

OXFAM IN LAO PDR

The Internal Monthly Newsletter

ISSUE: September 2024



Photo: A group photo of Oxfam in Laos staff with John, Oxfam's Asia Regional Director.

Oxfam at ASEAN Inclusive Business Forum in Lao PDR

On 23-24 September 2024, Oxfam in partnership with UNESCAP, OECD and the Lao Ministry of Industry and Commerce is supporting and participating in the 7th ASEAN Inclusive Business Forum in Lao PDR. In a keynote address, Oxfam's Asia Regional Director highlighted the critical role of businesses in addressing pressing global challenges.

The address emphasized the urgent need for businesses to adopt inclusive and responsible business practices to combat climate change, promote gender equality, ensure decent work, and fair wages, and protect the rights of indigenous people and migrant workers.

It also underscored the crucial role of ASEAN governments in creating an enabling environment for businesses to embrace these practices and inspire other stakeholders to join the movement.



Photo: John Samuel, Oxfam's Asia Regional Director is giving opening remark, IB Forum



Photo: A group photo on Inclusive Business Forum at Lao Plaza Hotel in Vientiane.

Oxfam's participation in the forum reflects its long-standing commitment to supporting ASEAN's vision of enhancing connectivity and resilience, as well as its 2025 agenda of building a peaceful, stable, and resilient community with enhanced capacity to respond effectively to challenges.

Since the 3rd ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit in Thailand in 2019, Oxfam has been actively engaged in the ASEAN IB Summit process, partnering with various ASEAN member states to promote inclusive and responsible business.

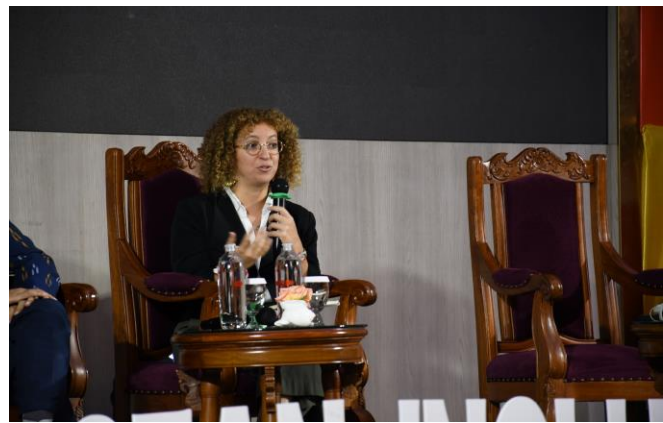
Our recent contributions include supporting the development of the Declaration on Strengthening Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN-Community Post-2025, recently adopted at the ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit in August.



Photo: Oxfam team joined IB Forum in Vientiane.



Photo: A group photo at Oxfam booth display



Windy Massabni, SME Specialist, Oxfam Novib is sharing during the panel discussion

Windy Massabni's quote during the IB Forum "In addition to encouraging businesses to adopt more inclusive and responsible practices, it's essential to collaborate with governments in shaping policies that enable these changes. It's not just about providing the necessary infrastructure for businesses to thrive, but also about fostering market integration, prioritizing inclusive businesses in public procurement, and setting national standards for dignified work, such as minimum wage and progressive parental leave. These efforts, when aligned, can create an ecosystem where inclusivity becomes the norm."



Photo: A group photo of Oxfam team on AEBF-24 in Vientiane, Laos.

Oxfam at 24th ASEAN ENERGY BUSINESS FORUM 2024 (AEBF-24)

On 26th September 2024, Oxfam and its partners participated in the Strategic Multi-stakeholder Forum on Just and Inclusive Energy Transition in ASEAN 24th ASEAN ENERGY BUSINESS FORUM during the 42nd ASEAN Ministers of Energy Meeting in Vientiane to promote gender-just energy transition framework in the development of the ASEAN Partnership for Energy Cooperation 2026-2030. In a keynote address, Oxfam's Asia Regional Director highlighted the Role of a Just and Inclusive Transition. A just energy transition means more than just shifting from fossil fuels to renewables-it is about equity, social justice, and ensuring that vulnerable communities, especially women, ethnical groups, and marginalized groups, are active participants in this process.

The need for education, training, and capacity-building initiatives that will equip the region’s workforce to participate in the emerging energy markets is paramount. Ensuring that women have equal opportunities to lead and benefit from the transition is essential. Women in ASEAN make up just 8% of the total workforce in the energy sector.



Photo: A group photo on AEBF-24 in Vientiane, Laos

Overcoming these barriers, which include gender bias and lack of supportive networks, will enable women to participate more fully and contribute to the region’s energy transition. Achieving a just energy transition requires collaboration across all sectors: government, private companies, civil society, academia, and communities. As emphasized in the recent civil society statements from the 2nd CSO Regional Convening in Phnom Penh on 27-29 August, fostering the transparent and inclusive consultation mechanisms that empower all stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to policy development. An ASEAN where energy transition not only tackles climate change but also promotes social justice, economic resilience, and gender equity. An initiative that Oxfam also highlighted will benefit from the support of inclusive and responsible businesses.”

Oxfam's Asia Regional Director meet with Key partners in Laos

(23-27/9/2024) During a mission in Lao PDR, John Smuel, Oxfam's Asia Regional Director has met with key partners in Laos, these key partners are included Lao Women Union (LWU), and Lao Federation Trade Union (LFTU).

Meeting with Lao Women Union

- Getting to know new President of Lao Women Union
- To thank LWU that has been cooperating with Oxfam team to driving on Care Economy influencing in Laos
- Exchange learning the best practices and lesson learn as well as any challenges for further support for driving of the Care Worker in Laos as well as any strategic plan to disseminate broadly.



Oxfam's Asia Regional Director and Oxfam team are taking photo with LWU leader

Oxfam has partnership with LWU for long time on gender development and mainstreaming gender into sector development in the region. Promoting women leader in water governance, gender in just energy transition. The main achievement: Promote care economy by supportive of LWU to participate the round table meeting in Jakarta and then LWU had been working closely with Oxfam in the country and Regional Platform to driving of the Care Economic mission. At the end, the key highlight is LWU's key role in developing the draft "Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community" and its endorsement by the ASEAN Committee on Women

Meeting with Lao Federation Trade Union (LFTU)



Oxfam's Asia Regional Director and Oxfam team are taking photo with LFTU leader

- Get in touch with the new LFTU president
- Exchange/hearing about labor context, how current economic change impacted to Lao labors, and their rights. And how LFTU has been working toward this context changes? As well as their partnership / working collaboration with ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC) during Laos is the host of ASEAN submit this year.

Oxfam has a long-term partnership with LFTU for more than 15 years, the partnership has been smooth and growing, from 1 MOUs to 3 MOU projects in recent years on promoting labor protection, social protection, COVID response, and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). Oxfam recently supported the ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC) meeting in Laos during 22-23 Augus 2024 at Vientiane. The LFTU has growing roles and policy framework to protect marginalized workers both formal and informal economic sectors, well aligned with Oxfam and ILO ambitious on promoting social projection and decent work for all.



Photo: A group photo on Care Learning Event in Bangkok, Thailand.

Care Learning Event 23-25/9/2024, Bangkok, Thailand.

Oxfam in Asia and Coalition hosted an inspiring event to showcase our shared achievements and outline key priorities for the future of care advocacy.

Our dynamic panel featured prominent leaders in care work across Asia, each bringing valuable insights:

- **Cecilia Tinonin** from *UN Women* discussed their latest data snapshot, highlighting how this information can guide decision-making on care policies.
- **Channe Lindstrom Oghuzan** from *United Nations ESCAP* introduced their recent model framework, a tool designed to help governments craft care-responsive policies.
- **Sona Mitra** from the *Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality* emphasized the critical role of locally-rooted think tanks in shaping care-related discussions.

- **Amuda Mishra** from the *Asia Feminist Coalition* underscored the importance of amplifying feminist voices in the care discourse.

While we’ve made meaningful progress on transformative care policies both regionally and nationally across Asia, there is still much work to be done. We must prioritize greater investment in care data, infrastructure, and services to create real, lasting change for caregivers. Let’s unite to drive these crucial investments forward and make a tangible impact in the lives of those who dedicate themselves to care.



Photo: Pannel Disscusion

Young Entrepreneurs Start-Up (YES Event)

On September 29-30, 2024, Oxfam collaborated with the YES organization (Young Entrepreneurs Start-up), the Laos Federation of the Trade Union, and the Laos National Chamber of Commerce and Industry to hold an event called 'YES.' The purpose of the event was to create opportunities for new entrepreneurs to develop into successful business owners and to support the growth of their businesses. Oxfam encouraged and inspired female entrepreneurs to integrate social responsibility into their businesses by awarding prizes to the Seven’s best business ideas. Additionally, six businesswomen are partnering with YES and interested investors to support their business ideas

This demonstrates that every business has a relationship with social and environmental development, contributing to the growth of sustainable development goals (SDG).



Photo: A group photo Of Young Entrepreneurs Start-Up



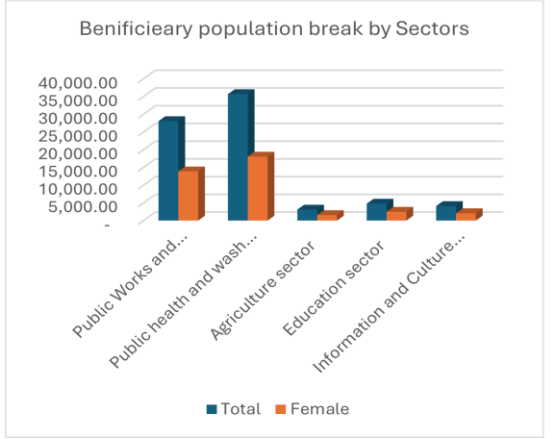
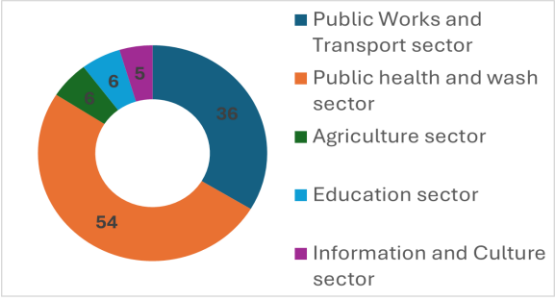
Photo: Handing the Award sign to the Winner

MFAT activity in 16 districts

Since July until September 2024, the Gender and Inclusion program team includes 4 CSO partners (GDA, IWAA, CAKID, CHIAS) Government partner (LFTU) are implementing the Essential Cash and Livelihoods Support project for the to Vulnerable Communities Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Laos PDR, which funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT), New Zeland Government. In September, the program team supporting the Community grants delivered to communities to the 102 most vulnerable villages in 16 districts, 5 provinces through participatory decision-making and could implement the project as chart below:

Thought preparation process, community participatory decision-making. and are followed by the community work plan. Work plans include capacity building for the Community grant Management Committee (CMC) for the 102 villages selected. The community has total 109 priority needs, mostly focused in upgrading community water (in sector of public work and wash sector) total of 52 schemes, followed by public work and transportation for 36 schemes, See diagram.

As per the combined community plan, priority need and available budget with community contribution, the project will provide capacity building and training to the village grant management committees, particularly to those who will administer the grants, on accountability, ownership and use of funds.



The facilitator shall also support discussion on the use of community and business grants, monitoring, coordinating, and considering lessons learned from previous and existing activities. Other community-based committees will be established to support in management and monitoring of community grants, business development activities, and continued capacity building after the project.



Photo: MFAT Project had provided materials/equipment for installing a cleaned water to the communities



Photo: MFAT Project had improved the transportation in the Communities

And supporting the Micro-enterprise grants delivered to individuals or groups to increase the capacity of project partners and micro-enterprise, training has been provided for the The original plan was providing a grant for 15 individuals/groups. With the extension, an additional 300 grants were added to the original 15 individuals/groups. Four of the targeted group grants (40 members including 28 female members) were already implemented within goat-raising groups in Bokeo Province.



Photo: Project provided equipment for chicken-raising

Technical assistance has been provided for all group members. For remaining 311 micro-enterprise grants are in the process of implementation and some are preparing their business as planned for their business, all of the grants will be transferred and implement by December 2024. The project targeted to achieve 65% of model/good practice of micro-enterprise grants managed by individuals or groups and 70% of women-led micro-enterprise, as set in the guidelines and MERL plan. As per the diagram, total 828 HHs they included in total of 315 business.



Photo: Project provided equipment for chicken-raising

Women-led Business competition in Oudomxai and Savannakhet provinces

TO continue on the Green Women-led business competition, at the first to second week of September 2024, Gender and Inclusion team and CSO partner (ARMI) have been provided 2 days of training on business plans for 15 women-led businesses from the southern (Phongsaly and Oudomxai Provinces) and 15 women businesses from the southern region (Savannakhet and Saravanh provinces), the training course was includes relevance areas as: 1). Social/environmental impact of the business; Feasibility and relevance of business plan; 2). Budget management and own contribution are realistic, e.g. land, facilities, and budget...etc; 3).Strength of team/entrepreneur on marketing; 4).Growth potential and business scope; 5) Green Economy and sustainability.



Photo: Group work during the event in Oudomxai



Photo: Group work during the event in Savannakhet



Photo: A group photo on hand over ceremony in Luangprabang.

Oxfam Provided public speakers equipment to the target villages in Luangprabang Province

Between 12-15 September 2024, Oxfam in Laos together with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare hand over public speakers equipment to the target villages of the project in Pakou and Nan Districts, Luang Prabang Province. This is a support under “Strengthening Climate Resilience (SCR)” in Lao PDR. The public speakers aims to strengthen hydro and meteorological data and information sharing at the communities so they are early prepare to manage disaster and adapt to climate change.

Oxfam joined International Coffee Day’s Celebration in 2024 in Vientiane Centre, Vientiane Capital 27-29 October 2024

Coffee is one of the main Lao agricultural exports generating substantial cash income for farmers. The Lao coffee is mainly exported to the European Union, Vietnam, Japan, China, Korea, the USA, others. The coffee sector supports more than 20,000 producers and employs more than 300,000 people. Lao PDR produces two main types of coffee: Robusta and Arabica. The Bolaven Plateau in the South is the historical and main coffee-producing area, representing 95% of the national production. National production is estimated at 33,000 tons of coffee cherries per year. On labor light and social protection, the Lao coffee sector still faces many important challenges as most workers



Photo: Booths display coffee product.

are informally employed, facing low wages, insecure employment, deficits in decent working conditions, low access to social protection, and lacking voice and representation in their interactions with employers and buyers. Women face greater inequalities, while being often excluded from managerial and decision-making roles, and may be denied employment or face harassment during pregnancy. So, to engage on the International Coffee Day 2024 Highlights "Coffee: Your Daily Ritual, Our Shared Journey". Oxfam together with national partner Laos Federation of Trade Union(LFTU), Social Security Organization(SSO), ILO, and CSOs displayed information and good practices on strengthening informal workers including tea and coffee farmers' access to social security, occupational safety and health (OSH), and women empowerment. And also, joined a panel discussion on **“Towards a greener and more inclusive economy: sustainable coffee production”**.



Photo: Oxfam Booths display.

INDABA 2024 from 3-5 September 2024, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania



Photo: A group photo on tINDABA 2024.

The INDABA 2024 was a Linking and Learning Conference, bringing together grantee partners, rightsholders, and key stakeholders to reflect on our 8-year journey and celebrate the power of "Nothing About Us Without Us." Which this year was held in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania from 3-5 September 2024. All participants were embraced by the open space to share the inspiring stories, showcase an innovative journey and telling a lesson learned experiences.

We had a lot of discussion on the wonderful journey we are doing in our respective countries supporting rights holders and advocating for change in social movement.

Meanwhile, Fanglao and WECARE, representatives from Laos, opened an opportunity to amplify their journeys of Dance-Up innovative ideas and the importance of good mental health.



Voice Meet from 7-10 September 2024, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

The Voice Meets in September 2024 in Tanzania, was an opportune moment for the Voice teams and its key stakeholders to reflect on and document the evolution of the Voice programme from start to finish – throughout the last 8 years of Voice Programme across 10 focused countries, together with the Steering Committees and Advisory Board Members, including the representative of MoFA the Dutch, Director of Programs at Oxfam Novib .



Photo: A group of Photo on Voice meet .

Objectives:

- 1. Reflecting on the lessons learned about programme implementation by us as a team,
- 2. Documenting the lessons learned for the Voice@8 final narrative report, and
- 3. Processing the ending of the programme as the implementing team and key stakeholders of Voice.

Beneficiary Stories



Vansy Senyavong

Gender equality: Empowering communities in the northern Lao People's Democratic Republic

In many developing countries, including the Laos, entrenched cultural traditions and norms have posed challenges to promoting gender equality. Vansy Senyavong, the Chief Director of MHP, emphasizes the importance of empowering women and youth through education and sustainable income generation from agriculture and forest resources. Through the support from the SOLAR Project, MHP is facilitating training sessions for villagers on gender equality, disability rights, and social inclusion. These initiatives have not only enhanced understanding but have also fostered a sense of shared responsibility among community members towards protecting their environment and promoting gender equality.

By fostering dialogue and introspection on gender norms and equality, initiatives like those of MHP are paving the way for inclusive development and empowerment in the Lao PDR.



Sengthong Manixap

Lao tea farmers boost sales and protect the environment by forming a cooperative

Traditionally, most households have operated as informal businesses with limited market access, working long hours under difficult conditions and generally without access to social protection. But things have started to change. Throughout the support from the SOLAR Project, the tea farmers of Paksong have been able to create a united effort to market and promote their teas, and thereby overcome previous awareness challenges to drive ever growing sales. “Some years ago, almost no Lao people drank Lao tea,” Sengthong recalled, “but today many restaurants and hotels in the country buy tea from us, and I believe that in the future we may not be able to produce enough, especially in the dry season, because the number of orders is steadily increasing.”

Now, almost every month the farmers participate in a training session on occupational safety and health, as well as related areas like social security, gender equality, disability and social inclusion. Sengthong is now starting to look beyond the immediate needs of members to the more distant future of the Paksong tea industry. .



Chansamone Phetbouasone

Supporting the Lao Government's efforts to promote sustainable development and gender equality in rural communities

Blessed with lush landscapes and rich natural resources, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a country brimming with potential. However, despite the abundance of resources, many people in rural areas lack the knowledge and tools needed to harness these assets for their own benefit. Chansamone Phetbouasone, a Technical Officer at ASDSP, the association is dedicated to supporting Lao farmers in integrating sustainable practices into their work. with SOLAR Project support the ASDSP has started working closely with local government partners to form farming production groups in Paksong and Thateng districts and to empower women leadership in these groups.

Today, women can be seen taking a more active role in decision-making and in leading the direction of discussions at meetings, so that they have a greater say in community affairs. In addition, there are hopeful signs of greater equality among families, with men taking on more responsibility in household activities and showing more support for their wives and other womenfolk. the ASDSP are not only transforming lives but also paving the way for a more resilient and prosperous future for all.

September’s Celebrants (Happy Birthday): Upcoming Birthday Celebrants!:



NEW COMMER’S STAFFs:

JOB VACANCY: ANNOUNCEMNETS:

Please share to your connection (If possible).

Oxfam is looking for 3 positions:

1. Cluster Information and Technology Assistant.
For more details please visit this link:
https://108.jobs/job_detail/66dea3698227530e80270d1e
Submit your application by: October 03, 2024
2. CLV INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING SPECIALIST.
For more details please visit this link:
https://108.jobs/job_detail/66ebd06970114216bb64feee
Submit your application by: October 03, 2024
3. National Consultant for the Female Youth Film Competition
For more details please visit this link:
<https://career2.successfactors.eu/career?company=OxfamNovibP>
Submit your application by: October 02, 2024

Deadline: Oct 03, 2024

WE'RE HIRING!

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.](#)
- [Strengthening skills to partner.](#)

Learn more about ONE Oxfam safeguarding strategy 2024-2028: [Click HERE](#)

Note: Please send your recommends and suggestions regarding to this newsletter to comm team: khamhack.siliphong@oxfam.org

