



Outcomes of Panel Discussion #2: Human Capital Development

By: H.E. Samlane PHANKHAVONG (Ph.D)
Vice Minister of Education and Sports

Round Table Implementation Meeting 2024
14 November 2024

Content



- 1. Most Pressing Challenges**
- 2. Recommendations and Ways forwards**

For:

- ❖ Financing**
- ❖ Education**
- ❖ Health**
- ❖ Social Protection**

Most Pressing Challenges



Financing

- 1) Low and inadequate Government funding for the social sectors (education, health and social protection) is preventing progress in achieving outcomes – and therefore preventing greater human capital development.
- 2) Limited investment in health including critical malnutrition issues due to limited fiscal space for public health financing and inefficient coordination of developing partners' support. A lack of tracking and tagging for nutrition budgeting and expenditure.
- 3) Insufficient government budget to support key social protection programs as well as human resources.

Most Pressing Challenges (Cont.)



Education

- 1) Substantial and continuing declines in student enrolment, and high drop-out, largely as a result of declining demand for education
- 2) Persistently low student learning outcomes. Primary education students are on average 3-4 grades behind expected levels of learning and this has a knock on effect at secondary and further levels
- 3) Disparities in access and learning, with increasing inequalities
- 4) Increasing shortages of teachers, and low competency of teachers
- 5) Limited relevance of education and training to the labour market



Most Pressing Challenges (Cont.)

Health

- 1) **Double burden of malnutrition:** high rate of under/malnutrition among women and children in rural and hard-to-reach areas, and growing concerns over unhealthy diets leading to non-communicable diseases
- 2) Limited evidence/data to identify target groups (age, gender, geographic areas) and monitor the implementation progress to deliver essential health services, including nutrition support, to those in need, especially among the most vulnerable populations.
- 3) Inadequate collaboration beyond the health sector (different ministries/sectors, public-private) for cross-cutting challenges such as nutrition.

Most Pressing Challenges (Cont.)



Social protection

- 1) Economic growth has not generated benefits for all segments of society equally, therefore Income inequality has risen over the years;
- 2) Coverage of Social Security is approximately 11,18%; therefore, Informal workers, who constitute a large portion of the country's workforce, are exposed and especially vulnerable;
- 3) Coordination across three pillars under national social protection strategy is challenging in terms of data, budget allocation and target areas and groups.
- 4) Insufficient government budget/human resources in implementation of social protection schemes effectively.

Recommendations and Ways Forward



Financing

- 1) In addition to the government's budget, large-scale national investment projects and /or private sector projects that have impacts on environment and society, should also contribute financially to support the development of human resources, as well as addressing cultural and social issues;
- 2) More cooperation should be sought, as well as grants and low-interest or interest-free loans, to further develop cultural and social sectors;
- 3) Increase investment in the social sectors in line with the government's commitment and laws;
- 4) Diversify funding sources including taxes and maximize the use of financial monitoring systems for transparent reporting and efficient budget management;
- 5) Investing in social protection schemes to prevent families from slipping back into poverty due to unexpected economic shocks, climate-related crises, or health emergencies.

Recommendations and Ways Forward (Cont.)



Education

- 1) Resilience in the approach to Human Capital Development through outreach and preparedness
- 2) Prioritise provision for 5 year old children, including implementation of alternative approaches (e.g. community based school readiness, 10-week pre-school). Address the needs for community and family support and empowerment
- 3) Invest in Lao language support to non-Lao-Tai children in the early grades of primary education
- 4) Expand scholarships for disadvantaged students to increase access
- 5) Increasing the teacher quota is critical, alongside development of more flexible and efficient systems for contracting and deploying teachers

Recommendations and Ways Forward (Cont.)



- 6) Invest in the development and implementation of innovative and cost-effective approaches to teacher development;
- 7) Assess the feasibility of establishing two streams in upper secondary education, natural sciences and social sciences
- 8) Finalise and operationalise the TVET Development Fund to mobilise additional resources for TVET quality improvement
- 9) Specific pre-service teacher training for secondary level education to enable teachers to teach several subjects
- 10) Reassign surplus secondary school teachers to primary level and provide them with targeted training on the primary level curriculum and its content

Recommendations and Ways Forward (Cont.)



Health

- 1) Prioritize the reduction of malnutrition in the 10th HSDP and ensure equitable access to essential health services, including nutrition and non-communicable disease services, especially for women, children and vulnerable groups.
- 2) Strategically invest limited resources to implement the National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN) effectively by improving its efficiency and accountability through reducing programmatic/financial fragmentation and duplication across nutrition, immunization and maternal and child health programs in the MOH and Development partners.
- 3) Strengthen monitoring and evaluation system to identify and address gaps in investment and implementation of the HSDP and NPAN.
- 4) Accelerate a Multi-Sectoral and Public-Private approach across different ministries and public-private to improve nutrition and health outcomes as a priority in human capital development.

Recommendations and Ways Forward (Cont.)



Social Protection

- 1) Expanding social security coverage to informal workers;
- 2) Creating fiscal space is critical to ensure that essential services are accessible to all, particularly in rural areas.
- 3) Governance and data systems play a crucial role in the effective delivery of social protection services;
- 4) Mainstreaming Social Protection into the National Development Agenda;
- 5) Partnership with donors, international organizations, development partners to foster the implementation of national social protection strategy
- 6) Streamline governance and data systems, and strengthen coordination among different ministries and agencies to ensure a more integrated approach

Recommendations and Ways Forward (Cont.)



Development Assistance

- 1) Development partners cannot, nor should not be expected to, fill large financing gaps - sustainability is needed
- 2) DPs should provide added value in the form of policy advice, innovation, data and management systems, and capacity development
- 3) DPs can assist the Government with feasibility and sustainability analyses that focus on the Government's strategic priorities and how they can best be achieved and maintained
- 4) DPs can assist in strengthening a results-based approach and evidence-based policy making with a focus on achieving strategic results and outcomes in the social sectors
- 5) Often DPs support too many multiple initiatives – sometimes at the request of Government. 'Doing too much', thus draining capacity and diluting implementation. **Less can be more.**



Thank You