

Environmental Education in Laos

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Introduction

The government of Lao PDR has been trying to improve the quality of life for all its people. The government recognizes that education is essential for the development of the country. Education is important for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Lao's current education system is provided at five levels: Primary 5 years (compulsory), Lower secondary 3 years, Upper secondary 3 years, Post-secondary 1-2 years and Tertiary education 3-7 years,

The educational objectives are provided the all round education covering five educational dimensions: moral, intellectual, labor, physical and aesthetic education. New curriculum and instructional materials for primary, secondary and teacher education have been developed in the 1990s. The environmental education is very important part of the contents and activities of curriculum and instructional materials.

Environmental education in curriculum system

The first National Environmental Action plan was adopted in 1994. Since that time there were many changed, concerning environmental conditions and priorities in the country.

National Environmental Action plan identifies the the need for a number of approaches to raising environmental awareness among the people including the integration of environmental subjects into public and private school curriculum, public awareness activities involving mass organizations, community based natural resource consultation and the provision of specific training programmes.

At the present time the preparation of a framework of national strategies on environmental education and awareness is going on. The goal of it to equip the citizens by environmental basic of knowledge, skills and attitude on environment issues and the citizens should acknowledge the values of environmental and encouraging the wise use and natural resources sustainable, and to help foster positive and responsible attitudes towards the environment.

In the primary school level to secondary education level, efforts have been made by the National Research Institute for Educational Sciences to integrate information about the environment into the curriculum. Student's book at the primary

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level that is in "World Around Us" subject and in the secondary level gain environmental knowledge through general natural sciences and biology subject.

At the University level teaching of environment related subjects occurs at both the diploma and Bachelor of Science level. Besides, such activities have place also at non-formal and informal education and among mass organization at village and district level.

EE in the Teacher education

Teachers play an important part in the environmental education of primary, secondary and higher education. Teachers who add environmental knowledge in their relevant courses as well as instructors in change and skill, and the ability to teach environmental knowledge of teachers definitively influence the environment quality and effects. At present time in Laos is lack of teacher education and professional development in environmental education is a major matter.

In the Teacher Training Colleges and pilot school we are promoted of teaching environmental education to familiarize teachers and educational administrators with the different aspects and problems of the environment and to make them aware the impact of deforestation and pollution the quality of life and to enable them a basis to incorporate environmental education effectively into their respective teaching and learning activities.

The scope of environment teaching and learning are:

- Recruitment of consultant in environment education.
- Carrying out environment education training needs.
- Developing of training packages.
- Development and revision of the existing curriculum and textbooks on environment education in teacher education.
- Training of core team at provincial and Teacher Training Colleges levels.
- Training of teacher trainers, educational administrators on environmental education.
- Training of teachers in pilot and practicum schools.

Waste - Econ Project

Since the establishment of Lao PDR, the Government has given the importance to the integrated waste management and has recognized that there is the negative effect to the human health, culture and Environment. On the contrary, if we can well address this issue, it will create the favorable condition for the promoting the natural beauty, the cleanliness of the city and community as well as the whole economy and society. So far, In addition to the mobilization of the public to deal with the waste management based on their capacity and conditions, the Vientiane Capital has received the technical assistance from Japanese Government in order to make the study on the waste disposal and management.

Actually the Vientiane Capital is in the process of implementing the integrated waste management project in the urban area. The dumping area at Kilometer 18 has been rehabilitated and finished in 1997. and then in 2000, under the assistance

of NORAD through UNDP we have initiated the waste management project in 4 secondary towns namely: Luang-Prabang, Thakhek, Savannakhet and Pakse such project has the following objectives:

- Develop the strategy for the waste management in 4 towns in a sustainable way.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of the local community on legal aspects of waste management and appropriate implementing mechanism.
- Institutional and human resource capacity building on waste management.
- Implementation of waste disposal and incineration in an effective manner.
- Study on the possibility of reuse, recycle of waste production of organic fertilizers.

The project activities have been well implemented in various places such as:

- There was the survey of the dumping areas according to the hygiene principles and not harmful to the environment of 4 towns.
- Creation of Landfill in each town according to the minimum technical standard.

In addition to the public relation activity has also initiated in order to promote the well understanding for the local community and institutions for the active participation to the waste disposal, management and recycle. The environmental protection law has been disseminated at the community level. In the future there is a need to deal with the Environmental Audit which is also an important issue that need to be addressed.

According to the needs for solving the problems as far as the waste management recycle and legal aspects are concerned, we can say that we are at the initial stage, a lot of things need to be done, the understanding of waste management at the community legal still low and many areas waste problems still exist and can not be solved.

The waste - Econ Project has the objectives for the training of staff on the awareness for using waste as an economy, the separation of wastes for reuse, recycle and making compost. In fact we can create jobs and can contribute for the poverty alleviation.

The Waste-Econ project

Lao PDR Waste-Econ project presents a lot of importance for promoting the environmental protection and sustainable development. The project activities are:

- Training course on Waste-Econ
- News letter and publication
- Teacher training workshop
- Teacher training manuals
- Special workshop for curriculum development
- Master degree study(02 persons)
- And pilot project implementation such as:

Title: "Waste separation and making compost of organic waste"

- Making compost of organic waste : By using EM technology, By using BE solution, As usual, Soil analysis and

Market survey.

- Waste separation: Survey of waste component (wet season and dry season), Interview of vendors such as vendors of fresh vegetable and meat vendors, And other people who are living near the market.

Conclusion

In view of the well implementation of the project, and promote the public awareness on waste economy we need to be very active and need to exchange of views and experiences in a fruitful manner and open way.

If we can solve the waste issue in the future we shall also address for enhancing the beautiful public parks, clean roads, as well being of all people which are the goals we want to achieve.