational health and safety and the importance of social security, including the National Health Insurance scheme, which she views as particularly important in a sector like agriculture where accidents can be all too common.

Souliphone noted. "The most important thing for humans is happiness, and you can never be happy if you're not healthy. No matter how much you earn or how many possessions you have, it amounts to nothing if you become ill." As a result of her trainings, farmers have developed an increased interest in social security and occupational health and safety, and this year she has 40 training sessions planned.





Kolaka Bouanedaoheuang Phan-Thin Social Enterprise empowers youth to develop communities through soft skills training

Engaging farmers in remote areas can be challenging due to their adherence to traditional practices that have been practised for centuries. But PhanThin Social Enterprise (PTSE) believes in the power of participation by a range of stakeholders, village communities and farmers themselves. By involving everyone in the planning, design and evaluation process, PTSE fosters understanding and interest among farmers. PTSE Founded in 2018 by a group of ambitious youth. Kolaka Bouanedaoheuang, Director of PTSE said " PTSE provides training in areas such as leadership, community development, media and information literacy, fnance, and organizational development. PTSE's initiatives span across four provinces in Laos, and implemented their training programmes to the specifc needs of each region and covers topics as diverse as farm and non-farm production processes.

One inspiring example he noted is the Nam Beng village group, which consists primarily of youth members. This group successfully opened a cofee shop in the main town in Lao Ngam district, Salavan Province and even won **the prestigious Best Lao Cofee award** for 2022–23. PTSE conducts the training session with the support from the ILO and Oxfam through the SOLAR Project.



**Noutjaly Keovilaythong** Artfully done: Harnessing creative activities to promote gender equality and social protection in rural communities

It can be difficult to change people who are set in their ways, even when you are trying to do so for the best of reasons. It can be particularly challenging if you come from a different background than your audience, who might resist the overtures of an outsider. It is a good thing then that Noutjaly Keovilaythong, a Technical Officer who conducts social protection and gender equality training in rural areas of the Lao PDR, enjoys being forced out of her comfort zone Working with NPA like.

Noutjaly travels from Vientiane to remote communities in Salavan Province every month to work with local villagers and conduct training sessions. She is also responsible for coordinating with government officials and village authorities. Motivating people in rural areas to take an interest in social security, occupational safety and health, and gender equality.

As a result of the GALS trainings under the SOLAR Project a European Union-funded initiative implemented by the ILO and Oxfam, many farmer production group leaders and group members both men and women now share both farming and household work more equally.



**NEW COMMER'S STAFFs:** 



Khamhack SILIPHONG (Hack) Comm and Campaign Officer

#### **JOB VACANCY:**

#### **ANNOUNCEMNETS:**

Please share to your connection (If possible).

1. Proposal is calling:

Deadline: August 16, 2024



#### For those who would like to taking course, please see URL below. However, we highly encourage our staff to take this course.

- Partnership Awareness Course.
- <u>Strengthening skills to partner.</u>

Learn more about ONE Oxfam safeguarding strategy 2024-2028: <u>Click HERE</u>



**Note:** Please send your recommends and suggestions regarding to this newsletter to comm team: <u>khamhack.Siliphong@oxfam.org</u>



