Lao PDR Media Training on EFA

The Right to Education
Reaching the Unreached

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Why Educate?

*Education Empowers:*
- A single year of schooling increases a woman's wages by 10-20%.

*Education Saves Lives:*
- Seven million cases of HIV/AIDS could be prevented in the next decade if every child received an education.
- A child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5.

*Education Builds the Future:*
- Children with educated mothers are twice as likely to go to school and are less malnourished.
Defining the Right to Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>REF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Art. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education</td>
<td>1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Art. 5</td>
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<td>ILO Convention on the Minimum Age for Employment</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Art. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Art. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Art. 28,29</td>
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*The above are all legal-binding instruments*
The International Community’s Commitment to the Right to Education

The right to education codified in the international human rights instruments has been translated to action-oriented statements and frameworks through the Education for All (EFA) initiative.

- The World Declaration for Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand (1990)
- The Dakar Framework for Action (2000), which set the six EFA Goals with a 2015 target
The EFA goals

“All children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs… Ensuring that by 2015 all children… have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.”

- EFA is a country commitment with 160 countries committing to the six EFA Goals set in Dakar
Six EFA Goals: Dakar Framework for Action, 2000

**Goal 1**: To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education

**Goal 2**: Universal primary education by 2015

**Goal 3**: To ensure that the learning needs of all young people are met through equitable access

**Goal 4**: To achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015

**Goal 5**: To eliminate gender disparities in primary / secondary education by 2005 and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015

**Goal 6**: To improve all aspects of the quality of education
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and EFA

At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000:
191 Heads of State agreed to:

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary schooling by 2015 (MDG2, EFA Goal 2)

- Eliminate gender disparities in primary education by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. (MDG3, EFA Goal 5)
The Situation in Education

- There are 77 million out-of-school children and 781 million illiterates. 9.298 million out-of-school children live in Southeast & East Asia.

- Among countries in East Asia, Malaysia has the highest GER in ECCE of 108%, with Lao PDR and Cambodia having the lowest at 8% and 9%, respectively.

- East Asia alone has 124 million people aged 15 and above who lack basic reading, writing and numeracy skills, 71 per cent of whom are women indicating a substantial imbalance in literacy skills between the sexes.

- There are now 94 girls in primary school for every 100 boys globally. Lao PDR has a ratio of 88:100.

- Cambodia and Lao PDR are the only two countries in East Asia with public spending for education less than 3% of GNP, although much improvement has been seen in their spending since 1999.

- Source: 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report
Government obligations

- To **fulfill** the right to education – by ensuring that education is available for all children, and that positive measures is taken to enable learners to benefit from it.
- To **respect** the right to education – by avoiding any actions which would serve to prevent learners access education.
- To **protect** the right to education – by taking the necessary measures to remove barriers to education posed by individuals and/or communities.
The 4 As of the right to education

- **Availability** – education is free and government-funded and there is adequate infrastructure and trained teachers able to support education delivery.

- **Accessibility** – the system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and positive steps are taken to include the most marginalised groups.

- **Acceptability** – the content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and of quality, the school itself is safe and teachers are qualified.

- **Adaptability** – education can evolve with the changing needs of society and contribute to challenging inequalities, such as gender discrimination, and it can be adapted locally to suit specific contexts.
Discussion

Possible stories to follow-up for journalists

- Examine the Lao situation based on the concept of “Right to Education” and the 4As

For Example: Lao is among the countries in South-East Asia that does not legally guarantee free education
**Legal guarantee of free education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Availability

- Is primary education free and compulsory? If not, is there a government plan to achieve free and compulsory primary education, with a reasonable timeframe and budget?

- Is sufficient money allocated for all children to receive primary education? Refer to the National Gov’t budget.

- Is the state making concrete steps towards achieving free secondary and higher education?

- Are teachers well trained, and do they receive domestically competitive salaries? Do they have appropriate working conditions, teaching materials, etc.?

- Are school buildings safe, do sanitation facilities exist, is there safe drinking water, a library, ICT resources?
Discussion

Accessibility

- Is education accessible to all, without discrimination on any grounds – for example race, colour, ethnicity, sex, language, religion, economic or social status?

- Are positive actions made to reach the most vulnerable? Are there any laws, such as child labour laws, which need to be enforced to ensure accessibility? Who are the disadvantaged groups?

- Is education within safe physical reach? Do children have to travel far to get to a school?

- Are there appropriate transport facilities?

- Is education affordable for all – this includes indirect costs such as textbooks and uniforms?

- Have all legal and administrative obstacles, such as the need for a birth certificate, been abolished?
Discussion

Acceptability

- Is the content of education relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate?

- Are there set minimum standards for the learning materials, methods of instruction, school discipline, health and safety, and professional requirements for teachers?

- What are the policies in relation to:
  - language of instruction
  - freedom from censorship
  - recognition of children as subjects of rights
Discussion

Adaptability

- Are there plans to ensure that children excluded from formal schooling have education opportunities?

- Does the education system adapt to the best interest of each child, especially those from disadvantaged groups such as children with disabilities, minority children, indigenous children, working children, child migrants, etc.?

- Do schools ensure that there is no gender discrimination in the classrooms, including the way teachers deal with students?
Reaching the Unreached

- Who is denied the right to education? What would need to change to make education available to them? For example, is education only available in one language and therefore inaccessible to minority groups who do not speak the language?

- Education systems must try to reach the unreached groups – the remaining 10% to 5% of the population who are not in school or those in school but are not “learning” due to various reasons, e.g. language, quality of education, etc.
Reaching the Unreached

- Everyone is entitled to education
- Education is not a privilege but a right