



## Tracer Study

### Non-formal Vocational Education and Training in Lao PDR Final Report 2014

#### Lao-German Development Consulting

Teamwork for Sustainable Vocational Education and Training & Local Business Development

##### Address and phones:

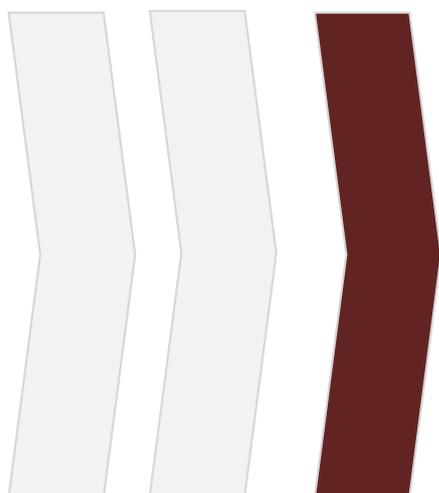
Unit 24, Ban Syvilay Village Xaythany District, Vientiane Capital - Lao PDR

Phone: + 856 21-710507

Fax: + 856 021-711324

Mobile: + 856 20 5652 9619

Leuthvisay\_keola@yahoo.de; www.lgdc-lao.com



# Tracer Study

## Non-formal Vocational Education and Training in Lao PDR Final Report 2014

### Lao-German Development Consulting

Teamwork for Sustainable Vocational Education and Training & Local Business Development



**Address and phones:**

Unit 24, Ban Syvilay Village Xaythany District, Vientiane Capital - Lao PDR

Phone: + 856 21-710507

Fax: + 856 021-711324

Mobile: + 856 20 5652 9619

Leuthvisay\_keola@yahoo.de; www.lgdc-lao.com

© LGDC 2014

Fotos credits, © LGDC 2014

Cover: interviews in Ban Beungsay, Saravan

# Content

<b>CONTENT</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.1 PREFACE .....	8
1.2 RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE.....	8
1.3 OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES OF TVET DEVELOPMENT.....	9
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE NON-FORMAL TRACER STUDY 2014.....	10
<b>2. METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NFTS 2014</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	11
2.2 EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE TRACER STUDY 2014 .....	12
2.3 TIMEFRAME OF NON-FORMAL TRACER STUDY 2014 .....	13
2.4 SAMPLE OF NON-FORMAL TRACER STUDY 2014 .....	13
2.5 FIELDWORK .....	14
<b>3. FINDINGS OF NON-FORMAL TRACER STUDY 2014</b> .....	<b>15</b>
3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TRAINING OFFER AND INTERVIEWEES.....	15
<i>Non-formal training offers at IVET schools</i> .....	15
<i>Training supported by GIZ/dvvi</i> .....	15
<i>Mode of delivery of training</i> .....	17
3.2 MANAGEMENT AND TEACHING STAFF OF NON-FORMAL COURSES .....	20
<i>Management of training</i> .....	20
<i>Teaching Staff</i> .....	20
<i>Information about training opportunities</i> .....	21
<i>Certification</i> .....	21
3.3 THE BENEFICIARIES.....	23
<i>Gender composition</i> .....	23
<i>Ethnic composition</i> .....	24
<i>Distance to training venue</i> .....	24
<i>Education background of participants</i> .....	24
<i>Source of information about training</i> .....	25
3.4 OUTCOME AND IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL TRAINING .....	26
<i>Economic activity and income of participants</i> .....	26
<i>Fields and duration of training</i> .....	30
<i>Impact on income by field of training</i> .....	32
<i>Reasons for joining training</i> .....	33
<i>Payment for training</i> .....	34
<i>Certification</i> .....	35
<i>Participants satisfaction</i> .....	35
<b>4. CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>5. RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>40</b>

**List of figures**

Figure 1: Participants by age ..... 24

Figure 2: General education of participants by province ..... 25

Figure 3: Source of information by province (percent)..... 26

Figure 4: Economic activity of participants before training by province ..... 27

Figure 5: Income of participants before training by province (percent)..... 27

Figure 6: Income before and after training (percent) ..... 28

Figure 7: Income of participants after training by province (percent)..... 29

Figure 8: Fields of training by province (percent) ..... 30

Figure 9: Duration of training by province (percent) ..... 31

Figure 10: Duration by field of training (percent, rounded) ..... 32

Figure 11: Income before and after training by field of training (percent of former participants in each field)..... 32

Figure 12: Reasons for participation by gender (percent) ..... 33

Figure 13: Reasons for training by province (percent)..... 34

Figure 14: Payment for training by province (percent)..... 34

Figure 15: Certificates by province (percent)..... 35

Figure 16: Evaluation of training by province (percent)..... 36

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Participants by schools and region ..... 13

Table 2: Short term training supported by GIZ in three target schools 2012-2014 ..... 16

Table 3: Organisation of non-formal training Saravan ..... 18

Table 4: Organisation of non-formal training Sayaboury ..... 18

Table 5: Organisation of non-formal training Xieng Khouang..... 19

Table 6: Persons providing training by province ..... 20

Table 7: Identification of participants by province ..... 21

Table 8: Certificates by province ..... 22

Table 9: Suggestions by frequency ..... 36

## List of Abbreviations

DNFE	Department of Non-forma Education
DTVE	Department of Technical and Vocational Education
dvvi	Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband international
EFA	Education for all
ESDF	Education Sector Development Framework
FoT	Field of Training
GoL	Government of Laos
HRD	Human Resources Development
HRDME	Human Resources Development for a Market Economy (programme)
IAF	Inclusion and Access Fund
IVET	Integrated Vocational Education and Training
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LGDC	Lao-German Development Consulting Co.
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NFTS-14	Non-formal Tracer Study 2014
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
QAM	Quality Assurance Mechanism
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VEDI	Vocational Education Development Institute
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Preface

This report is the result of joint efforts the *Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE)* of the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Lao-German Program '*Human Resource Development for Market Economy*' (HRDME III) and contracted consultants.

This report adds information to the existing tracer studies in formal TVET, namely the *National Baseline Tracer Study 2006*, the *National Tracer Study 2011* and the *Tracer Study VET 2013*. As the Tracer Study VET (VET) 2013 shifted the focus towards Integrated Vocational Education and Training institutions (IVET) this report pay particular attention to the non-formal part of IVET schools. This is due to the fact that former participants of non-formal training courses were underrepresented in the general tracer study. On the other hand GIZ in cooperation with the German Adult Education Association (dvvi ) increased and streamlined its support to non-formal vocational training in Lao PDR with a total of 22 courses in the three schools selected for this study during the last three years (2012-2014) with a total of 485 participants. Non-formal vocational training in Lao PDR has its roots in general adult education, especially related to alphabetisation. On this background the IVET concept was developed to connect these vocational training efforts closer to formal vocational training. Despite the fact that IVET had been officially introduced as pilot project in 2003 the approach is relatively new and therefore specific information and experiences are rare. Non-formal VET is a specific part of the IVET approach and of great importance to continuously achieve the integrated approach in order to ensure inclusion of disadvantaged youth into training and lay thereby foundations for employment or self-employment thereby improving income and livelihood of those target groups. This study tries to close the gap and provides specific information about non-formal training, its organisation, former participants and changes in their professional life after participation in such courses. The Non-formal Tracer Study 2014 (NFTS-14) was conducted from April to June 2014 by Lao-German Development Consulting in cooperation with DTVE and the respective schools.

### 1.2 Rationale and objective

The rationale of the NFTS-14 is to collect empirical and reliable data about persons who participated in non-formal training at selected IVET schools and their professional placement or self-employment after training. The survey (data collection) on the participants who have been in short-term training in the IVET school aims to provide the real data on how the participants make use of their trained skills in their daily works”.

This follows the general objective:

***“The Tracer Study is to provide empirical data about mode of delivery of non-formal vocational training courses, impact of the training to improve the standard of living, respectively the income situation of former participants”!***

This study looks for the first time into the implementation of the IVET strategy formulating as a duty to provide half of IVET school capacities to training in the non-formal sector (means to learners not meeting the requirements to enter formal TVET, i.e. graduating at least from lower secondary education). The study aims to provide information about the organization of such courses (frequency, subjects, financial issues) as well as labour market relevance of the provided training.

### **1.3 Objectives and Challenges of TVET Development**

Since 2006, the year of the first TVET tracer study delivered by the Lao-German HRDME project, several policy efforts, strategies and plans have been initiated, among them the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy in 2006, the National Socio-Economic Development Plans (6<sup>th</sup> NSEDP 2006-2010 and 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP 2011-2015), the National Education System Reform Strategy 2006-2015, the Education for All (EFA), National Plan for Action 2003-2015, the Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) 2009-2015 and last but not least the National Strategy and Action Plan on Inclusive Education 2011-2015. Regarding Vocational Education and Training the TVET Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2015 has been developed by MoE in 2005/2006. With support from the German Technical Cooperation this document has later been approved by the Prime Minister's Office. All these strategies and plans clearly emphasise the importance of education within the development policy of the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) until 2020, especially the increased attention to HRD and in particular to TVET and Skills Development. The policies state to uplift training capacities and their quality, widen TVET access (also on district level), ensure inclusion of disadvantaged groups and develop HRD in general to be one breakthrough pillar of the society. The main objectives and targets of TVET development stated in the above mentioned papers related to education are among others to satisfy the labour market demand and social needs based on 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP in Laos. The National Policy on Inclusive Education formulates as the objective "to ensure the right to equitable access to quality education for all people in the society, to reduce and eventually eliminate the disparities in access to and completion of education, especially among the educationally disadvantaged groups such as girls, women, ethnic groups, people with disability and people with socio-economic vulnerabilities".<sup>1</sup> With respect to TVET the goals are among others:

- Improve access and permeability of the education system with a strong focus on the extension of TVET -capacities nation-wide,
- Ensure access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for at least 50,000 students, with 50% of the students being female and 20% from poor families"<sup>2</sup>,
- Increase enrolment rate and build at least three technical schools on district level in districts with rapid economic growth,
- Increase literacy rate in the age group 15-24 years to 99 per cent and in

---

<sup>1</sup> National Policy on Inclusive Education, document no. 1170/MoE dated 29.Nov.2010

<sup>2</sup> Ministerial Decree on the endorsement and promulgation of the National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education 2011-2015, No.:4477,dated 22 November 2011

- populations of age above 15 to 87 per cent by 2015<sup>3</sup>,
- Improve quality of TVET (QAM of MoE), and
- Promote TVET teacher training development.

So far the above mentioned policies and strategies in place have been delivered the right directions for improving education especially vocational education in Lao PDR – mostly determined in quantitative terms and trying to solve the problems by extending TVET capacities nation-wide and promoting vocational training as the basis for a livelihood option for school leavers. However the mentioned documents also leave some questions and challenges not properly reflected so far. This concerns questions of governing and financing TVET, including demand orientation and the cooperation with the business sector as described in the Tracer Study 2013.

One more topic leaving room for improvement concerns the access to vocational training by disadvantaged groups, especially those not fulfilling the requirements to access formal TVET. Per definition this applies to many potential learners – girls, woman, members of ethnic groups, people living in rural and remote areas, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged target groups – remaining outside the education system.<sup>4</sup> This issue has been the rationale to develop and to promote the Integrated Vocational Education and Training approach officially approved by MoES (MoES) with Decree No.: 1503/MoE-VE dated December 15, 2003 on “Promotion and management of IVET-schools” and Decree No.: 1925/MoE-VE 2004 on “Nomination of IVET-coordination committees on provincial and central level”, dated September 23, 2004.<sup>5</sup>

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Non-formal Tracer Study 2014**

Following the major objectives as mentioned under 1.2 the Non-formal Tracer Study 2014 “provide(s) empirical data about the status and impact of non-formal vocational training courses of selected IVET schools in Lao PDR” (objective stated in the Terms of Reference). By decision of GIZ HRDME the sample for this study has been limited to three IVET schools (out of 9). In order to carry out the study the following activities had to be implemented:

1. Brief DTVE and GIZ at MoES about the objectives and approach of the mission and getting green light for data acquisition,
2. Identify three IVET schools providing non-formal training courses for this study,
3. Brief IVET Directors (and other TVET staff as necessary) on the purpose and value of the Non-formal Tracer Study. Obtain their buy-in and clarify roles and responsibilities,

<sup>3</sup> Please also compare ESDF: Increase lower secondary education enrolment rate to 75 per cent by 2015 and increase upper secondary education enrolment rate to 43 per cent by 2015

<sup>4</sup>Source MoES: National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education 2011-2015, Decree No.:4477,dated 22 November 2011, page 2

<sup>5</sup> Source: MoE/GIZ - IVET-Reference Frame work 2009

4. Collect contact data from sample IVET schools on implemented non-formal training courses and participants in 2012/13 and 2013/14, paying special attention to former participants of courses supported by GIZ/dvvi,
5. Set target number for each institution which will add to a total number of 150 to 210 participants,
6. Organise a series of workshops (2-4 days) at IVET institutions or selected venues in the target provinces inviting former participants from non-formal training to complete the Non-formal Tracer Study Questionnaire,
7. Interview IVET institution directors and employers for obtain additional information,
8. Interpret processed data in view of policy measures to improve the impact of non-formal vocational education for improved livelihoods of former participants.

Special attention has been given to point 5 by interviewing directors of IVET institutions and employers in order to collect additional information. For this purpose a special questionnaire has been developed.

## **2. Methodology and Implementation of NFTS 2014**

### **2.1 Design and Methodology**

The Non-formal Tracer Study 2014 follows the general design of general tracer studies, namely the National Baseline Tracer Study 2006, the National Tracer Study 2011 and the Tracer Study 2013, with the aim to allow comparability of collected data. However the 2014 non-formal study focussed especially on the former participants from selected IVET schools supported by Lao-German development cooperation in even two ways – the direct support to IVET schools through financial (buildings and equipment) and technical (advisors to school management) cooperation, and the support to organisation and implementation of non-formal courses. For this purpose the three IVET schools in Xieng Khouang, Saravan, and Sayaboury provinces have been selected.

Implementation of the survey was assigned to Lao-German Development Consulting Co. which combines experts with long experience in vocational training and economic development in Lao PDR. For this purpose LGDC developed and submitted a detailed plan of activities together with the respective budget plan.

Based on discussion and in close cooperation with HRDME, Component 2, the LGDC team developed the questionnaire for former participants by keeping in mind the comparability of data collected with previous studies. The questionnaire for directors/teachers of IVET schools was newly developed and submitted to HRDME and VTED for decision.

The finally adopted questionnaires included:

Questionnaire 1 (former participants)

- Personal Information
- Educational Background
- Information about the received training
- Evaluation of the training
- Situation before and after training

#### Questionnaire 2 (IVET schools)

- Basic data
- Organisation and financing of non-formal training

The LGDC team, HRDME C2 and directors of VTED ensured a coordinated implementation of the activities and the best inclusion of responsible personnel of the respective schools.

LGDC formed one implementation team which then joined forces with directors and leading staff of the respective three IVET schools in order to organise the interviews with graduates. These interviews were held in meetings convened in the respective villages in cooperation with school staff and supported by HRDME. Additional interviews with village administration were organised in form of individual meetings in order to get their opinion about the training.

Interviews with responsible persons and staff directly involved in training delivery at IVET schools took place at the selected schools. After a general introduction of the objectives of the survey and its methodology the questionnaire was explained and later filled in by responsible staff. Additional extended interviews with key personnel in non-formal VET were held and used as background information for the analysis of information gathered in the questionnaire.

Concerning the findings at IVET school level it was therefore decided to use results of interviews with key personnel at each school as basis for analysis and to compare and complete with information gathered from additional questionnaires/interviews.

## **2.2 Expected results of the Tracer Study 2014**

The Non-formal Tracer Study 2014 aims to provide information about:

- Information and reflection about the understanding of the IVET-approach in general and the non-formal training concept in particular by school managers, teachers and trainers,
- The provision and evaluation of non-formal vocational training by IVET schools,
- The impact of the training on employment and income of the participants,
- The organisation and sources of finance for provision of non-formal courses,
- Comparison of the collected data with other information about non-formal vocational training.

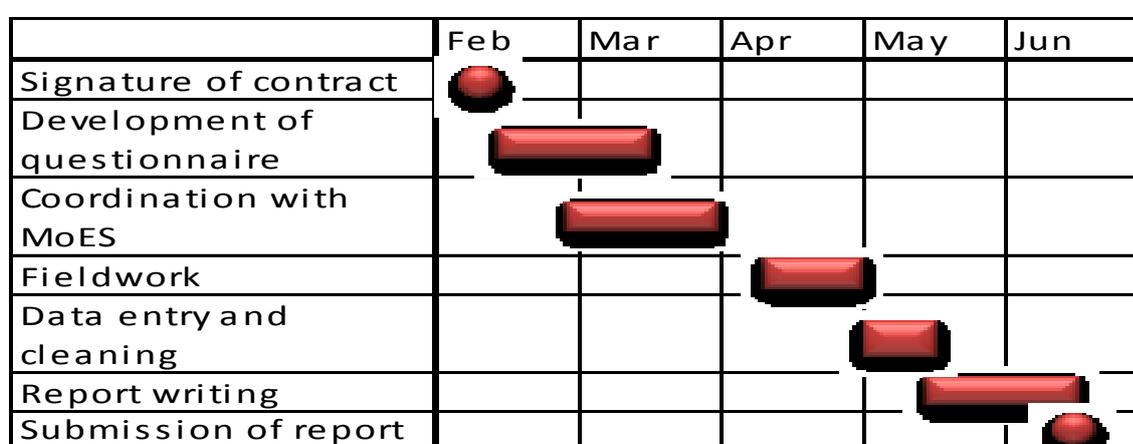
Based on this information the study draws conclusions and develops recommendations for further development of non-formal vocational training. The study also provides

baseline data for future projects and activities in the IVET sector relevant for non-formal training.

Major aspects to be addressed by the tracer study are:

1. Relevance and significance of non-formal vocational education at IVET institutions,
2. Planning and financing non-formal courses,
3. Importance of non-formal VET for employment and decent income,
4. Evaluation of non-formal VET offers by participants,

### 2.3 Timeframe of Non-formal Tracer Study 2014



### 2.4 Sample of Non-formal Tracer Study 2014

Since the introduction of the IVET concept into practice in the school year 2007/08 the number of IVET schools increased –supported by Lao-German financial and technical cooperation – to a total of nine. According to their mandate these schools shall reserve about half of the training capacity to non-formal courses. The sample covers the two geographical focal regions of Laos for the development of IVET schools with emphasis on the northern part which has also the highest number of IVET schools with the longest experience in operation.

**Table 1: Participants by schools and region**

School	Number of participants	Number of school/village staff	Region
IVET School Xieng Khouang	105	10	North
IVET School Sayaboury	40	7	North-West
IVET School Saravane	60	6	South
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>23</b>	

As no consolidated statistic about non-formal training courses has been available the number of interviewed participants is put into relation to the total number of trainees as stated by the school management of the respective schools. These figures are further compared with numbers reported to GIZ and DVVI. The sample of this particular survey has been reduced from the originally envisaged 10 IVET institutions to 3.

Additional interviews with school and village staff provide valuable information about the organisation, financing and implementation of the training. In all three cases several local representatives have been interviewed in order to compare information.

## **2.5 Fieldwork**

Field work has been carried out from 08. to 30. April 2014, starting in Saravan (08.-11.04.14) and followed by Xieng Khouang (23.-26.04.14) and Sayaboury (27.-30.04.14). Besides interviews at the respective IVET schools, fieldwork included trips to villages with high concentration of participants of non-formal vocational training courses. These trips were also used for additional interviews with local authorities (village chiefs).

Thanks to the directors of the involved vocational training institutions, the team has been able to carry out the field work in a quick manner and according to the ToR. Cooperation with local representatives in schools and villages has been good allowing for a smooth implementation of the work.

### **3. Findings of Non-formal Tracer Study 2014**

#### **3.1 General information about training offer and interviewees**

For this survey three IVET schools have been selected known for organising non-formal courses and receiving support from GIZ/dvvi. This means the findings here may be not representative for all TVET institutions or even IVET schools. The aim of the survey with regard to schools offering non-formal courses is to find out more details about the organisation, financing and implementation of non-formal vocational training. Speaking with different representatives of each involved school provides opportunities to compare information and to identify possible communication problems. This effort will allow to draw conclusions for the improvement of respective offers in non-formal vocational training.

In schools and villages a total of 23 persons have been interviewed but only 21 questionnaires have been returned. Of those 8 are teachers at IVET schools, 1 school director, 1 acting school director, 3 deputy directors, 5 directors of section, department or division, 1 deputy village chief and 2 members of village committees. Among the 21 persons 7 are women.

Asked about their involvement in non-formal training 13 have been working as teachers, 2 as organisers, 3 as director of an IVET school and 3 have been otherwise involved.

As stated under methodology extended interviews with key personnel at each school were chosen as basis for analysis completed by and compared to answers from other relevant staff. In Saravan and Sayaboury the key personnel were directors or deputy directors of the respective school whereas in Xieng Khouang one responsible teacher had been identified as main source of information.

In addition responsible staff of GIZ has been interviewed in order to gather information about procedures of organisation of non-formal courses supported by GIZ/dvvi.

#### ***Non-formal training offers at IVET schools***

##### ***Training supported by GIZ/dvvi***

According to information provided by GIZ HRDME, during the three years 2012-2014 a total of 22 short-term training courses with 485 participants have been supported at the selected three IVET schools (see Table 2).

Table 2: Short term training supported by GIZ in three target schools 2012-2014

No.	Name of school	Year	Number of training course	Number of participant
I.	IVETS Sayaboury	2012	0	0
		2013	0	0
		2014	2	40
		<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>
II.	IVETS Xiengkhuang	2012	4	95
		2013	5	90
		2014	1	15
		<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>200</b>
III.	IVETS Saravan	2012	3	45
		2013	5	140
		2014	2	60
		<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>245</b>

In 2013 and 2014 courses have been offered in the following fields of training:

Sayaboury: 2014 1 course in mushroom cultivation (20 participants/17 female)  
1 course in food processing (20/19)

Xieng Khouang 2013: 1 course in motorcycle repair (16/0)  
1 course in electrical installation (19/0)  
1 course in construction (11/4)  
1 course in mushroom cultivation (20/14)  
1 course in chicken raising (20/18)

2014: 1 course in electrical installation (15/1)

Saravan: 2013 1 course in chicken raising (30/7)  
1 course in goat raising (25/2)  
1 course in fruit tree grafting (30/14)  
2 courses in mushroom cultivation (55/35)

2014 1 course in electrical installation (30/0)  
1 course in motorcycle repair (30/0, not finished during time of assessment).

GIZ/dvvi support to short-term training included also reimbursement for transport to the training.

Deducting from field of training and number of courses supported by GIZ/dvvi or other sources (as up-to-date lists of former participants were not available at schools and former participants in general were not able to identify the supporting agency) former participants of GIZ/dvvi sponsored courses are represented as follows in the actual sample:

1. Saravan 54 out of 60 persons in the sample or 27% of all 200 former participants of GIZ/dvvi-supported courses 2013-2014,
2. Xieng Khouang 62 out of 105 persons or 59% of all 105 former participants of GIZ/dvvi-supported courses in 2013-2014,
3. Sayaboury 40 out of 40 persons in the sample or 100% of all 40 former participants of GIZ/dvvi-supported courses in 2014 (due to logistical reasons it was impossible to interview the former participants of company sponsored courses which took place in Hongsa district).

Collected data also shows that the maximum capacity of non-formal course in Sayaboury and Xieng Khouang was set at 20, in Saravan at 30 participants. This could be an expression of higher need in Saravan.

In general gender composition of participants depends on the field of training offered with women mainly participating in traditionally female dominated domain like chicken raising and mushroom cultivation. Female participation in technical fields was minimal. In Saravan male dominated even the traditional women's affairs showing an even stronger cultural influence on the selection of trainees.

### ***Mode of delivery of training***

Referring to information provided by GIZ staff time and field of trainings have been proposed by the respective IVET school by submitting written requests to DTVE which commented and forwarded the request to GIZ. Upon agreement by GIZ trainings are implemented by the respective school. Discussions with involved personnel at the schools during fieldwork revealed that generally training proposals/requests are developed based on available teachers and curricula partially handed forward by GTZ's former BAFIS (Occupation-oriented Vocational Education and Further Training for Target Groups in the Informal Sector) project. Training is organised and implemented by school staff, in some cases with support of additionally hired teachers either at the IVET school or in target villages.

Based on this background the idea was to ask directors/deputy directors of IVET schools for precise data about number of non-formal training courses and numbers of participants and to validate this by collecting additional information from other school staff involved in the training. The results have been interpreted in comparison with the GIZ HRDME reports about non-formal training courses supported by GIZ/dvvi.

The first question was whether non-formal VET is part of the general annual plan of activities of the respective IVET school - if yes, how many courses have been planned – or implemented on initiative of other stakeholders (MoES/PESS, target groups, companies, development projects). The next question asked how those courses have been financed. Two key persons in Saravan answered as follows:

**Table 3: Organisation of non-formal training Saravan**

Question	Person A	Person B
Part of annual plan	yes, 11 courses	No
Initiated by	MoES/PESS, target groups, projects	projects
Financed by	projects, 1 course	projects, 8 courses
Courses in 2013/14	1 course with 30 participants on project budget	6 courses 220 participants on project budget
FoT in 2013/14	1 course electro-technique	1 course electro-technique (30) 1 course plant production (25) 1 course animal husbandry (30)

This information can be compared with GIZ HRDME project records stating that in 2013 and 2014 a total of 7 courses in electro-technique (1 course, 30 participants), motorcycle repair (1/30), plant production (3/85) and animal husbandry (2/55) have been supported. There is a bias as GIZ HRDME reports by calendar year. However the total figure of 7 courses with 200 participants comes close to the information given by person B (6/220) which would mean that there have been practically no other courses besides those supported by GIZ HRDME.

A similar exercise for Sayaboury produces the following results:

**Table 4: Organisation of non-formal training Sayaboury**

Question	Person A	Person B
Part of annual plan	Yes, 4 courses	Yes, 1 course
Initiated by	No answer	No answer
Financed by	Projects, 4 courses	Projects, 1 course
Courses in 2013/14	2 courses with 40 participants on project budget, 2 courses with 70 participants on other sources budget	1 course with 20 participants
FoT in 2013/14	1 course construction (15) 2 courses cooking (40) 1 course plant production (20)	1 course plant production (20)

The GIZ HRDME report shows for 2014 one course in plant production (20 participants) and one in food processing/cooking (20). Additional information from IVET school staff states that two courses have been supported by the Hongsa power plant company. This information confirms basically all data provided by person A.

In Xieng Khouang the situation looks as follows:

**Table 5: Organisation of non-formal training Xieng Khouang**

Question	Person A	Person B
Part of annual plan	No	No
Initiated by	Other sources	Projects
Financed by	No answer	Project budget
Courses in 2013/14	14 courses with 106 participants on companies budget	1 course with 21 participants on project budget
FoT in 2013/14	19 courses tailoring (186)	1 course plant production

GIZ HRDME programme reports 5 courses in 2013, one each in electrical installation (19), motorcycle repair (16), plant production (20), animal husbandry (20) and construction (15), and one in 2014 in electrical installation (15), totalling 6 courses with 135 participants.

When comparing with responses of other persons handing the questionnaire in the spectrum of different answers increases with the number of people. However difficult it seems to keep proper record about implemented courses at school level it became obvious that none of the courses taking place during the last two years was reportedly financed by the IVET school itself, but the majority by development projects. This underlines the low level of attention given to this part of training which should be one compulsory part of the IVET concept.

The IVET pedagogical concept is determined to strengthen the relevance of labour market demand and employability of graduates. The concept aims to maintain high training quality of apprentices and students by practical and enterprise oriented training with a minimum relation of 40 % theory and 60% practice related education and training in formal as well as non-formal vocational training programs. IVET defines “*formal learning*” as learning in a well- organized and structured context, explicitly in systematic learning processes and content-wise as well as methodically and didactically structured. Formal learning in general leads to certification, i.e. to a recognized professional certificate, whereas “*non-formal learning*” means learning embedded in methodical activities which are sometimes not explicitly indicated as learning but containing a distinct “learning element”. From the point of view of the learner non-formal learning is in general intentional but normally doesn’t end up with a certification. Proven professional competencies resulting from non-formal training in IVET Schools or from long-standing professional practice and work entitle the respective person to enter formal vocational training leading to *semi-skilled* or *skilled worker* level.<sup>6</sup> However, it was found that short term training is delivered as stand-alone training not necessarily related to the topics of formal education at IVET schools. Regulations about modular approaches in non-formal training, recognition of prior learning and calculation of credit points have so far not been finished. This would be essential to streamline

<sup>6</sup> Compare MoES: IVET Reference frame work, Vientiane 2009

non-formal training with formal VET and allow participants of non-formal training to enter mainstream TVET.

The “live long learning” aspect is the crucial part of IVET to be applied to all trainees but especially to disadvantaged people which are in their daily live excluded from any education and especially from vocational training. The new TVET law promulgated by the President of Lao PDR on 14.01.2014 (Presidential Decree 060) defines IVET in Article 11 as “combination between formal and non-formal vocational training”. Removing or neglecting one of those parts actually undermines the status and intention of the IVET concept.

For these three IVET schools can be stated that short-term courses supported by GIZ/dvvi represent an important share of all offered short-term training, in the case of Saravan even all courses have been financed by GIZ/dvvi. In Sayaboury and Xieng Khouang a number of courses has been initiated and financed by interested companies.

### 3.2 Management and teaching staff of non-formal courses

#### Management of training

The current method of managing non-formal training at IVET schools depends mostly on the dedication of teachers and trainers. Based on their professional competencies, experiences and capacities they are free to propose such courses to be held at their training sections. Based on those preconditions requests have been elaborated and handed over directly to the DTVE at the MoES, sometimes without any information to the PESS and IVET school management. DTVE on his part forward those requests to GIZ and occasionally to other donors which are referring or willing to support such short term courses. Such a management practice is not in line with the “IVET-reference frame work” and the policy and strategy on inclusive education.

#### Teaching Staff

The representatives of IVET school were also asked who actually provides non-formal training. As directors, administrative staff and teachers answered this question all replies were included in the following Table 6.

Table 6: Persons providing training by province

Person who provides the training	Saravan	Xieng Khouang	Sayaboury	Total
	0	1	0	1
<b>Teachers and trainers of the School</b>	3	4	2	9
<b>Specialised non-formal teachers</b>	0	3	0	3
<b>Temporarily hired teachers</b>	3	1	4	8
<b>Total</b>	6	9	6	21

The majority of respondents stated that non-formal courses are delivered by teachers and trainers of their respective school. The second frequent answer stated that teachers had been hired temporarily. From practical experience it can be concluded that this answers may include also teachers/trainers of the respective school separately paid by projects for teaching in non-formal courses. Only in Xieng Khouang three respondents stated that specialised non-formal teachers provide the training.

These answers underline that non-formal training courses are mostly organised supply driven. This means an IVET school is offering what is readily available at the respective schools in terms of professional competence of the staff, technical facilities and equipment as well as existing curricula.

### **Information about training opportunities**

Regarding the ways participants were informed about upcoming training opportunities there is a clear preference for local authorities accounting for 16 out of 21 answers. This reliance on administration corresponds to the very high rating of village chiefs as source of information about training among participants (see Figure 3). Only in Xieng Khouang a diversification of information channels exist.

**Table 7: Identification of participants by province**

Identification of participants	Saravan	Xieng Khouang	Sayaboury	Total
na	0	1	0	1
Radio/Television	0	2	0	2
Local Authorities	6	4	6	16
Project Mobilised Participants	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>

### **Certification**

Regarding certification different forms of certificates have been used to recognise short courses. IVET schools using mostly certificates of participation (certificate of attendance) as well as certificates level I and certificates level II. It could not clearly explained by the school management on what kind of regulation such practice of certification has been based.<sup>7</sup> But there is the doubt that this practice is in line with the

<sup>7</sup> Defines in Article 31 defines 5 qualification levels, Article 51 defines the respective certificates: basic level = certificate 1, semi-skilled worker = certificate 2, skilled worker = certificate 3. The requirements for each level are to be defined by the NQF.

TVET qualification framework and the national policy on inclusive education of MoES as according to current regulations certificate 1 needs a training time of at least 3 months. Actually courses of less than 3 month duration have no value regarding the educational carrier of the participants as such courses to not open ways to further training and end in a deadlock (as it is the case of non-formal education since long time). That's why IVET schools have to offer short courses in line with the existing NQF, focussed on occupational standards and recognized curricula, combined with practical applications and certified after appropriate in terms of content and duration training as basic skills or semi-skills related to a clear defined occupation. Such a practice will opens the door to the world of work and decent income for disadvantaged people.

Not much irritation was found with regard to certificates handed out to participants of non-formal training in Sayaboury and Saravan where all respondents stated that certificates of attendance are awarded. However 2 out of 9 representatives of Xieng Khouang IVET School stated that certificates level 1 or 2 were handed out. This corresponds with responses of former participants (see [Certification](#)).

**Table 8: Certificates by province**

Offered Certificates	Saravan	Xieng Khouang	Sayaboury	Total
na	0	1	0	1
None	1	0	0	1
Certificate of Participation	5	6	6	17
Certificate Level I	0	1	0	1
Certificate Level II	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>

### **3.3 The beneficiaries**

A total of 205 participants in non-formal vocational training courses have been interviewed for this survey. The majority was interviewed in Xieng Khouang province (105), followed by Saravan (60) and Sayaboury (40). 8 out of the 205 interviewed persons participated in non-formal training 2009 or earlier, 35 in 2012, 90 in 2013, 52 in 2014 and 20 did not state the time of training.

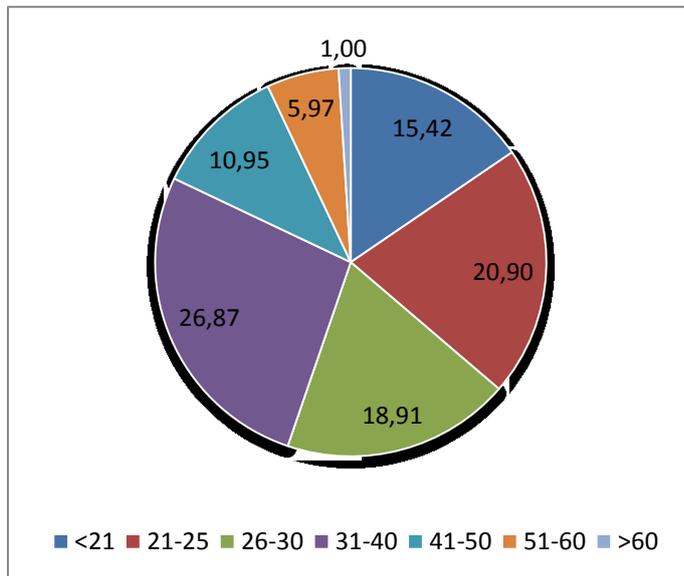
#### ***Gender composition***

With regard to gender distribution in the sample 67.5% of interviewed participants were female. This is substantially higher than the share of women in formal vocational training stated by the Tracer Study 2013 at 39%. In Saravan the men-to-women-ratio was found in correspondence with the formal education (61:39%), but in Xieng Khouang (24:76%) and even more in Sayaboury (15:85%) the majority of participants were women. How this composition is influenced by the subject of training will be shown later.

### Age structure

Looking at the age structure of interviewed participants (**Fehler! Ungültiger Eigenverweis auf Textmarke.**) data show that only a small group of 15,4% is 20 years old or younger. This group would best represent the group of school leavers before graduating from upper secondary education which account for the majority of Lao youth.

Figure 1: Participants by age



People aged between 21 und 30 years represent the biggest group – 40% of the total. Second largest is the age group 31 to 40 (27%). Two participants were older than 60 years.

### Ethnic composition

The ethnic composition of participants shows a domination of ethnic Lao. Depending on the geographic location representatives of the Mon-Khmer (Soui in Saravan 30%) or Hmong-Mien groups (Hmong in Xieng Khouang 30%) are well represented among the participants. The ethnic composition may vary significantly from course to course if the training is organised in selected villages (mostly inhabited by one specific ethnic group).

### Distance to training venue

The average distance to the place of training was 6.6 kilometres with the shortest way of just 50 meters and the longest of 200 km. If excluding the four exceptional long travel distances of 100, 120, 150 and 200 km (all occurring in Xieng Khouang) the average distance comes down to 4,1 km. 75 or 36,6% of the participants had to travel less than 1 kilometre to the training venue, 64 (31,2%) between 1 and 3 km. The longest distance at “medium range” (more than 10 km) was 45 km.

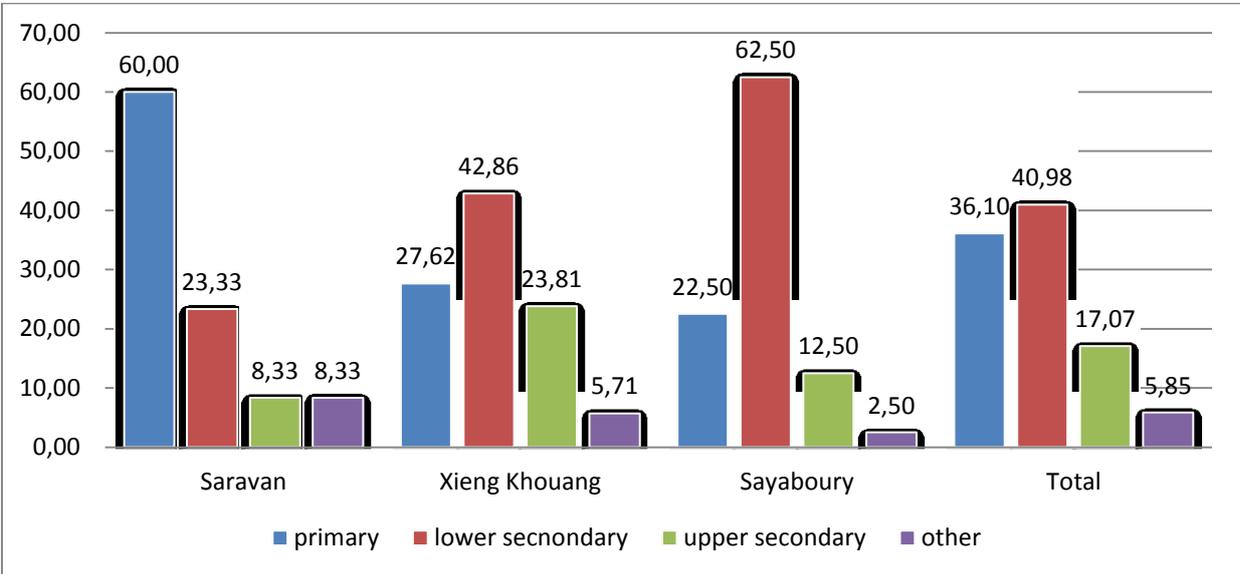
### Education background of participants

In general non-formal vocational training aims at those not fulfilling the entry requirements for formal training means at least graduating from lower secondary education. Data in Figure 2 show that the majority of participants (58%) in non-formal

vocational training actually were eligible for formal TVET. Looking into provincial details the situations gets more complicated as on one hand Saravan has a high share of 60% graduates from primary education but on the other hand 62.5% of participants in Sayaboury graduated from lower secondary education. Together with graduates from upper secondary schools the share of participants entitled to apply for formal TVET increases to 75%, only slightly higher than in Xieng Khouang (66.7%).<sup>8</sup>

This is not in line with the IVET approach as accepting persons meeting the requirement for formal TVET in short courses is further minimising chances for disadvantaged people. This practice which seems to be not an exception contradicts principles and regulations of IVET. Therefore emphasis on the original target groups of non-formal training has to be permanently controlled and appropriate measures for enforcement have to be applied by DTVE and PESS.

Figure 2: General education of participants by province

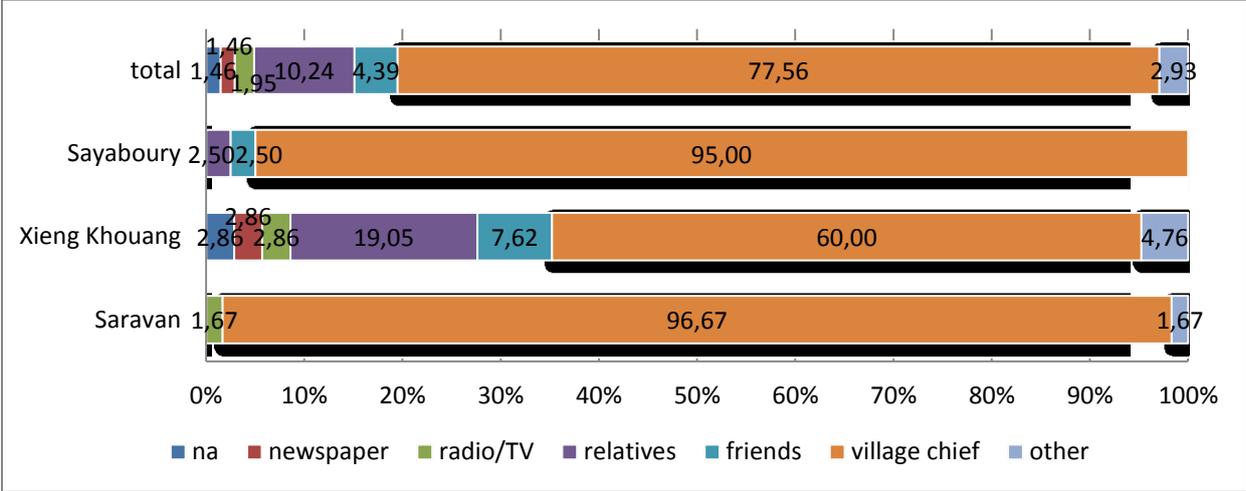


Source of information about training

<sup>8</sup> Individual reasons for this situation may be manifold and – as it was not topic of questions during the survey – could open way for speculation. Finally the underlying cause for persons fulfilling the formal requirement to enter formal TVET and not doing so is the limited capacity of TVET institutions. For example in school year 2011/12 in Saravan province a total of 1,296 students (570 female) successfully passed final examination of grade 7 of upper secondary education.<sup>8</sup> In the following school year 2012/13 Saravan Teacher Training College (one of two TTC in the four Southern Provinces and the only college in Saravan province listed in MoES statistics) had a total of 603 students graduating from upper secondary in its first year of study. In the same year 2012/13 the IVET school Saravan had a total of 90 learners in year 1 of formal TVET (19 female).<sup>8</sup> This leaves 46.5% of graduates from year 2011/12 theoretically with the option to move to other provinces or abroad for further education. This calculation is a theoretical example as graduates of earlier school years also compete for entrance examination and TTC Saravan has to accept quota students from neighbouring Attopeu and Sekong provinces as well, increasing the run for the limited number of places in further education.

Participants were also asked from where they got information about the training. The predominant answer was through the village chief (77.6%; Figure 3). Especially in Xieng Khouang and to a lesser extent in Sayaboury also relatives (10.2% of total) and friends (4.4% of total) provided the information about an upcoming training opportunity. Relatives and friends combined stand for 26.7% of sources of information in Xieng Khouang province. Media traditional like newspapers (1.5%) or radio/TV (2.0%) play a marginal role as source of information for non-formal vocational training.

Figure 3: Source of information by province (percent)



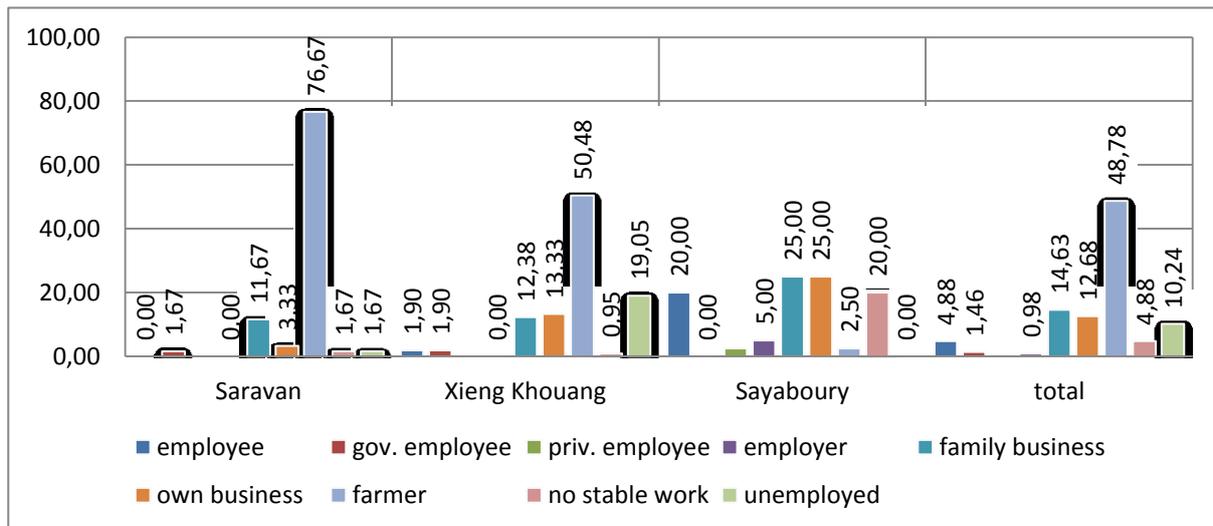
### 3.4 Outcome and impact of non-formal training

#### Economic activity and income of participants

The participants have been asked about their income activity before the training. The result (see

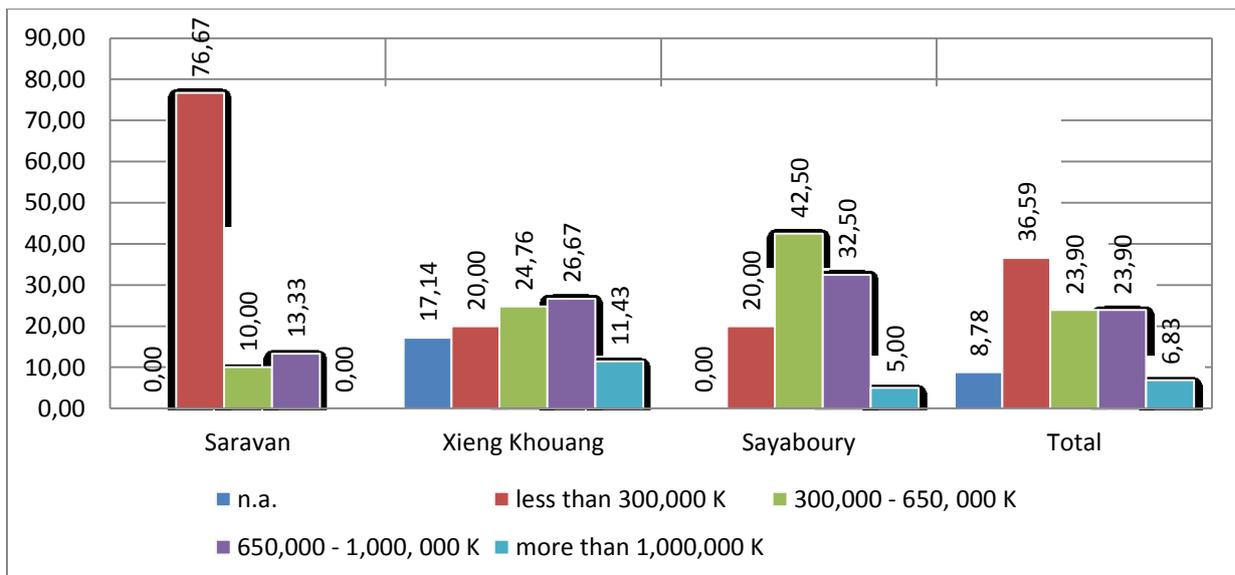
Figure 4) show a huge difference between the provinces. In Saravan 76.7% of participants have been farmers against 2.5% in Sayaboury. In total 48.8% of trainees have been farmer before the training. The second largest group was working in a family business (14.6%) followed by running an own business (12.7%). Both categories are running highest in Sayaboury (25% each), but also reach a high level in Xieng Khouang (12.4% and 13.3% respectively). Former employees reach a considerable level only in Sayaboury province. Persons with no stable work rank high in Sayaboury (20%) whereas jobless people were significant as participants in the training in Xieng Khouang (19%).

Figure 4: Economic activity of participants before training by province



Regarding their income before the training the largest share of participants earned less than 300,000 Kip a month, less than half of the legal minimum wage fixed by the Lao government in 2012 at 626,000 Kip. However this total share is heavily influenced by the participants in Saravan province where 76.7% of participants fell into this bracket. In Xieng Khouang 20% of the interviewees did not disclose their income leaving space for speculation. In Xieng Khouang a relatively high share of 11.3% earned more than 1 million Kip whereas in both Xieng Khouang and Sayaboury income of more than 300,000 Kip accounted for more than two thirds of the participants.

Figure 5: Income of participants before training by province (percent)

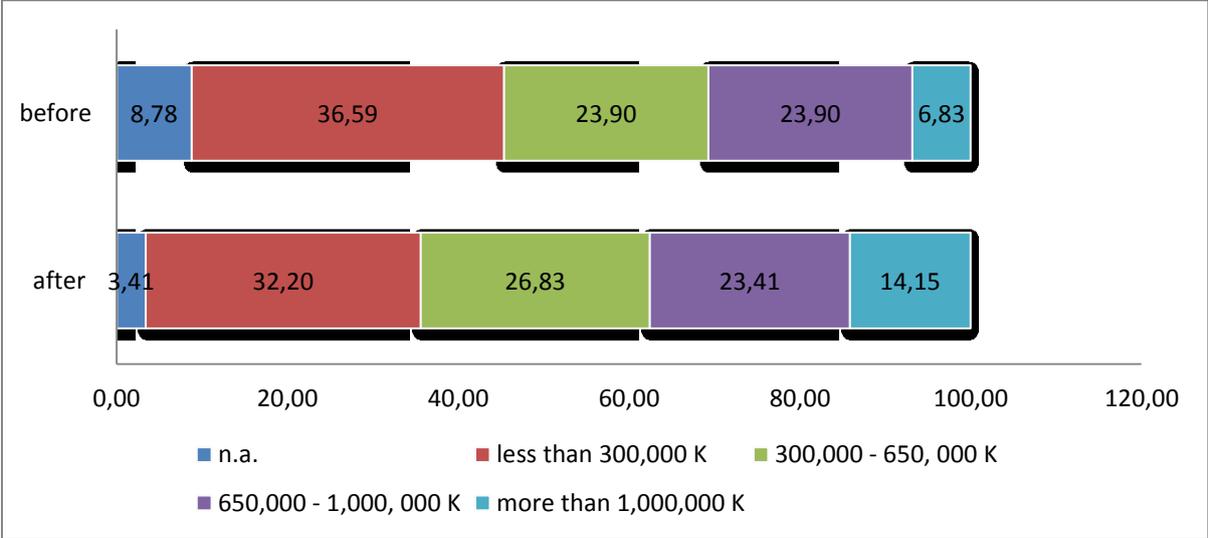


The participants reported an improved economic situation after the training. In general the number of persons earning less than 300,000 Kip decreased by 9 persons from 36.6.% to 32.2% of the total 205. On the other end the number of persons earning more than 1 million Kip increased from 6.85% to 14.2%. As there could have been a

bias because the number of persons not stating any income also decreased (meaning that persons not stating any income for the time before training could well have received more than 1 million Kip per month already stated only for the time after training) each individual case was checked. In fact only one person not stating any income before training belongs to the group earning more than 1 million Kip after training. Seven (out of a total of 18) earned between 650,000-1 million, six between 300,000-650,000, one below 300,000 Kip and three did not provide any figure. The development of other groups showed a general trend of improvement for 19.0% of the participants whereas 6.8% reported lower income than before the training. The highest increase was reported in the group earning more than 1 million Kip which doubled from 14 to 29 persons. 14 persons (18.7% of that group) improved from an income of less than 300,000 Kip (12 to 300,000-650,000, 2 to 650,00-1 million, 2 to > 1 million).

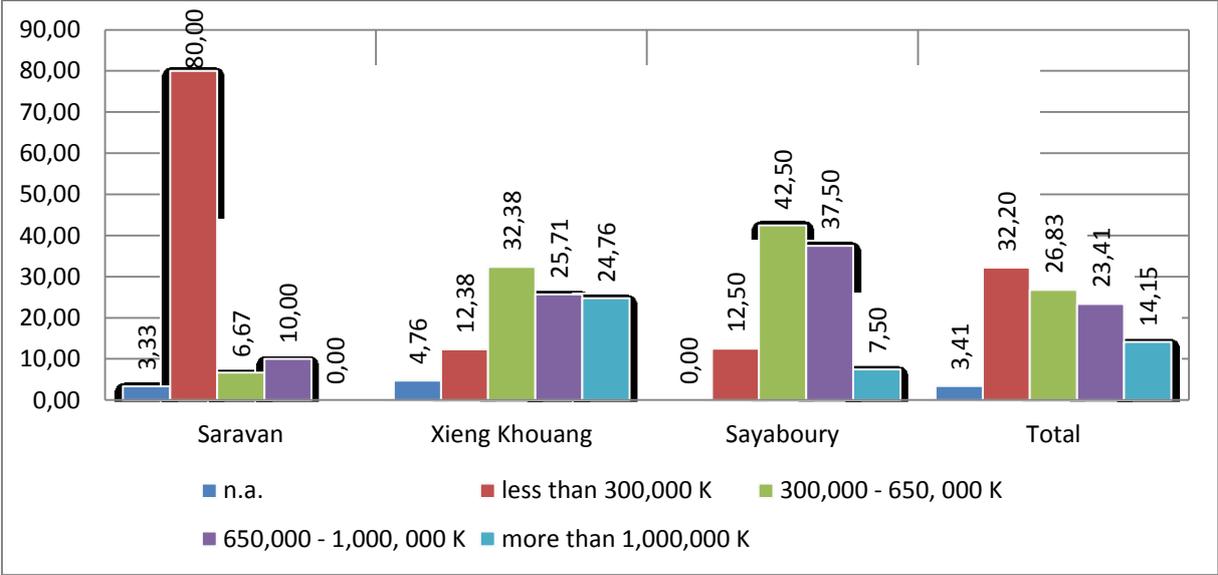
As Figure 6 shows the income situation in general improved with increased numbers of participants in the income groups 300,00-650,000 and > 1 million Kip with less participants earning below 300,000 Kip (which means less than half of the minimum wage).

Figure 6: Income before and after training (percent)



The income levels after training by province show a mixed picture. In Saravan the share of persons earning less than 300,000 Kip even slightly increased after training (from 76.7% to 80.0%) whereas in the other two provinces this bracket decreased substantially or in the case of Sayaboury was even wiped out. Saravan also reported decreasing numbers in the other income brackets, increasing only the number of persons not stating any income (from 0 to 2) leading to the conclusion that the economic situation of participants of training in Saravan province did not improve.

Figure 7: Income of participants after training by province (percent)

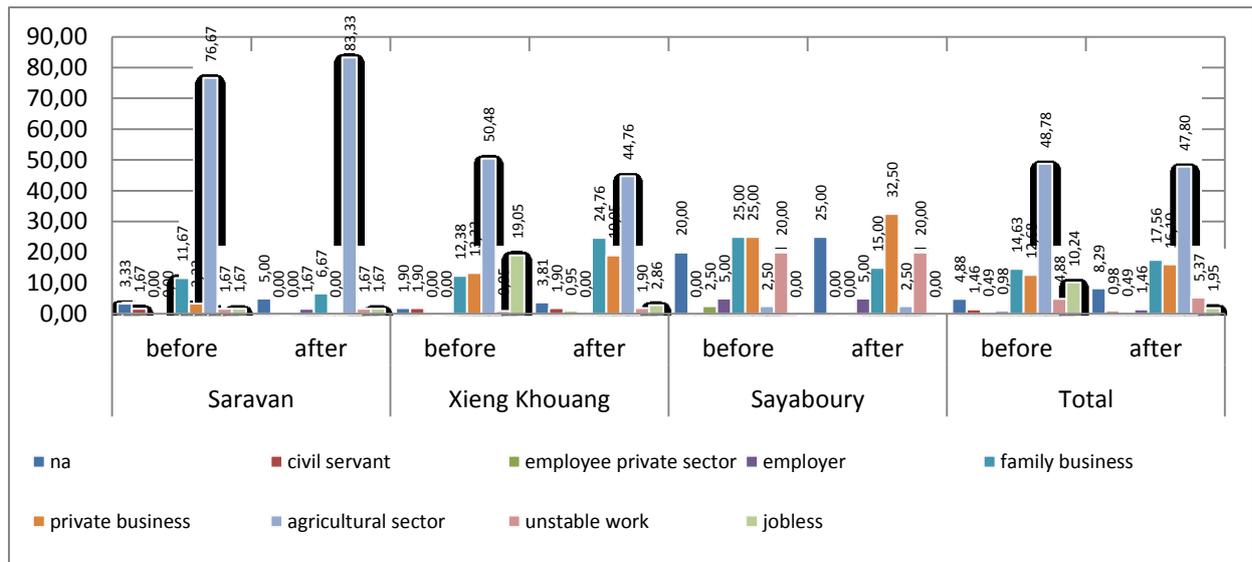


When looking into economic activity after the training the picture shows that fewer persons than before the training stated being employed in any form. On the other hand the number of persons running their own business, working in a family business or employing other people increased. As a very positive development it was found that the biggest decrease appeared among jobless people, which was achieved exclusively in Xieng Khouang province. On the other hand the share of farmers in Saravan – already highest before the training – did even increase which could be expected as training focussed on agriculture. For the surveyed schools and courses it can be stated that participation did not directly result in higher employment rates. This may be related to the lack of communication with the local business sector in order to identify labour market needs or simply with limited number of jobs in those provinces. As example: in Saravan province in fiscal year 2012/13 a total of 1.395 enterprises has been registered with the tax office. Out of this just 108 enterprises are active in the manufacturing sector, another 27 in construction.<sup>9</sup> The last two figures are exactly the same as two years earlier. If no large investment projects, like hydropower or infrastructure projects, happen in such a province the local labour market remains very tight as very few new jobs are created.

The current analysis shows an almost complete isolation of non-formal training from local labour market which was also found during other assignments of LGDC for related matters. On the other hand livelihood of former participants improves as the number of persons having their own business or earning an income in the family’s business increased.

<sup>9</sup> See Report of ES2013, Vientiane 2014

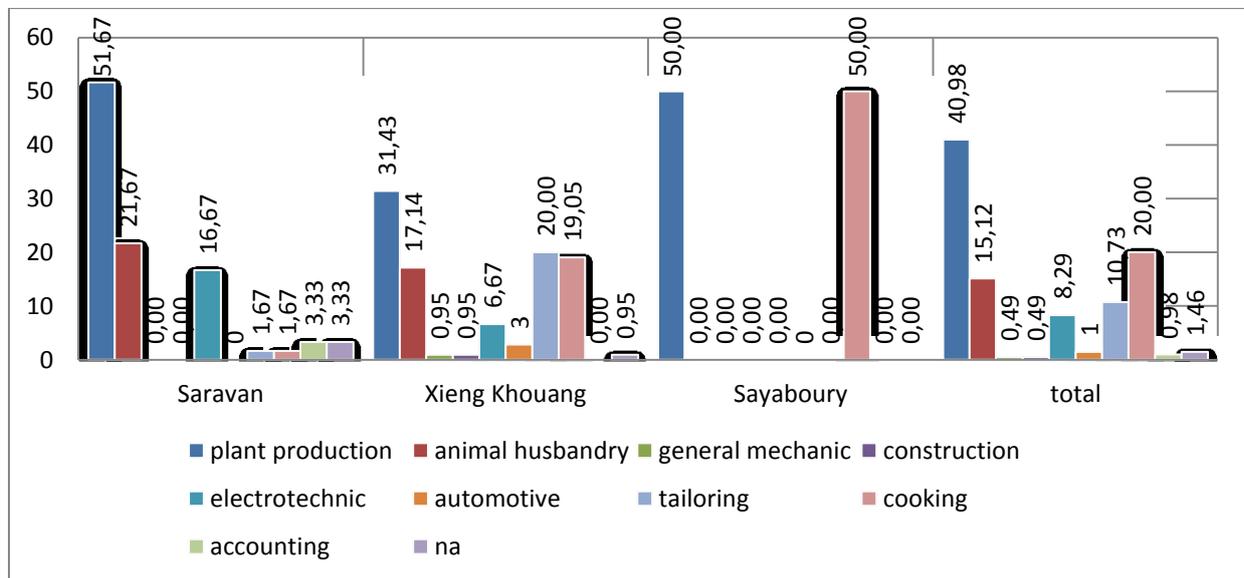
Figure 8: Economic activity before and after training by province (percent)



### Fields and duration of training

Looking into the fields of training for economic success the following total composition of training courses was found:

Figure 9: Fields of training by province (percent)

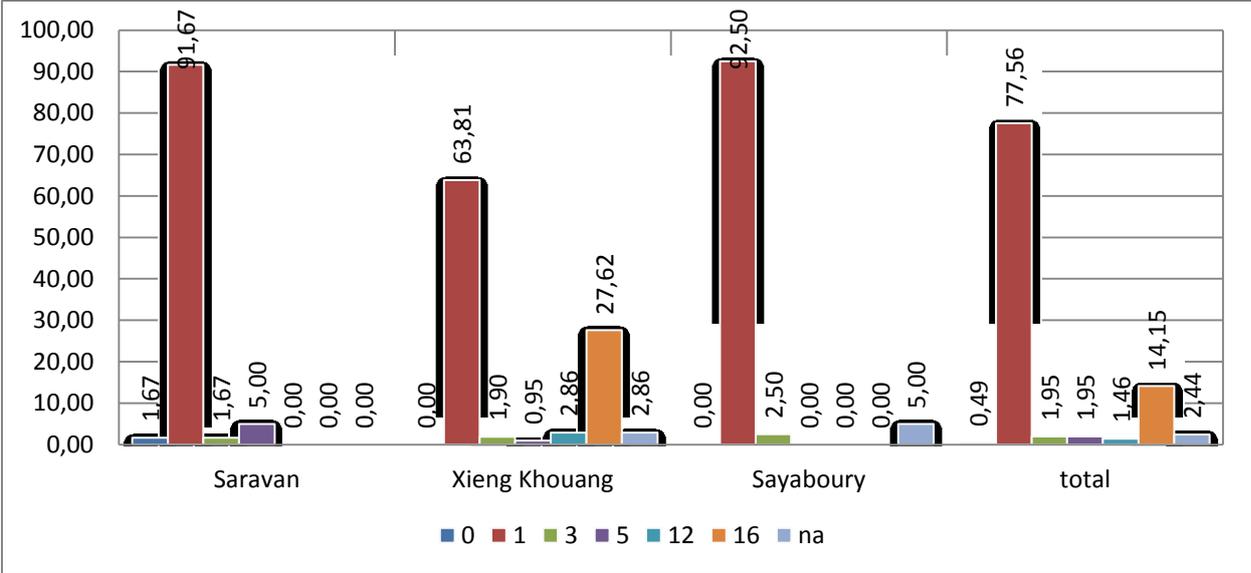


In all three surveyed provinces training in plant production was the number one in kind of number of participants among the interviewed persons. In both Saravan and Sayaboury 50% or more of participants got training in this field accounting in total for 41.0% of all participants. This is followed by food processing/cooking (20.0% of total) which was strongest in Sayaboury (50.0%) and Xieng Khouang (19.0%). It has to be noticed that participants in Sayaboury participated in just two fields (plant production

and food processing/cooking) whereas the diversity of offers was much higher in Saravan (7 fields) and Xieng Khouang (9 fields of training).

Looking at duration of training 159 out of 200 participants (77.6% of all) answering this question stated a training duration of one week. On the other end a significant number of 29 participants (14.15%) stated a training duration of 16 weeks.

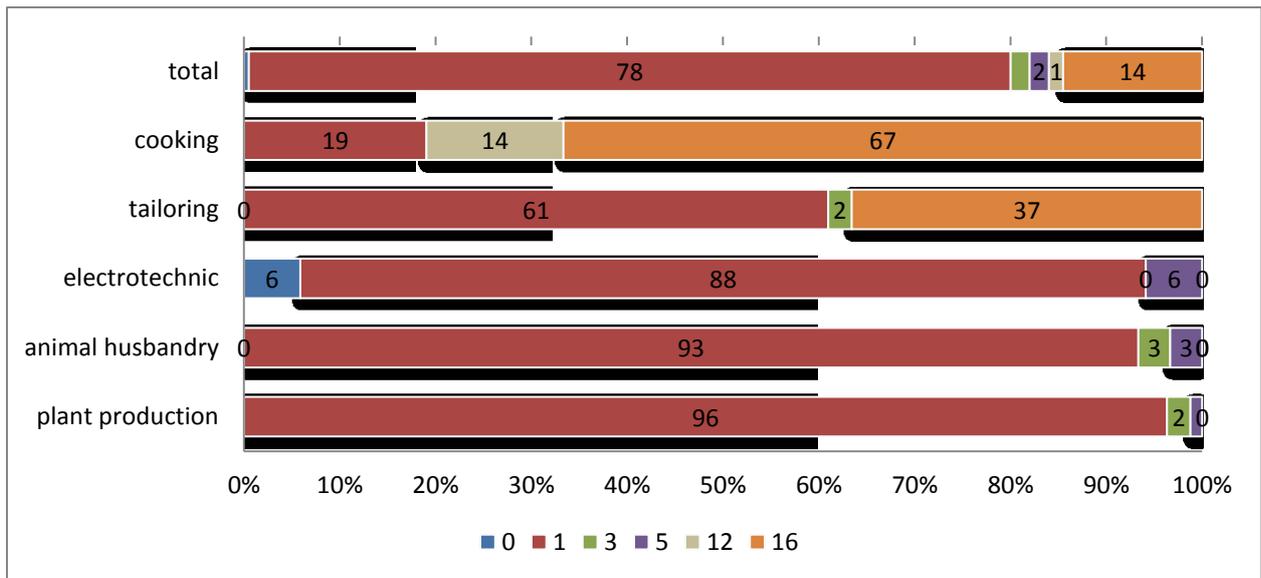
Figure 10: Duration of training by province (percent)



As Figure 10 shows the highest share of one-week-trainings was reported from Sayaboury and Saravan. In Saravan 5% of participants learned 5 weeks. All training with duration of more than 5 weeks was reported in Xieng Khouang.

Looking deeper into this matter the duration of training in different fields of training was analysed. Therefore only fields with more than 3 participants have been considered. The result was that agricultural training in most cases does not take last longer than one week. The longest training courses (16 weeks) were reported in food processing/cooking and tailoring. But in both FoT also a substantial share of one-week-courses took place. The only technical FoT with a considerable number of participants was electro-technic which was offered only in Xieng Khouang. The duration for such a complex profession with high implications for safety was rather short – only one week.

Figure 11: Duration by field of training (percent, rounded)

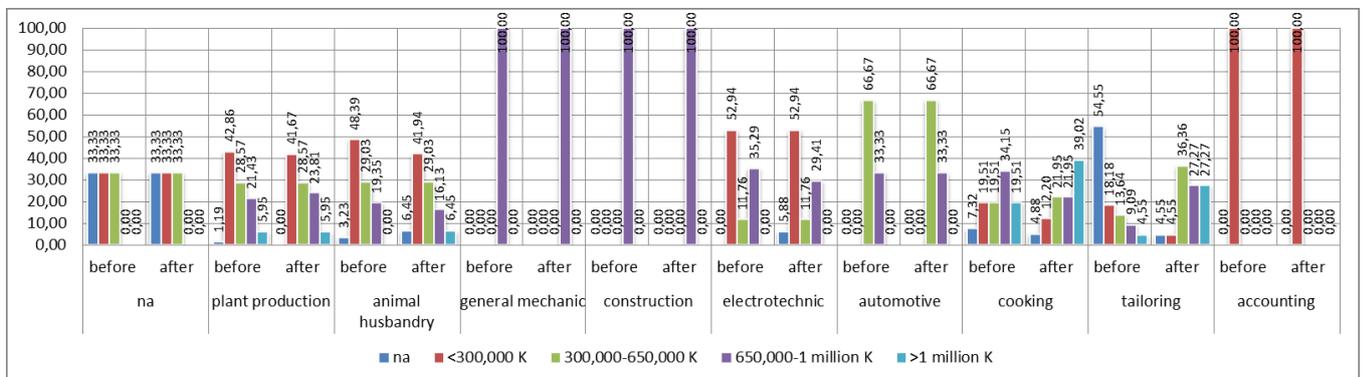


### Impact on income by field of training

Relating changes in income to the field of training shows that big changes occurred especially in two fields of training: tailoring and cooking. In both cases the share of participants stating improved income especially in the higher income brackets above minimum wage level (605,000 to 1 million and > 1 million) grew significantly whereas the share of low income earners fell. Both fields of training are traditional domains of women. The biggest impact in kind of lifting people out of the lowest income group was achieved by cooking courses.

In most other cases income remained relatively stable with slight improvement in kind of income and number of people affected by this improvement in agricultural occupations whereas income in technical fields remained generally unchanged.

Figure 12: Income before and after training by field of training (percent of former participants in each field)

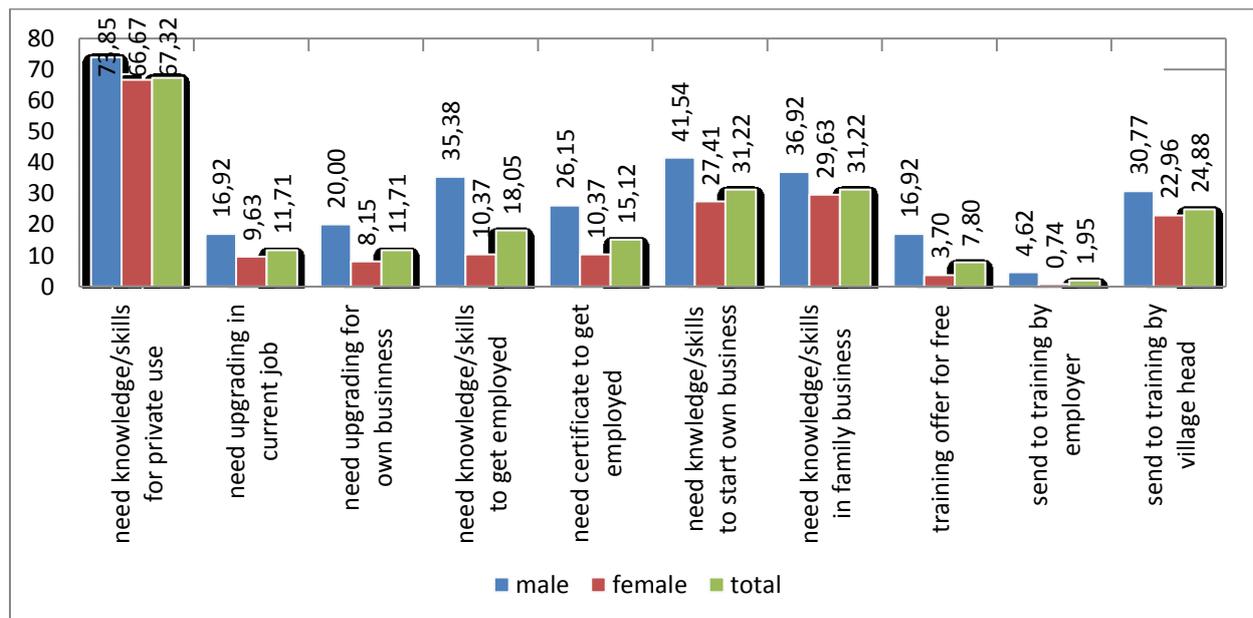


### Reasons for joining training

To the question about reasons for participating at the training multiple answers were possible. The most common answer was “need knowledge/skills for own (home) use” accounting for 138 answers (48 male and 90 female) or 67.3% (73.8% of all male and 66.7% of all female participants – see Figure 13). So the impression is that increasing income or finding employment ranks not very high on the priority list for entering short term vocational training courses as knowledge/skills for home use would rather not being directly related with increasing income.

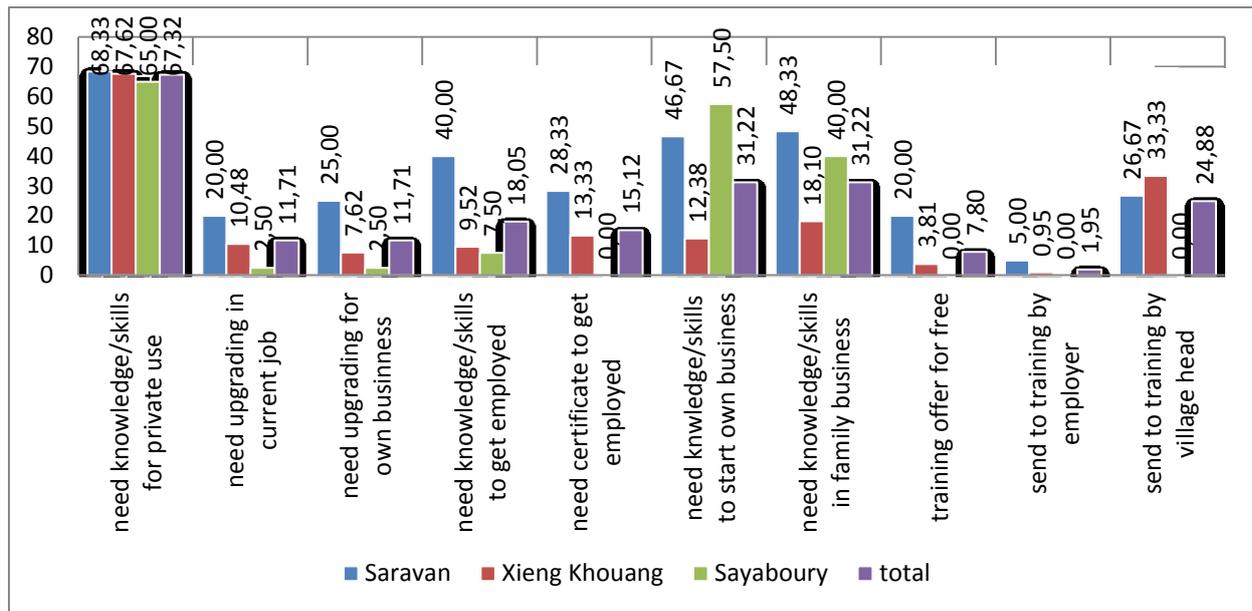
On the other hand the percentage of participants stating creation of an own business or improvement of a family business as one reason to join the course also ranks high (31.2% each), being higher among men than among women. More than one third of male participants stated their aim to get employed as one reason to learn, which is significantly higher than in women. Joining the training course just because it was offered for free plays only a small role whereas the advice from the village head to attend the training ranks at almost 25% relatively high (higher in men with 30.8%).

Figure 13: Reasons for participation by gender (percent)



Looking into provincial characteristics (Figure 14) it becomes obvious that the need for knowledge/skills for private use is in all three provinces on a similarly high level. On the other hand business orientation seems in Saravan highest. In Saravan the biggest share of participants need the knowledge/skill to get employed (40.0%). Saravan ranks also first for application of the new skills in family businesses. In Sayaboury the wish to use the training result for setting up an own business is strongest (57.5%). In general business orientation seems lowest in Xieng Khouang.

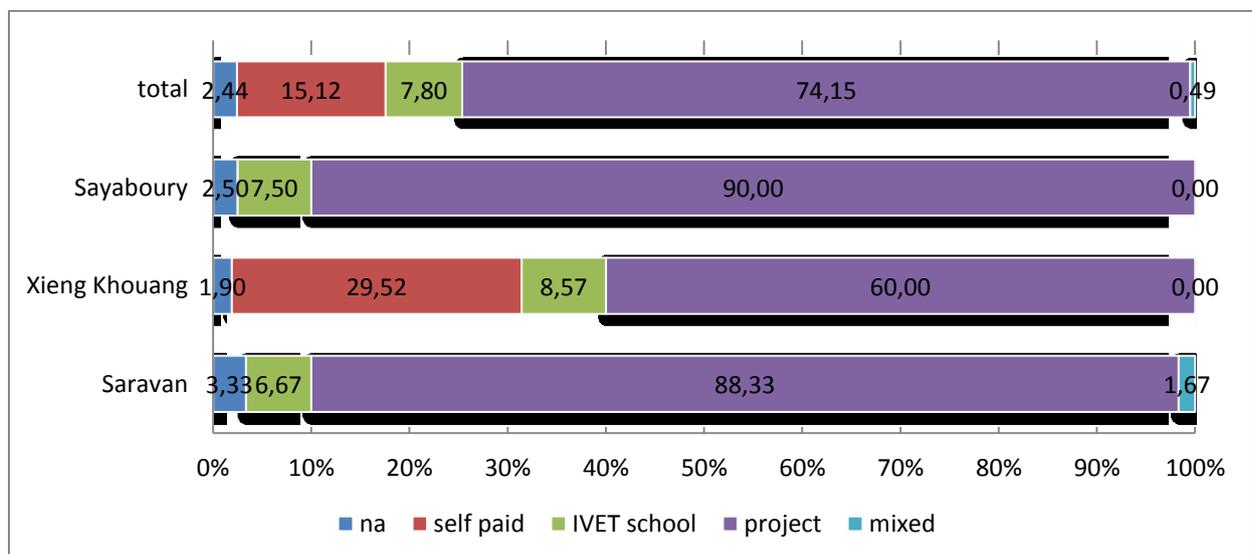
Figure 14: Reasons for training by province (percent)



### Payment for training

The participants were also asked who financed the training (Figure 15). Three quarters of the participants stated that their training was paid by development projects. This corresponds with the fact that 76% of interviewees participated in GIZ/dvvi-supported training courses. The second largest source for financing the training was payment by participants accounting for 15.1%. However it has to be mentioned that only at IVET school Xieng Khouang participants paid on their own – 29.5%. Financing non-formal courses out of the school budget totalled for 2.5% and was highest in Saravan (3.3%).

Figure 15: Payment for training by province (percent)

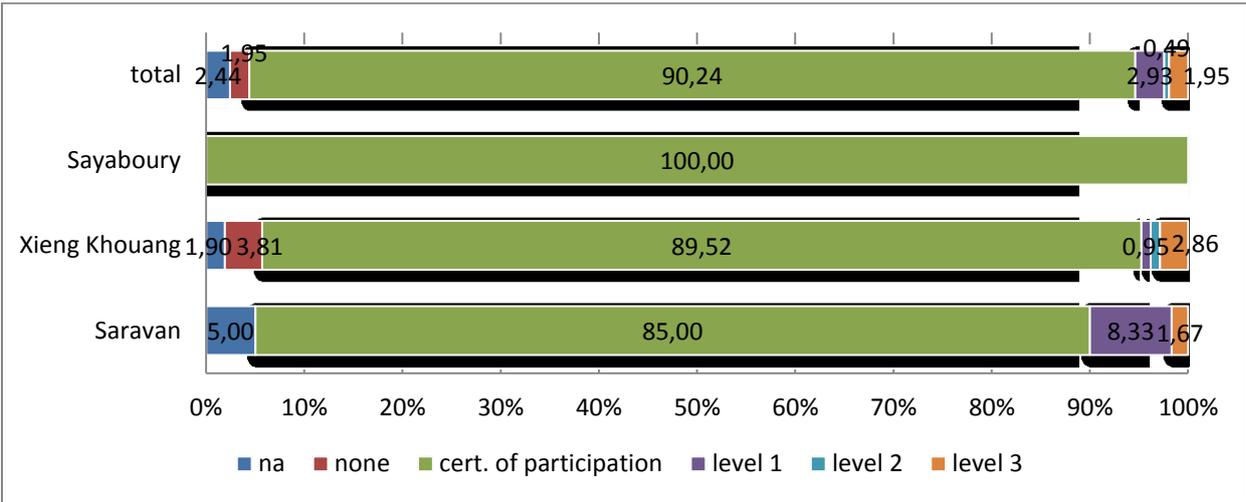


**Certification**

Even only a relatively small percentage of participants (15.1%) gave the need for a certificate as reason to join the training the study also asked what kind of certificate the participants got after finishing the course.

This matter is handled almost in a uniform manner in all schools as a total of 90.2% received certificates of participation. Most consequently this was handled in Sayaboury handing out 100% certificates of participation. Certificates level 1 were reportedly handed out especially in Saravan (8.3% of participants in that province) whereas participants got level 3 certificates in Xieng Khouang (2.9%) and Saravan (1.7%). However a cross check of data showed that most of former participants who stated that they had received level 1 or 2 certificates participated in training course where other participants received certificates of attendance only. Here a misunderstanding may have occurred.

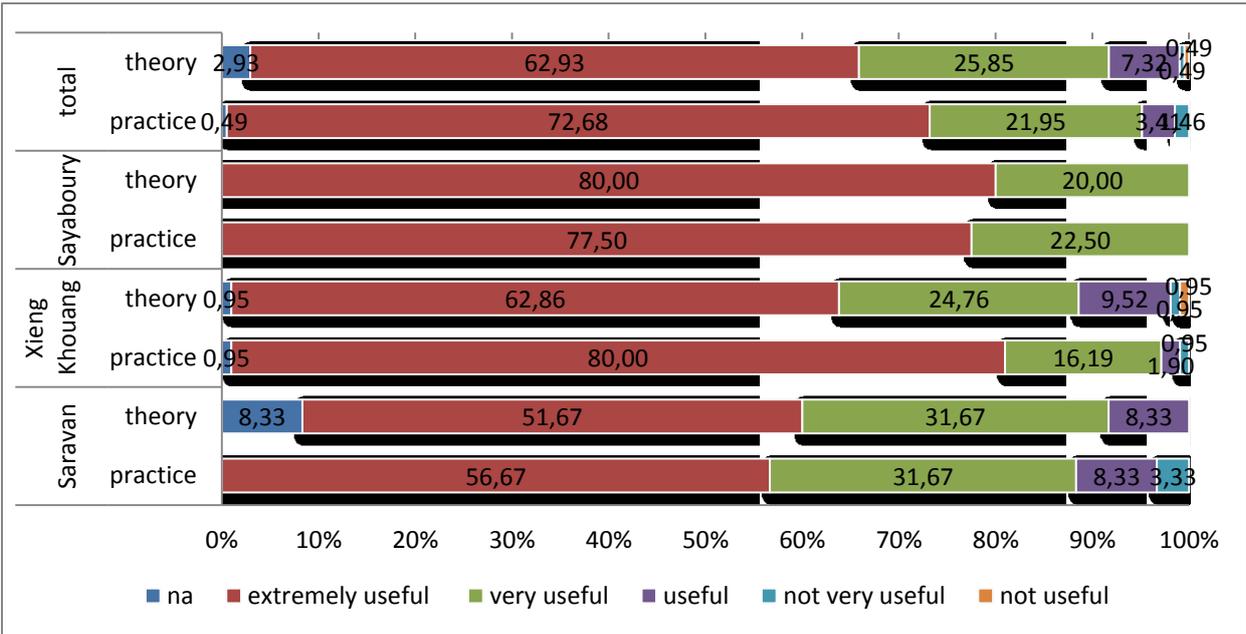
**Figure 16: Certificates by province (percent)**



**Participants satisfaction**

Participants were also asked to evaluate the training separately for practical skills and theoretical knowledge provided at a 5-step-scale from extremely useful to useless. The rating given by participants was very high with 72.7% ‘extremely useful’ for practical training and 62.9% ‘extremely useful’ for theory classes. Rating as ‘not useful’ or ‘not very useful’ were singular cases. Looking at provincial differences Saravan was less positive (56.7% and 51.7% ‘extremely useful’ respectively) than the other provinces. Xieng Khouang showed the biggest difference in evaluation of practical and theory training (17.3 percent points in favour of practice) and Sayaboury even reversed the trend by rating theory classes slightly better than practice (2.5 percent points more ‘extremely useful’ for theory; see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Evaluation of training by province (percent)



The final question opened opportunities to former participants for suggestions and wishes in relation to the non-formal training. 108 out of 205 interviewees used this opportunity. Their open answers could be summarised into 10 groups ranked in the following table by frequency.

Table 9: Suggestions by frequency

rank	suggestion	frequ.	share
1	no suggestion	97	47,32
2	No investment capital/suggest to project to provide	34	16,58
3	Time for training too short	34	16,58
4	Need training in tailoring	21	10,24
5	Would like to have additional training	6	2,93
6	Would like to have better trainers	4	1,95
7	Would like to learn about organic fertilizer	4	1,95
8	Suggest that the project provides sufficient equipment	2	0,98
9	Would like to have more fun activities during training	1	0,49
10	Would like to get additional knowledge about mushroom growing	1	0,49
11	Like to get more in depth	1	0,49

This means that a total of 68 former participants would like to have longer, more detailed or additional training. This shows the general high interest in training. The specific request for training in tailoring can be related to the high impact on income for those who participated in tailoring courses. On the other hand 9 out of 21 persons proposing more training in tailoring actually already participated in tailoring courses.

This suggestion and the proposal to get more in depth training hint to need in continuous training in the same field of occupation. This seems most plausible in tailoring where specific courses can concentrate on different tasks like shirts, skirts, trousers and so on impossible to be trained in just one or two weeks. So here the need for a modular approach emerges automatically.

34 former participants would like to get additional support in form of investment capital. From these suggestions it becomes not clear whether the former participants are interested in loans or in grant aid only however this issue could be tackled in cooperation with village banks and microfinance schemes.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The decision of GIZ to undertake this specific assessment about former participants in non-formal vocational training provides an important insight into the current situation and challenges in this part of vocational training. It provides valuable information for the further consolidation of IVET and DCT especially as both forms of TVET are defined as important parts of vocational education and training in Lao PDR by the recently adopted Law on VET. The regular repetition of this study could provide necessary information helpful to solve upcoming problems in a focused and timely manner.

Following the fundamental policy of the “Education for All”<sup>10</sup> and the adapted key principles of an inclusive and market oriented vocational training system by “guaranteeing access to vocational training for all”<sup>11</sup> integration of formal and non-formal training in IVET institutions, should provide vocational education and training to large target groups laying the foundations for income relevant employed or independent work and thereby substantially contributing to improved livelihoods and sustainable poverty eradication. Has the traditional formal TVET focused on successful graduates from general education, in recent time more and more concentrating to provide vocational training for graduates from upper secondary education (see also GIZ’s tracer study 2013<sup>12</sup>), so IVET should focus opportunities for vocational training also for the majority of young people leaving or dropping out from general education without meeting the preconditions to enter formal TVET. Therefore non-formal TVET should represent an integral part of the training offer of the respective IVET schools, often situated in remote areas without any other training opportunities. This task of IVET schools has been widely supported by GIZ/dvvi which was found to be the biggest and regular supporter of non-formal training in the selected schools. Existing information suggests that this conclusion can be applied to all IVET schools in Lao PDR.

This study is looking especially into non-formal vocational training within the IVET approach in selected IVET schools and provides evidence that this emerging task is so

---

<sup>10</sup> Compare MoES/UNESCO Education Reform Policy and Education for All (EFA) in Lao PDR

<sup>11</sup> Compare GIZ/MoES: IVET Reference framework

<sup>12</sup> Tracer Study Vocational Education and Training in Lao PDR, Final Report 2013

far only fulfilled partially. The following facts show the generally positive approach to and implementation of non-formal training at IVET institutions:

1. The selected IVET schools are offering non-formal training and are able and willing to organise such courses according to the needs of the target groups in a flexible manner. Initiated by development projects or local companies training has been organised increasingly in villages and in FoT requested by the initiators.
2. Support of GIZ/dvvi is at current stage crucial for more or less regular offer of non-formal vocational training courses at IVET schools. Compared to the GIZ/dvvi approach support from other sources seems rather sporadic.
3. Entering non-formal training is obviously triggered by considerations to improve livelihood rather than enter employment after finishing the training. The objective using the training in order to get employed was mentioned by about 20% of participants. Starting an own business or working in the family business ranked higher in the original reasons to join the training (at 31% each – see [Figure 13](#)). Results after training further validate these expectations as literally none of the interviewees got employed after training. Results of this study provide strong evidence that non-formal training in its current set-up is rather facilitating improved livelihoods through individual or family based economic activity than by opening employment opportunities. This is also connected to the selection of fields of training which in fact are less oriented towards skills required for employment in factories or large farms.
4. The non-formal training itself is judged by the participants very high. It was rated by the majority of participants in both areas theory and practice as “extremely helpful”.
5. From a pedagogical and from a general development angle the fact that by non-formal training persons who by what reason ever dropped out of education were brought back into the realm of organised training can't be overestimated. It lays the foundation for further skills upgrading or even re-entering formal education in a situation where the lack of qualified workforce is seen by potential investors as one of the biggest obstacles to successful investment.
6. Participation in non-formal courses also lead to an increase of income among the participants, even this indicator shows mixed results (see [Figure 6](#)).
7. The share of girls and women in non-formal training is very high which is also related to the FoT offered by the respective IVET schools (e.g. agricultural activities such as chicken raising, tailoring or food processing/cooking traditionally looked at as women's domains). The share of women is also positively impacted by the fact that training has been implemented in target villages as leaving from home and related household tasks for a number of days is for women in traditional families more complicated than for men.

8. The ethnic composition differs between provinces and seems not related to the shares of ethnic groups in the three provinces. However the survey also shows that the ethnic groups can be easily addressed by a respective selection of target villages. Also in this regard the concept of mobile or on the spot delivery of non-formal training demonstrates its advantages.

On the other hand the results of the survey also show a number of shortcomings and challenges:

1. Non-formal VET is not yet fully integrated into the normal planning cycle and institutional management of IVET schools shown by the fact that literally no course had been financed by MoES budget. Reporting about non-formal courses to MoES seems not being included into the normal reporting routines (see also GIZ tracer study 2013). This actually prevents the complete implementation of the IVET approach which stated that half of the IVET schools capacities should be reserved to non-formal VET. In the current situation the provision of any non-formal training depends on additional initiatives and financial support from development projects and companies.

The management of the IVET schools is much more concerned about formal VET and manages the school like a normal TVET institution regarding non-formal VET as an ad-hoc add-on to their formal training offers. Some directors state as their development goal to upgrade the school as soon as possible into a technical college which is not in line with the basic idea of the IVET-concept and the inclusion policy of MoES. This may partially being explained by information gathered outside this study that despite the fact that IVET as school concept has been piloted in Lao PDR in 2003 and introduced by setting up IVET schools in the northern part of Laos a proper dissemination of the IVET reference framework and respective training of management staff of IVET schools did not take place in a permanent manner. Not being formulated as a particular point in this study, information gathered give reason to conclude that the school development committees established in the IVET schools in Northern Laos at the time of start of operation discontinued their work. This may also explain the limited influence of local businesses on training in general and on non-formal training in particular.

2. The existing non-formal training does not fully focus on the target groups aimed at by the IVET approach. The original idea of IVET was to create opportunities for VET for those groups not fulfilling the requirement to enter formal VET. The findings of this study show that the majority of participants (>58%) actually possess of the required general education level to enter formal VET. As the general capacity of non-formal courses is limited this means that fewer people from the target groups actually have access to the training. This concerns the basic policy of IVET and especially the implementation of the inclusive education strategy formulating as a target group the educationally disadvantaged groups such as:

- girls and young women,
  - ethnic groups,
  - people with disability,
  - people with socio-economic vulnerabilities and especially the increasing rate of school drop outs in remote areas.
3. The high share of girls/women is a very positive fact but may also prevent from focusing on other disadvantaged groups such as ethnic groups, people with disability and people with socio-economic vulnerabilities. This may apply especially to the IVET school Xieng Khouang and to a lesser extent to Sayaboury both reporting a relatively low percentage of participants in the lowest income bracket.
  4. Also not being a separate part of this study, the question of permeability may be of some concern as well. The majority of participants received certificates of participation (attendance). Whether those certificates are recognised as part of an education career or contain a certain number of credit points on the way to vocational training certificates level 1 and 2 (to enter level 3) was not detected during the interviews, judging by existing regulation they would not qualify as the training was shorter than 3 months. However the current situation in organising non-formal courses (mostly supported by development projects on rather narrow topics) suggests that current non-formal courses are implemented at a stand-alone basis. Permeability would require a close relationship of trained subjects with the occupational standards and curricula of formal VET.

## 5. Recommendations

The finding and conclusions presented in this paper allow developing a number of recommendations for action at different levels. Thereby the most important level is the central level at MoES, especially DTVE (and in a broader sense other stakeholders as for example MoLSW), as decisions and directives provided by MoES/DTVE may influence the implementation of non-formal VET nationwide. Most of the following recommendations can be implemented within the framework of Lao-German development cooperation as they directly contribute to the implementation of ongoing cooperation projects in the field of TVET. Recommendations to GIZ in most cases require also close cooperation with MoES/DTVE or other stakeholders and are therefore not separated.<sup>13</sup>

1. Produce a compilation of all documents related to the IVET concept, especially the IVET framework and all legal acts related to IVET. All documents shall be checked for their consistency with the Law on Vocational Education and Training and proposed for an update if necessary. At least one cross-institutional IVET-appreciation workshop with high rankings from MoE and MoLSW and all

---

<sup>13</sup> Special attention is required by the newly launched Lao-German-Swiss supported VELA project, especially within the implementation activities of component 1 “Strengthening the vocational education system” and 3 “Training to disadvantaged population groups”.

provinces, should be organized soon by Lao-German-Swiss founded VELA project to explain IVET concept and approach and the high potentials and expectations of the newly launched VELA project especially the foreseen instrument of Inclusion and Access Fund (IAF).

2. The legal framework and administrative regulations and procedures shall be instructed to IVET schools and their implementation shall become part of the reporting routines of all IVET schools. Therefore a special training for managing personnel of PESS and IVET schools should be organised very soon in close cooperation with GIZ/SDC (SDC) and VEDI (VEDI). Development workers of GIZ attached to IVET schools should as well get a comprehensive training about the IVET concept with special focus on the non-formal part as this will become much more important within the framework of the new VELA project.
3. Based on this non-formal VET courses shall be included into the yearly planning of each IVET schools and budgeted accordingly. Thereby the topics/content of training shall be discussed with the local business community in order to ensure training at the work place and highest possibly employment impact. In this regard local school development committees shall play a crucial role. They should be established/reanimated in all IVET schools and become an indispensable tool for planning, management and administration of non-formal VET.
4. Once included into yearly plans of IVET schools respective information campaigns focusing on target groups should be foreseen using local media (local TV, radio, loudspeaker systems as well as administration).
5. Topics and curricula in non-formal training shall be deriving from occupational standards and recognized formal curricula as modularized packages whenever possible with the aim to allow for higher permeability into formal VET. Recognition and certification of such partly acquired professional competence for potential users and participants, leading to achieve certificate I and II (systems of recognition of prior learning and credit point systems), must be urgently developed in cooperation between DTVE and DNFE and endorsed by MoE and applied by PESS and all TVET/IVET-institutions. The existing NQF has to be further developed to meet the needs and challenges for inclusive and integrated vocational education and training.
6. Teachers and trainers of IVET schools should be trained more intensive and target related. The existing Multiplier Training System (MTS) provides a perfect basis to that and should therefore be upgraded by experts and delivered under the guidance of VEDI, which have the mandate and all potentials to guarantee appropriate access to the targets.<sup>14</sup>
7. GIZ/dvvi and VELA should continue supporting non-formal courses at IVET schools. Implementing Inclusion & Access Fund (IAF) as foreseen in VELA

---

<sup>14</sup> Please compare: LGDC Offer to GIZ,: How to upgrade MTS to the higher targets of work place based and inclusive VET, Vientiane, 2013

should be managed criteria based and transparent for users (target groups as described above) and providers (MoE, PESS, IVET-institutes, GIZ, SDC). However these efforts should be better embedded in the framework of general support in the field of TVET in order to further improve impact and sustainability in inclusive vocational education.

8. With the aim to further strengthen the focus on disadvantaged groups the so far successful approach of mobile training, i.e. organising short term courses in target villages, should be expanded as it allows for higher participation to women and specific focus on ethnic groups. The use of teachers/trainers with knowledge of local languages would be an advantage.
9. Based on activities under point 3 and 4 IVET schools should approach development partners and local companies with the aim to open up opportunities for additional funding of non-formal courses especially for disadvantaged target groups. This will also help to temporarily ease the budget constraints in MoES.
10. In order to broaden the offer of non-formal courses quickly a compilation of all existing short-courses including those under MoES' non-formal education department and MoLSW's (MoLSW) skills development offers and of the pool of available trainers should be produced and distributed to all IVET schools.