COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME – COMMUNITY RADIO (CPCSP)

Project ID: 00077488

Project Description

Large parts of the Lao population, particularly in remote areas, have poor access to information, communication systems and public services. Access to information that is relevant to the community is vital to help people make informed decisions about their lives. Local information about markets, services, job opportunities and development issues, such as reproductive health, is very often lacking. Enhanced community participation in information sharing could help to overcome these problems.

The Community Participation and Community Support Programme is working to address this problem through establishing and supporting eight community radio stations across Lao PDR and by creating mechanisms and infrastructure that will support other community radio stations sustainably into the future.

Project Summary:

- Duration: February 2011 – December 2016
- Geographic coverage: 7 Community Radio Stations across 5 provinces (Xieng Khouang, Sekong, Oudomxai, Sayabouli and Saravane)
- Focus Area: Governance
- Implementing Partners: Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT), Provincial Department of Information, Culture and Tourism (PDICT) of Xieng Khouang, Sekong, Oudomxay, Sayabouli and Saravane Provinces
- Website: www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/CPCSP.html

Community-run radio stations ensure that communities enjoy better access to information through bottom-up communication channels. The radio stations allow the Lao people, including often marginalised groups like women and ethnic minorities to make informed decisions, express their views, share knowledge and validate their cultures and traditions. Furthermore, the project supports the sustainability of community organisations, especially community media organisations.

Main Objectives and Outcomes

This project’s overarching objective of empowering communities to effect self-driven changes for the benefit of their communities through community radio is supported by the following three expected outcomes:

- **Outcome 1: ‘Scaling-up’** – Community media (radio

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stations, frequency and infrastructure) will be scaled-up in poor and under-served districts.

**Output 2: ‘Capacity for sustainability’** – Local organisations and companies will develop the knowledge and competence to scale-up and sustain community media.

**Output 3: ‘Learning and advocacy’** – Community radio volunteers will use their experience and first-hand knowledge of running their stations to inform policy-makers at all levels and contribute to an enabling environment for community media and access to information and indigenous rights.

**Results and Achievements to Date**

Through the scaling-up of community media in remote, poor and marginalised communities, local news and educational programmes are now being aired through the voices of local community radio volunteers in five provinces from eight community radio stations. These eight stations are broadcasting in eight different ethnic languages and reaching more than 200,000 people across Xiengkhuang, Sekong and Oudomxai provinces.

It is estimated that 72,249 people (100 per cent of the population) in Houn District and more than 38,417 people (79 per cent) in Namor District, 29,000 people (85 per cent) in Khoun District and more than 35,000 people in Thateng District (100 per cent) have access to the community radio station frequency.

Therefore, the project has empowered communities to increase their knowledge and access better quality of life. It has also given a voice to marginalised groups. Community radio stations supported by UNDP Lao PDR are the only community media channels in Lao PDR enabling communities to access and create localised, quality information on health, reproductive education, nutrition, agriculture and gender equality in a community-orientated and locally appealing format.

The project has also helped to develop capacity to promote local information sharing. This has included building the competency of Community Radio Volunteers and staff to develop community-based radio programme content and to broadcast independently. This achievement also includes capacity building in technical knowledge on community media broadcasting, developing radio programme content based on community needs and building capacity for financial and day-to-day operational management skills.

The project has also established successful working relationships with many local organisations and community radio stations are now independently building partnerships with community leaders and private businesses. The Nonghed Community Radio Station in Xieng Khouang Province, for example, has partnered with Lao Telecom to share a radio antenna. It is anticipated that a service-provider association such as this will be established for all stations, thus enabling the continuation of the Community Radio Stations beyond the lifecycle of the project.

Community media provides space for civic engagement at the local level. This project has also helped develop the capacity of community media leaders, in particular women and ethnic people, and encouraged them to participate in development policy debates.

In May, 2015, high-level representatives of Lao Government, Development Partners working in Lao PDR and UN agencies visited the Community Radio Station in Namor District in Oudomxay Province to advocate for the importance of people’s participation in media and community development. This visit and recognition of work was very encouraging to Community Radio Volunteers.

Two new Community Radio Stations will be launched in Saravane Province (Lakhonhengpheng District) and Saiyabouli Province (Khop District) by the end of 2015.

**Funding:**

- **Project budget:** USD 1,864,774
- **Donors:**
  - UNDP: USD 1,100,000
  - Oxfam: USD 764,774
- **Unfunded budget:** N/A
- **Delivery (2014):** USD 578,739.03

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