



# CULTURAL SHIFTS AND EARLY ENGAGEMENT IN LAO RPD

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Plenary Session 4: Building lifelong learning culture in ASEAN

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**Lifelong Learning**, the concept of continuous learning throughout life, is gaining popularity in ASEAN countries and it just start to develop in Lao PDR. This shifts is driven by several factors.

# 1. Cultural Shifts

**1.1. Economic change:** the rapid pace of economic development and technological advancements necessitates continuous skilling and reskilling to remain competitive in the workforce;

**1.2. Urbanization:** growing urban populations expose individuals to diverse learning opportunities and lifestyles, fostering a more open and flexible approach to learning;

# 1. Cultural Shifts

**1.3. Increased lifespan:** longer lifespans create the possibility and desire for individuals to pursue new interests and engage in learning activities beyond formal education;

**1.4. Evolving values:** traditional emphasis on rote learning and the attitude of respect and submission to authorities is giving way to valuing critical thinking, adaptability, and lifelong learning;

## 2. Early Engagement in Lao PDR

**2.1. *Early childhood education:*** recognizing the crucial role of early years in development, Lao PDR is expanding access to quality early childhood education programs that foster curiosity, exploration, and a love for learning;

**2.2. *Non-formal and informal learning:*** initiatives promoting community-based learning, vocational training, and adult literacy programs are bridging the gap between formal education and lifelong learning opportunities;

**2.3. *Technology integration:*** Lao PDR is exploring the potential of technology, such as e-learning platforms and mobile resources, to make learning accessible and engaging for diverse learners at all stages of life;

## 3. Challenges and opportunities

**3.1. Cultural attitudes:** traditional perspectives on education and the role of elders may need to adapt to embrace lifelong learning for all;

**3.2. Resources constraints:** limited access to quality learning resources, qualified educators, and infrastructure in rural areas present challenges for equitable access to lifelong learning opportunities;

**3.3. Language barriers:** ensuring content and resources are available in Lao and minority languages is crucial for inclusivity;

## 3. Challenges and opportunities

**3.4. Sustainability:** building a strong ecosystem for lifelong learning requires sustained investment, partnerships, and policy frameworks;

**3.5. Lao PDR's effort** to promote early engagement and address cultural shifts need to be flexible as to ***collaborate and share experiences with other ASEAN nations*** in fostering lifelong learning cultures.

**3.6.** By investing in early childhood education through ***diversifying learning pathways, and leveraging technology***, ASEAN can ***empower individuals to adapt, thrive, and contribute to their lives***;

## 4. Recommendations

### ***4.1. Fostering cultural acceptance of lifelong learning:***

***4.1.1. Promote awareness campaigns:*** highlight the benefits of lifelong learning for individuals, communities, and the economy, emphasizing its alignment with evolving cultural values like adaptability and personal growth; Lao PDR is still at this stage of development;

***4.1.2. Engage community leaders and influencers:*** partner with traditional authorities, religious institutions, and cultural to champion lifelong learning initiatives and address potential cultural barriers;

***4.1.3. Showcase success stories:*** share inspiring examples of individuals who have benefited from lifelong learning, particularly those from rural areas of underrepresented groups, to demonstrate its relevance and accessibility;



## 4. Recommendations

### ***4.2. Strengthening early engagement in Lao PDR:***

***4.2.1. Expand access to quality early childhood education:*** invest in infrastructure teacher training, and curriculum development to ensure all children have access to early learning experiences that foster curiosity, critical thinking, and a love for learning;

***4.2.2. Integrate cultural and traditional knowledge:*** incorporate Lao traditions, stories, and languages into early learning programs to foster cultural identity and connect learning to real-life experiences;

***4.2.3. Develop age-appropriate lifelong learning pathways:*** create diverse learning opportunities serve to different age groups and interests, including vocational training, community-based learning programs, and digital literacy training;

## 4. Recommendations

### ***4.3. Leveraging technology for inclusive learning:***

*4.3.1. Develop e-learning platforms and mobile resources:* design platforms with users-friendly interfaces and available content in Lao and minority languages, ensuring accessibility for diverse learners;

*4.3.2. Bridge the digital divide:* facilitate Internet access and provide digital literacy training, particularly in rural areas, to empower individuals to utilize technology for learning;

*4.3.3. Promote online communities and knowledge sharing platforms*

*4.3.4. Encourage peer-to peer learning and knowledge exchange* through online forums, virtual learning groups, and social media platforms;

## 4. Recommendations

### ***4.4. Building partnerships and sustainability:***

*4.4.1. Foster collaboration among stakeholders:* develop partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions, private sector, NGOs, and community organizations to share resources, expertise, and best practices;

*4.4.2. Advocate for policy frameworks:* encourage policy changes that prioritize lifelong learning, allocate resources, and recognize non-formal and informal learning pathways;

*4.4.3. Promote financial sustainability:* explore innovative funding models, such as public-private partnerships, social impact bonds, and micro-financing initiatives, to ensure long-term financial sustainability of lifelong learning programs;

## 4. Recommendations

### ***4.5. Cross-cultural learning and exchange:***

***4.5.1. Facilitate knowledge sharing within ASEAN:*** promote regional collaboration and exchange of best practices in lifelong learning initiatives to learn from each other's successes and challenges;

***4.5.2. Support cultural immersion programs:*** encourage student and adult exchange programs within ASEAN to foster cultural understanding and broaden learning experiences through exposure to diverse perspectives and knowledge systems;

***4.5.3. Develop multilingual learning resources:*** invest in creating and sharing multilingual learning resources that serve to the diverse linguistic landscape of ASEAN, promoting regional understanding and collaboration;

## 4. Recommendations

### ***4.5. Cross-cultural learning and exchange:***

4.5.4. These recommendations are just a starting point, and the specific strategies will need to be adapted to the unique context of each ASEAN nation particularly in Lao PDR;

4.5.5. By promoting cultural acceptance, investing in early engagement, leveraging technology, building partnerships, and fostering cross-cultural learning, ASEAN can build a vibrant and inclusive lifelong learning ecosystem that empower individuals and communities to thrive in the 21st century

# Thank you for your attention!