

**Evaluating the level of community participation in increasing
children's attendance in quality primary education in Lao PDR**

**A case study of BEQUAL NGO Consortium project in Xaybouathong district,
Khammouane province**

By

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Declaration

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This Thesis entitled: “Evaluating the level of community participation in increasing children’s attendance in quality primary education in Lao PDR – A case study of BEQUAL NGO Consortium project in Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province” is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of International Communication.

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- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
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ABSTRACT

Recognition of the importance of education to national development has led to the implementation of many educational development programmes, which aim at improving access to education for all children in Lao PDR. One programme that focuses on primary education initiatives is Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR [BEQUAL]. This research evaluated the level of community participation in the BEQUAL NGO Consortium [BNC] project in increasing children's attendance in quality primary education. Using a qualitative research approach (including non-participant observation, communicative ecology mapping, in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documentation), it analysed how effective the community participation is, in the implementation of the BNC project. The interviews and focus groups involved 13 participants from three different groups engaged with by the BNC: local primary school teachers, parents of school children and BNC staff. Findings revealed that all community members highly appreciated the project intervention, although the level of their participation was low. Positive change in children's learning, parents' awareness about the importance of education to their child's life and understanding of how parenting skills affects their child's education were claimed to be key benefits experienced by members of the community. The findings also revealed that in general community members have passive attitudes towards the development project, in the sense that they wait for assistance from donors. To address this issue, it is recommended that BNC could increase the level of participation by empowering all primary stakeholders (community leaders, teachers, village volunteers and parents) to participate in the process of problem identification, problem solving, and decision making. It is also recommended that BNC could consider teachers, parents and village volunteers as agents of change for their own community as evidence indicates that these three groups can play a significant role in addressing the level of school attendance in their community.

KEY WORDS: development communication/communication for development; ethnic groups/ethnic minority; community participation; community development; disadvantaged children; non-Lao speakers; quality primary education.

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Abbreviations

ADP	: Area Development Programme
AEC	: ASEAN Economic Community
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asia Nations
BQUAL	: Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR
BNC	: BEQUAL NGO Consortium
C4D	: Communication for Development
DESB	: District Education and Sports Bureau
ECCE	: Early Childhood Education and Care
ECD	: Early Childhood Development
ESDP	: Education Sector Development Plan
GoL	: Government of Lao PDR
IACD	: International Association for Community Development
IEP	: Individual Education Plan
IMC	: Implementation Management Committee
MDGs	: Millennium Development Goals
MoU	: Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	: Non-Government Organisation
NSDP	: National Socio-economic Development Plan
PESD	: Provincial Education and Sports Department
PESS	: Provincial Education and Sports Service
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
SIM	: Subscriber Identity Module
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	: United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
VEDC	: Village Education Development Committee
WTO	: World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Development communication applied to community development over the years is based on two dominant paradigms, namely the modernisation paradigm (top-down approach) and the alternative paradigm (bottom-up approach) (Melkote, 2003). Community development, which has a central focus on the improvement of community life, is embedded in governments' policies and programmes. It requires an involvement from both private and public sectors at all levels (Lee, Kim & Phillips, 2015). The way a community is engaged by development agents has varied over the years; one way is to increase levels of trust and confidence in the projects or organisations by encouraging people to participate in the process of decision making and bringing together those who share common goals or interests (Sanoff, 2000). This chapter introduces essential background information, especially about development policy in the context of Lao People Democratic Republic [Lao PDR] and about the particular project that has been used as a case study for this research, in order to establish a starting point for exploration, discussion and evaluation. This chapter provides research aims and objectives, research questions, operational definitions, as well as the outline of this thesis.

1.1 Development policy in the context of Lao PDR

During the past two decades, Lao PDR has experienced rapid economic growth and made good progress in social sectors (World Bank, 2018b; UNDP, 2019). According to the World Bank (2018b), the average growth of GDP in the past 10 years was 7.8 %, with an income per capita of US\$2,270 in 2017. The poverty rate decreased from 46 % in 1992 to 23 % in 2015, enabling the country to achieve the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty. In 2015, the adult literacy rate was 84.7 % (UNDP, 2019). Lao PDR became eligible to exit the status of being a least developed country [LDC] in 2018, and is projected to formally graduate from this status by 2024 (UNDP, 2019). This progress can be regarded as a result of the country implementing a series of five-year national socio-economic development plans and becoming a member of international organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asia Nations [ASEAN] in 1997, the World Trade Organisation [WTO] in 2013, and the ASEAN Economic Community [AEC] in 2015 (UNDP, 2019).

Education has been placed at the centre of the government of Lao PDR [GoL]'s development policy. The GoL has made efforts to foster Lao PDR as a knowledgeable and skilled society through the improvement of education. In 2011, the development of the education sector focused on the expansion of equitable access, improvement of quality and relevance and strengthening of planning and management under the GoL's five-year educational plan (2011-2015), called the Education Sector Development Plan [ESDP]. The plan was used in line with the seventh five-year National Socio-economic Development Plan [NSDP] to achieve the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] on universal primary education and gender equality (Ministry of Education and Sports & UNICEF, 2015).

Education remains a priority for government development and has been supported by both national and international development partners. As in previous development phases, a subsequent ESDP (2016-2020), which draws on the achievements and challenges of the ESDP (2011-2015), has been used in conjunction with the eighth five-year NSDP (2016-2020) as a guideline to reach the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] by 2030. BEQUAL [Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR], which has been used as a case study for this research, is a striking example of a development programme that has been launched as a result of cooperation between international development partners and the GoL in implementing the plans.

1.2 The aim and objectives

By exploring the case study mentioned above, this research aims to evaluate the level of community participation in the BEQUAL Non-Government Organisation Consortium [BNC] project to increase children's attendance in quality, basic education in Lao PDR. This evaluation explores how the project engages with the community, the level of participation from both sides, the changes being made within the community and the involvement of media and other communication tools. It also identifies some of the opportunities and challenges for promoting an increased attendance of children in quality primary education. The exploration provides a robust understanding of the community communication structure and how communication is established between community and development agents to facilitate educational improvement. To gauge the scope of the study, a research question and a series of five sub-questions were developed, and are presented in the following section.

1.2.1 Research questions

This evaluative research was conducted based on the following key question:

How effective is the community participation in the BNC project in increasing children's attendance in quality basic education?

In order to help enrich the answer of the above question, the following sub-questions were developed.

1. *How does the BNC project engage in the community to promote an increase in participation of children in primary education?*
2. *What challenges does the project face in engaging with the target community?*
3. *What challenges does the target community face in supporting children's access to quality primary education?*
4. *How is the Khammouane provincial media involved in the project implementation?*
5. *How are the needs of disadvantaged children, especially girls and those with disabilities, addressed?*

1.2.2 Operational definitions

- **Effectiveness** refers to the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). In this research context, effectiveness is regarded as a desirable outcome of a development project which is engaged within a community. The outcome includes a positive impact on the community's capacity to cope with future problems and on the success of the project (Figueroa, Rani & Lewis, 2002).
- **Ethnic community** can be defined as a group of people residing in the same geographical area, or a group of individuals which share the same interests (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).
- **Participation** can be defined as the status of ordinary people being involved in the process of development, contributing to change (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). It refers to the local community's involvement in the process of decision-making where participants are brought together and articulated their views (Dutta, 2011).

- **Participatory communication** “is a planned activity, based on one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates the dialogue among different stakeholders around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization, and which supports or accompanies this initiative” (Bessette, 2004, p. 9).
- **Community participation** can be regarded as the active involvement of varied community groups along with other stakeholders such as researchers, development agents, and decision makers (Bessette, 2004).
- **Quality education** refers to the integration of:
 - “Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and community;
 - Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
 - Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
 - Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparity;
 - Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society” (UNICEF, 2000, p. 4).
- **Non-Lao speakers** as a term represents those who come from minority groups of Lao PDR, and whose native language is not the instructional language of schooling.
- **Disadvantaged children** refers to pupils/students who are unable to learn at school because there is a lack of family, social or financial support (Research and Development [RAND], 2018).

1.3 Background of the BEQUAL NGO Consortium [BNC] project

BEQUAL [Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR] is one of the educational programmes designed to improve the quality of education which is currently being implemented. It is a 10-year programme led by the Lao and Australian governments, with support from the European Union, UNICEF, the World Food Program and a consortium of Non-Government Organizations [NGOs]. Its goal is to ensure that more girls and boys, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve good quality basic education and acquire other essential life skills (BEQUAL, n.d.-a).

The BNC, including Save the Children, Plan International, ChildFund and World Vision, is in charge of implementing activities designed to support participation in, and increased access to, primary school. With the support of school children's parents and communities, the BNC project aims to ensure that all children, especially girls, non-Lao speakers, and disabled children enroll in and complete quality, primary education (World Vision Laos, 2017b). Across the country, BNC supports 171 schools in the 66 most educationally disadvantaged districts by training remote-village teachers, developing Lao language teaching methods and improving learning environments (BEQUAL, n.d.-a; World Vision Laos, 2017b). World Vision, which is used as a case study for this evaluative research, is responsible for implementing activities that increase the participation of disadvantaged children in basic education in the Khammouane province (World Vision Laos, 2017b).

Founded in 1950, World Vision is an international Christian relief, advocacy and development organization working to support children and communities to rise out of poverty and fight against injustice (World Vision International, 2017; World Vision Laos, 2017a). The organisation is committed to working with everyone, regardless of race, religion, gender or ethnicity. Today, World Vision operates in nearly 100 countries, serving about 100 million people (World Vision Laos, 2017a).

Initially launched in Lao PDR in 1968, World Vision provided relief assistance for displaced people during the Indo-China War. The organisation closed when Lao PDR gained its independence in 1975 and did not open again until 1991. By restarting development work, World Vision aims to improve the lives of vulnerable Lao children. It takes efforts to bring about change for children, particularly those who live in rural communities with a focus on

child protection, health, education and food security (World Vision Laos, 2017a) In 2004, World Vision started implementing Area Development Programmes [ADPs] in five provinces, including Khammouane, aimed at improving the well-being of children affected by poverty. Alongside with ADP implementation, in 2013 the organisation launched a national strategy designed to support and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]. Its goals are as the following:

“Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger [MDG 1]

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education [MDG 2]

Goal 3: Reduce child mortality [MDG 4]

Goal 4: Children report increased well-being (World Vision Global Goal)” (World Vision Laos, 2017a, para. 5).

According to BNC staff, after World Vision accomplished its mission of implementing the ADP in Khammouane province for a period of five years (2011-2016), it continued working in the province to implement the BNC project launched in early 2017 (BS1, personal communication, August 23rd, 2018). One of the communities engaged by this BNC project was chosen to be the unit of analysis for this evaluative research.

1.4 The researched community profile

This evaluative research was conducted in Phonsa-ard village, Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province. Phonsa-ard was chosen as a result of the discussion and an agreement among BNC, the District Education and Sports Bureau [DESB], and the researcher. In addition to its status of being a rural community, Phonsa-ard was selected because of its unique context which reflects all aspects of educationally disadvantaged children identified by BNC; that is, children from ethnic minority groups, girls and children with disabilities.

Located in the middle Lao PDR, Khammouane province shares borders with Bolikhamxai province to the north, Vietnam to the east, Savannakhet province to the south and Thailand to the west (Mekong Institute, 2016). It has a land area of 16,315 km² with a population of 392,100 people, which is 6.1% of the nation’s total population (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2015; Mekong Institute, 2016). The majority of people earn their income from agricultural activities such as rice and vegetable growing, livestock raising (pigs and cows) and fishing. In terms of economic segments, the percentage of people working in the agriculture sector is

approximately 72% of the total population in Khammouane province, while only 5% work in industry and service makes up about 22.8%. The poverty average in Khammouane province (31.4%) is higher than that of the national average of 27.6% (Mekong Institute, 2016).



Figure 1: Map of Khammouane province with Xaybouathong district indicated by black arrow

Source: Author adapted from Mekong Institute, 2016.

Xaybouathong district has a population of 26,100 people, accounting for 6% of the provincial population. This is almost three times smaller than the population of Khammouane's capital, Thakhek. Xaybouathong consists of 40 villages, 25 of which are accessible by dirt roads and 33 of which have electricity. Across the district, there are only six health centers and one market. Piped water is not available (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2015). Out of 54 primary schools, six are incomplete (Xaybouathong District Education and Sports Bureau [DESB], 2018).

Phonsa-ard village comprises of 64 households, with a population of 323 people. The majority of residents are Lao (Lowland Lao) and Makong (Midland Lao). The village has one primary school (see Photo 1). The secondary school, health service centre (see Photo 2) and market (see Photo 3) are located in the centre of Xaybouathong town, approximately 7 kms away from the village.



Photo 2: The health service centre located 7 km away from the community.

Source: Author.



Photo 3: The market located 7 km away from the community.

Source: Author.

1.5 Thesis structure

Chapter one introduces essential background information for the study including the development policies of Lao PDR, the background of the BNC project, and the research community profile. To provide insights into the development communication field, which is a core focus of this study, relevant theories and published research are explored in chapter two. Chapter three introduces the applied research design and methods including qualitative methodology and ethnographic research techniques – in-depth semi-structured interview, non-participant observation, communicative ecology mapping and focus group. Findings on the understanding of the community context (social and communicative ecology mapping), the level of understanding of community members about the project, the benefits of the project intervention, the challenges facing participation and the involvement of local media are presented in chapter four. These finding themes are then integrated with related research and a literature review and discussed in chapter five in order to contribute towards answering the research questions. The conclusion, chapter six, also provides recommendations which might be useful for future projects aimed at improving the life of the community.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature on communication approaches applied in development programmes over the years. It begins with an overview of theories in the areas of communication for development, with a particular focus on the participatory communication approach. It then explores how communication for development and social change is conceptualised within two dominant communication paradigms: the development-based approach (top-down approach of interventions), and the Marxist approach (bottom-up approach of interventions). The literature review also presents some communication strategies and tools to take into consideration when designing and planning to engage communities. Following this, it explores how the indicators of the integrated model of communication for social change are used to assess the process and outcomes of development initiatives that apply to the participatory communication approach. The connection between education and development is then discussed within the context of community development. The chapter ends with a presentation of education and development issues in the context of Lao PDR, which have led to interventions by both internal and external development agencies.

2.1 Development communication

Communication for development theories can be categorised into two groups, namely the modernisation dominant paradigm and the alternative paradigm. The former is comprised of communication and modernisation theory, the diffusion of innovations theory, the social marketing approach, and the entertainment-education model. The latter consists of participation action research theory and the empowerment approach (Melkote, 2003).

In the modernisation dominant paradigm, theories have the premise that the underlying problems of development of third world countries are due to a lack of necessary knowledge of the culture of modern world. The traditional cultures of developing countries are perceived as a major factor preventing modern innovations. To resolve such development problems, there is a need for information diffusion and the adoption of modern cultures and innovations from first world nations (Waisbord, 2001).

In response to this suggested solution, mass media were presented as communication channels and powerful tools for the dissemination of information and therefore perceived as

successful manipulators of the audience's opinions, attitudes and, ultimately, their behaviour. However, the modernisation paradigm emerging in the 1970s was seriously criticised for the incorrect assumptions that it made about the development process in developing countries, which resulted in an even larger gap between the developed and undeveloped world. It had been designed to promote a top-down, paternalistic and ethnocentric view of development. The paradigm was also criticised for its ignorance of structural problems and having a negative view of culture. The conventional view of the modernization paradigm indicates that if third world nations want to modernise, traditional culture has to be destroyed. This notion is no longer overtly supported, although the processes of modernisation still functions by absorbing or destroying indigenous cultures (Melkote, 2003; Waisbord, 2001).

In the alternative paradigm, the theoretical premise is based on multiple factors of development. Servaes (2008) states:

In contrast with the more economical- and politically-oriented approach in traditional perspectives on modernization and development, the central idea in alternative, more culturally-oriented versions of multiplicity and sustainable development is that there is no universal development model which leads to sustainability at all levels of society and the world, that development is an integral, multidimensional and dialogic process that can differ from society to society, community to community, context to context (p. 205).

Because of the difference of each context and case, none of the development models has been identified as satisfactory. This means that each community and society must work to identify relative problems and find their own solutions in order to pursue sustainable development (Servaes, 2008).

According to Huesca (2003), a shift of paradigm from modernisation to alternative was mainly inspired by the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970). In Freire's work, the modernisation model is viewed as analogous to traditional pedagogy in which students are seen as objects, implying that knowledge should be transferred to them in a linear style. In response to this oppressive traditional pedagogy, Freire introduced a more liberal approach which has a central focus on dialogic praxis. This model enables teachers and students, as well as development agents and clients to close the distance between them and build up co-

learning relationships. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) point out that this notion has led to the emergence of influential participatory communication theories which stress the importance of stakeholder engagement in the process of development and determination of the outcome. They note that the outcome of development should not be imposed and pre-established by external actors.

In relation to a framework of methodological communication, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) classify communication modes into two categories, namely monologic communication and dialogic communication. The former consists of one-way approaches of communication such as media campaigns and information dissemination. The latter is two-way communication in which all parties involved have the opportunities for discussion and interaction with one another, in order to find solutions to problems, rather than just conveying information. The following table shows the main characteristics of these two modes of communication:

	MONOLOGIC (one-way communication)		DIALOGIC (two-way communication)	
	Communication to Inform	Communication to Persuade	Communication to Explore	Communication to Empower
Main purpose	Raise awareness, increase knowledge	Promote attitude and behavior change	Assess, probe and analyze issues, prevent conflicts	Build capacities, involve stakeholders
Main model of reference	One-way (monologic)	One-way (monologic)	Two-way (dialogic)	Two-way (dialogic)
Preferred methods and media	Predominant use of mass media	Predominant use of media	Heavy use of interpersonal method	Use of dialogue to promote participation

Figure 3: The main features of communication modes.

Source: Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009.

2.1.1 Participatory communication approach

Participatory approaches of development communication, categorised into the alternative paradigm, were developed following the criticism of the modernisation paradigm. Gaining wide support in the 1980s and 1990s, participatory communication approaches have evolved and become a rich discipline, which contrasts with the previous models and theories of development (Huesca, 2003). Unlike the modernisation paradigm which centres on economic growth and technological advancement regardless of human and environmental factors, participatory approaches take into account the fulfillment of basic needs, equitable progress and interpersonal relationships. More importantly, the environment and indigenous cultures

are valued (Melkote, 2003). According to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), the initial emphasis of participatory communication was on two-way communication rather than on one-way communication in which all processes of development need to be done collectively. Most recently, the focus of this participatory approach has been on the change in social structures.

In any process of decision-making for development, participatory communication is viewed as an important approach. This is because, as Serveas and Malikhao (2008) argues, the participatory model not only stresses the importance of local cultural identity, but also participation and democratisation at all levels. They point out that as this model focuses on reciprocity of collaboration; it means members from all levels need to listen, respect one another's ideas, and build up mutual trust in order to take development action. The ability of individuals with regard to self-development and the development of their communities is valued. Referring to this as all people's right to speak, Freire states:

This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone – nor can he say it for another in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words (Freire, 1983, as cited in Servaes & Malikhao, 2008, p. 169).

In participatory approaches, communication is viewed as an empowerment tool rather than as the use of mass media to simply send messages. According to Bessette (2004), the term participatory development communication refers to the use of communication to support the participation of community members in a development initiative. To provide more insight, Bessette states:

Participatory development communication is a planned activity, based on one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates the dialogue among different stakeholders around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization, and which supports or accompanies this initiative (Bessette, 2004, p. 9).

Conceptualising approaches to development communication, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009)

introduce nine parameters which can be used as a conceptual checklist to develop a participatory communication strategy. These parameters, set out in the table below, can be discussed in relation to stages of a participatory development project and to levels of participation. A clear conception of different communication approaches used in development over the years can be seen emerging through the discussion of these nine parameters.

Development Communication	The Diffusion Model (one-way/monologic communication)	The Life Skills Model	The Participatory Model (two-way/dialogic communication)
Definition of the problem	Lack of information	Lack of information and skills	Lack of stakeholders' engagement
Notion of culture	Culture as obstacle	Culture as ally	Culture as "way of life"
Notion of catalyst	External change agent	External catalyst in partnership with the community	Joint partnership (external and internal)
Notion of education	Banking pedagogy	Life skills, didactics	Liberating pedagogy
Notion of groups of references	Passive: targets audiences	Active: targets trainee groups	Active: targets citizen/stakeholders
How you are communicating	Messages to persuade	Messages and experiences	Social issues engaged, problem-posing, dialogue
Main notion of change	Individual behavior	Individual behavior, social norms, experiential learning	Individual and social behavior, social norms, power relations
Expected outcome	Change of individual behavior, numerical results	Change of individual behavior, increased skills	Articulation of political and social processes, sustainable change, collective action
Duration of activity	Short- and mid-term	Short- and mid-term	Mid- and long-term

Figure 4: The Conceptual Approach to Development Communication.

Source: Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009.

In the context of Lao PDR, it would be possible to use the life skills model as a conceptual checklist for its national development plan. For example, regarding parameter 1 (Definition of the problem), the development issue is associated with a lack of information and skills. As highlighted in the eighth National Social-economic Development Plan [NSDP], one of the government's challenges for development is in the quality of human resources. This area of development is low because "labour lacks necessary skills and human resource development is not linked to the demand for social-economic development, especially in the area of SMEs under the condition of the ASEAN Economic Integration and accession to WTO

membership”(Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2016, p. 75). With respect to parameter 2 (Notion of culture), culture is highly valued while promoting social and economic development. Ensuring that economic growth occurs in harmony with socio-cultural protection is one of the key government directives for national development (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2016).

2.1.2 Communication for development and social change

According to Dutta (Dutta, 2011), social change is conceptualised within two opposing views; a development-based view and a structural transformation-based view. The former’s goal for change is to modernise societies based on a top-down approach of intervention. In this regard, the identified problems in third world nations are seen as issues of underdevelopment. Therefore, interventions in these nations are perceived as solutions to such problems, and the focus of the interventions is on changing behaviour and lifestyle in order to achieve the development goal. However, the aim of the latter (a bottom-up approach of interventions) is to change social and political structures that perpetuate social inequalities. This perspective places an emphasis on the inequality of materials resulting from economic and political structures and presents successful change as structural transformations brought about in existing structures.

Communication for development [C4D] refers to communication as a tool, which is used to enhance participation and social change through the application of various communication methods and channels such as interpersonal communication (public meetings or hearings, field visits, workshop, seminars, etc.), community media (printed and electronic materials, radio and television), and modern information technologies (social media like Facebook, Twitter, etc.). In project management, C4D is aimed at facilitating dialogue with partners, authorities and beneficiaries in order to create a sense of local ownership of projects and ensure that the impact is sustainable (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC, 2016).

Through dialogue enhancement, C4D is viewed as an approach comprised of the following key features: C4D is based on dialogue; C4D supports social change; C4D is sensitive to local culture; C4D has four major tasks that include 1) facilitating access to information and knowledge, 2) promoting participation, 3) giving a voice to the excluded and, 4) influencing public policies. The following table provides a summary of each characteristic of C4D.

Communication for development...		
...is based on dialogue	...supports social change	...is sensitive to local culture
Dialogue is perceived as key to information assimilation. Creating spaces where everyone can articulate their voice and exchange information freely is the fundamental task of C4D.	C4D aims to foster development as to bring about change. It is not the end product, but rather the process designed to enhance social participation, promote local ownership of a programme and, ultimately, its impact.	C4D always needs to be designed and planned on local context basis as different countries have different cultures. This difference may even exist within a single nation. Knowing how information is conveyed within a particular community, for example, is key to success.

Table 1: C4D elements

Source: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC, 2016.

Having a clear goal is the key to success. When implementing C4D each time, we need to keep asking ourselves the following question in order to set clear aims: What do we want to achieve? The following figure illustrates the different objectives of C4D:



Figure 5: The objectives of C4D.

Source: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC, 2016.

It is important to select appropriate tools to communicate with an audience because different contexts require distinct approaches. However, a communication tool is just the starting point of the process of communication. Effective communication must include the application of the communication tool, the audience's reaction as well as a space for a dialogue. The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (2016) categorises communication tools into three groups as shown in the table below:

Interpersonal communication	Print and electronic media	New media/multimedia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public hearings • Peer visits, e.g. Farmer to farmer • Product fairs • Public contest • Cultural events • Thematic weeks • Creation of collective murals • Street theater • Photo exhibitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed materials • Posters/banners • Community radio • Television/videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • Digital storytelling • Social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. • Text message (SMS) • Email • Podcasts/multimedia broadcasts • Blogs • Educational online games

Table 2: Communication tools

Source: Adapted from Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC, 2016, p. 20

2.1.3 Community participation

The way a community is engaged with by development agents has varied over the years. According to Sanoff (2000), development programmes in the past four decades have not emphasised community members' participation in key decision making, budget control and risk taking. Community intervention today, however, perceives community members as vital groups which take part in design and implementation. This trend is well reflected by the term *community driven* (Kingsley, McNeely & Gibson, 1997, as cited in Sanoff, 2000) instead of *community participation*. In relation to social capital building, Sanoff (2000) argues that "resident driven initiatives have a greater chance of success because residents are more aware of the realities of their own environments than outside professionals. They have a sense of what will work and what will not work" (p. 7).

Community participation involves an exchange of information, conflict resolution, and improvement of design and planning. Becker claims:

Participation reduces the feeling of anonymity and communicates to the user a greater degree of concern on the part of the management of administration. With it, residents are actively involved in the development process, there will be a better maintained physical environment, greater public spirit, more user satisfaction and significant financial changes (Becker, 1977, as cited in Sanoff, 2000, p. 8).

Participation is classified into two levels: pseudo-participation and genuine participation. The former is categorised as domestication, involving transforming, manipulation and therapy which involves consultation and placation. The latter is categorised as cooperation, referring to the delegation of power and partnership, and citizen control, which is regarded as empowerment. Pseudo-participation occurs when people participate in a project that is controlled by administrators. Here, 'participation level' refers to a situation in which people are present with the purpose of doing what they are told to do. However, participation in a project in which people are empowered to take control of the action is genuine participation (Deshler & Socks, 1985, as cited in Sanoff, 2000).

Looking at different interpretations, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) classify participation into four categories, each of which refers to different levels of participation: 1) passive participation, 2) participation by consultation, 3) participation by collaboration and, 4) empowerment participation. Passive participation refers to the lowest level of participation in which primary stakeholders participate in a project by being informed about particular issues. Not much feedback, or even no feedback at all, exists in the assessment process and the assessment methods used are very simple; such as head counting. Participation by consultation is a process in which stakeholders answer questions posed by external experts or researchers. Input from stakeholders is unlimited, but at the final stage of analysis all the decision making power rests with outside professionals who are not obliged to incorporate the input of stakeholders. Participation by collaboration is where groups of primary stakeholders are formed to discuss and analyse the predetermined objectives established by the project. Because objectives are already determined, this participation level does not usually contribute to changes in an ideal way. However, it requires active involvement in the process of decision making about how to achieve it. This involvement incorporates an element of horizontal communication, as well as capacity building among the stakeholders

involved. Empowerment participation refers to the level where primary stakeholders have the capability and willingness to initiate the process and participate in the analytical stage. This results in joint decision making when establishing objectives and finding ways to achieve them. Here, dialogic communication allows critical issues to be identified and analysed, and an exchange of experiences and knowledge results in solutions. With empowerment participation primary stakeholders have control on and ownership of the process.

According to Sanoff (2000), there are several purposes of community participation. The first purpose is to include people in the processes of decision making and, consequently, increase levels of trust and confidence in projects or organizations. Another main purpose of community participation is to give people a voice when designing and making decisions, in order to get the decisions, plans, and delivery of services improved. Community participation also has the purpose of promoting a sense of community by bringing those who share common goals together.

In order to ensure that community participation is encouraged in the design process, effective tools need to be provided. The following statements, made by Sanoff (2000), provide five principles for community participation:

1). There is no best solution to a design problem. Each problem has a number of solutions. Solutions to design and planning problems are traditionally based on two sets of criteria:

(a). Fact – the empirical data concerning material strengths, economics, building codes, and so forth; and

(b). Attitudes – interpretation of the facts, the state of the art in any particular area, traditional and customary approaches, and valued judgments. Thus, design and planning decisions are by nature biased and depend on the value of decision maker(s).

2). Expert decisions are not necessarily better than lay decisions. Given the fact with which to make decisions, users can examine the available alternatives and choose among them. The designer or planner involved in such an approach should be considered a participant who is expected to identify possible alternatives and discuss consequences of various alternatives and to state an

opinion – not to decide among them – just as users state opinions and contribute their expertise.

3). A design or planning task can be made transparent. Alternatives considered by professionals are frameworks in their own minds and can be brought to the surface for the users to discuss. After understanding the components of design decisions and exploring alternatives, the users in effect can generate their own plan rather than react to one provided for them. The product is more likely to succeed because it is more responsive to the need of the people who will use it.

4). All individuals and interest groups should come together in an open forum. In this way people can openly express their opinions, make necessary compromises, and arrive at decisions that are acceptable to all concerned.

5). The process is continuous and ever changing. The product is not the end of the process. It must be managed, reevaluated, and adapted to changing needs. Those most directly involved with the product, the users, are best able to assume those tasks (p. 13-14).

In short, community participation requires the engagement of stakeholders from all levels in the design and implementation processes because all inputs are important. Since each context is unique, it requires a distinct approach which is collectively developed by all parties involved. By its nature, community participation is a changing process in which the outcome needs to be managed and reflected by beneficiaries in order to make it responsive to their changing needs.

2.2 Participatory monitoring and evaluation of communication for social change

The monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives that apply participatory development communication, are important factors in the determination of development progress. To provide measurable indicators to evaluate the process and outcomes of initiatives' involvement in community development, Figueroa et al. (2002) introduce an integrated model of communication for social change, which emphasises community dialogue and collective action. This model (see *Figure 6*) provides practitioners with practical

indicators, including catalyst, community dialogue, collective action and societal impact, to assess the process and outcome(s) of communication for social change.

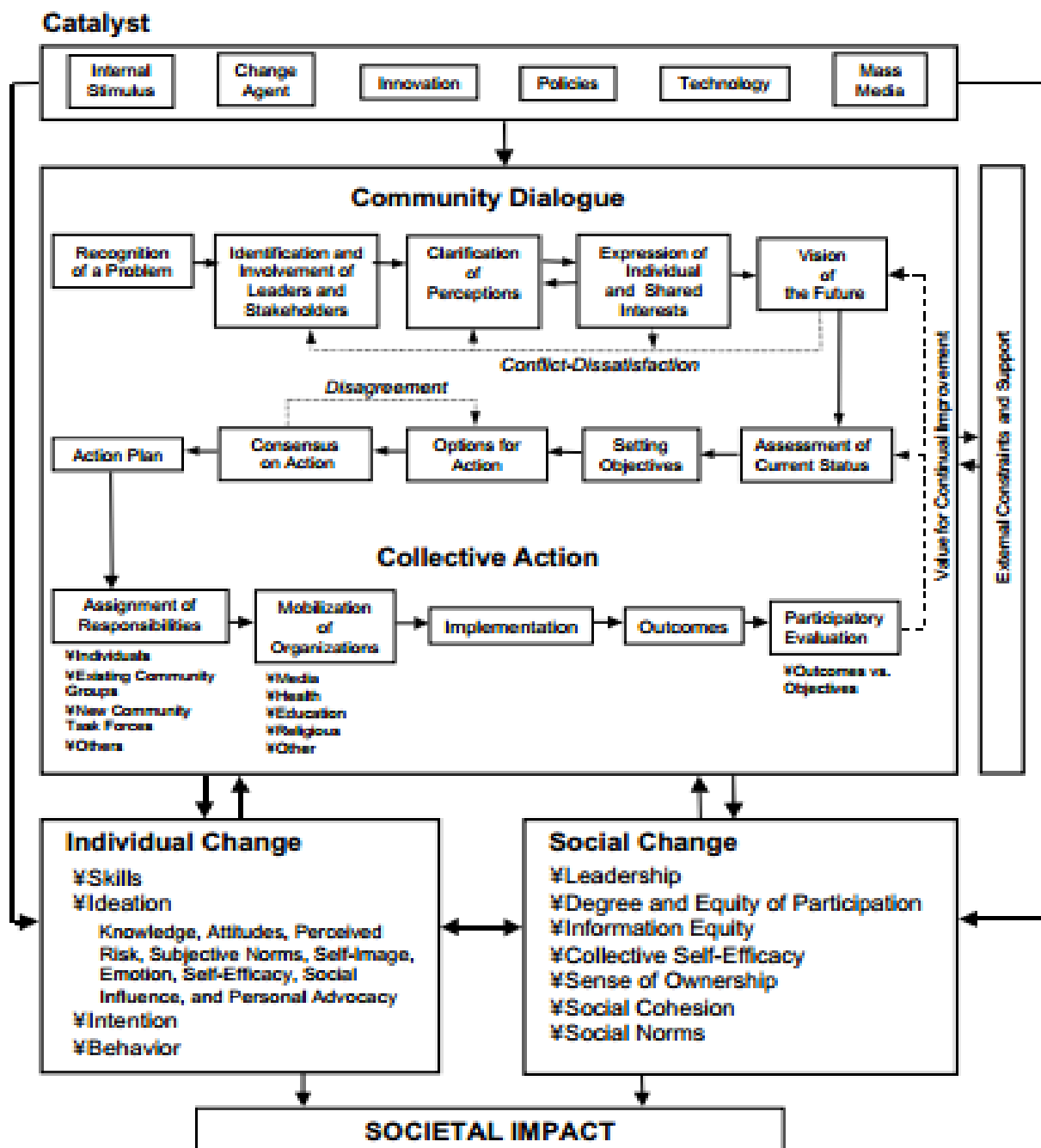


Figure 6: Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change.

Source: Figueroa et al., 2002.

Looking at the overall trend, it is noted that the catalyst acts as a 'starter' for the community development because it drives the initial community dialogue in relation to common problems or interests in the community (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani, & Lewis, 2002). For instance,

a change agent, one of the potential catalysts of change that most NGOs use for community intervention, might visit a community to initiate a dialogue about basic needs or common problems. They do this with the purpose of inducing the community to take some form of collective action which will contribute to solutions for the needs of the community. The following figure illustrates the process of change among the indicators, beginning with the catalyst.

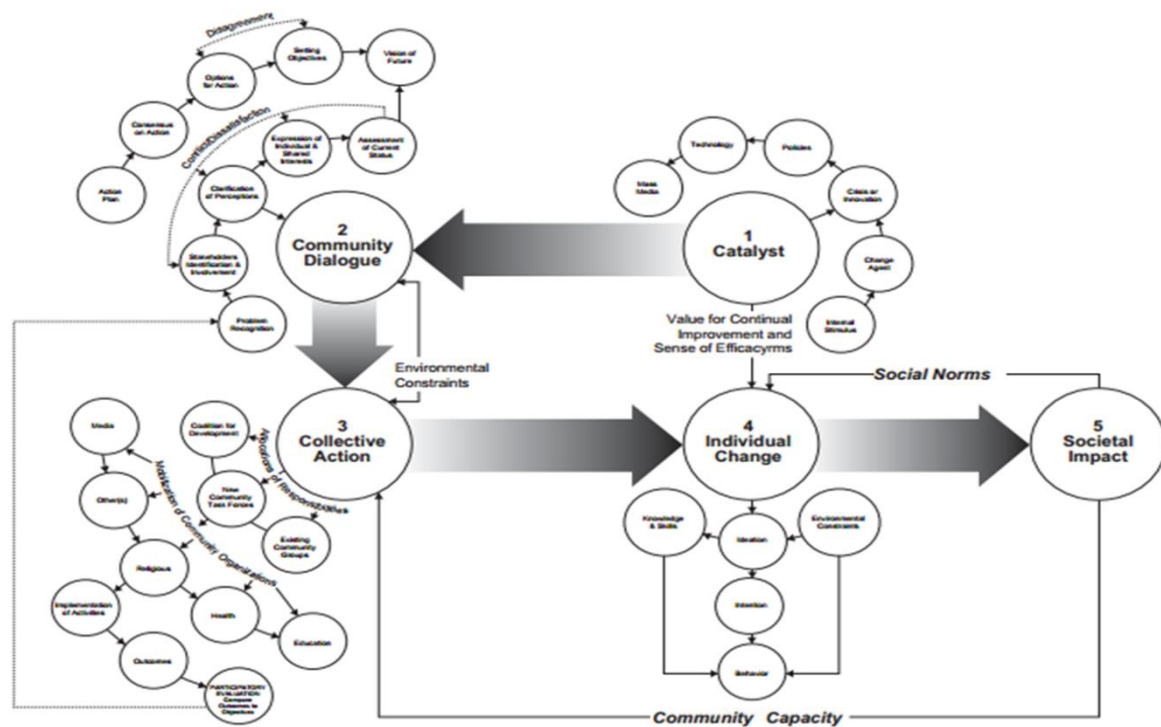


Figure 7: The adaptive integrated model of communication for social change

Source: Figueroa et al., 2002, as cited in Doan-Bao, 2017.

Media, another potential catalyst of change, can play a role by conveying messages that promote the adoption of behaviour of other successful communities which are pursuing common goals through collective work. According to Internews' global theory of change (2018b), access to information is extremely important, especially at a high-quality, local level, because limited information or lack of information reduces freedom of expression and informed choices. The solutions for this problem can be reached by working on four components; 1) access, 2) content, 3) inclusion and, 4) engagement (*see figure 5*).

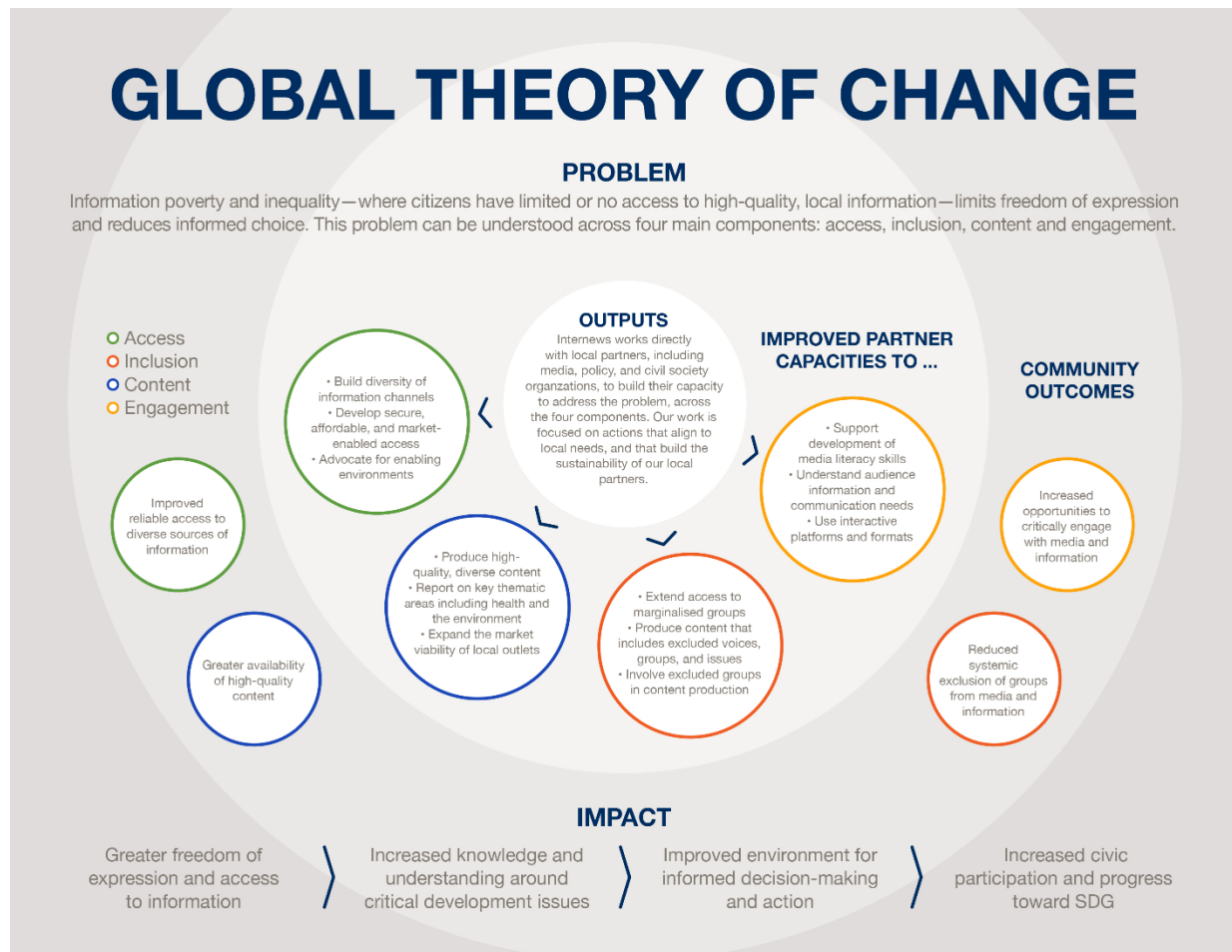


Figure 8: Global Theory of Change

Source: Internews, 2018b

Regarding the Mapping Information Ecosystems to Support Resilience (see figure 9 below), Internews (2018b) points out that the map is designed to enable decision makers to understand how information has an impact on a community. It states that the important elements of responsive and effective actions, which are designed to enable a community to understand and adapt to change, are an ability to understand community information needs and how the information is used, regardless of the community's population, location, issue, or integration of these. The map helps decision makers to understand how community members communicate and use information, and identifies gaps and obstacles they may arise during practical intervention design. This will ensure that information is seen as a core element of the decision makers' efforts in supporting communities, and that information truly has an impact – community members receive information they need in a timely, actionable and trusted way – and, therefore, improves a community's ability to build resilience.

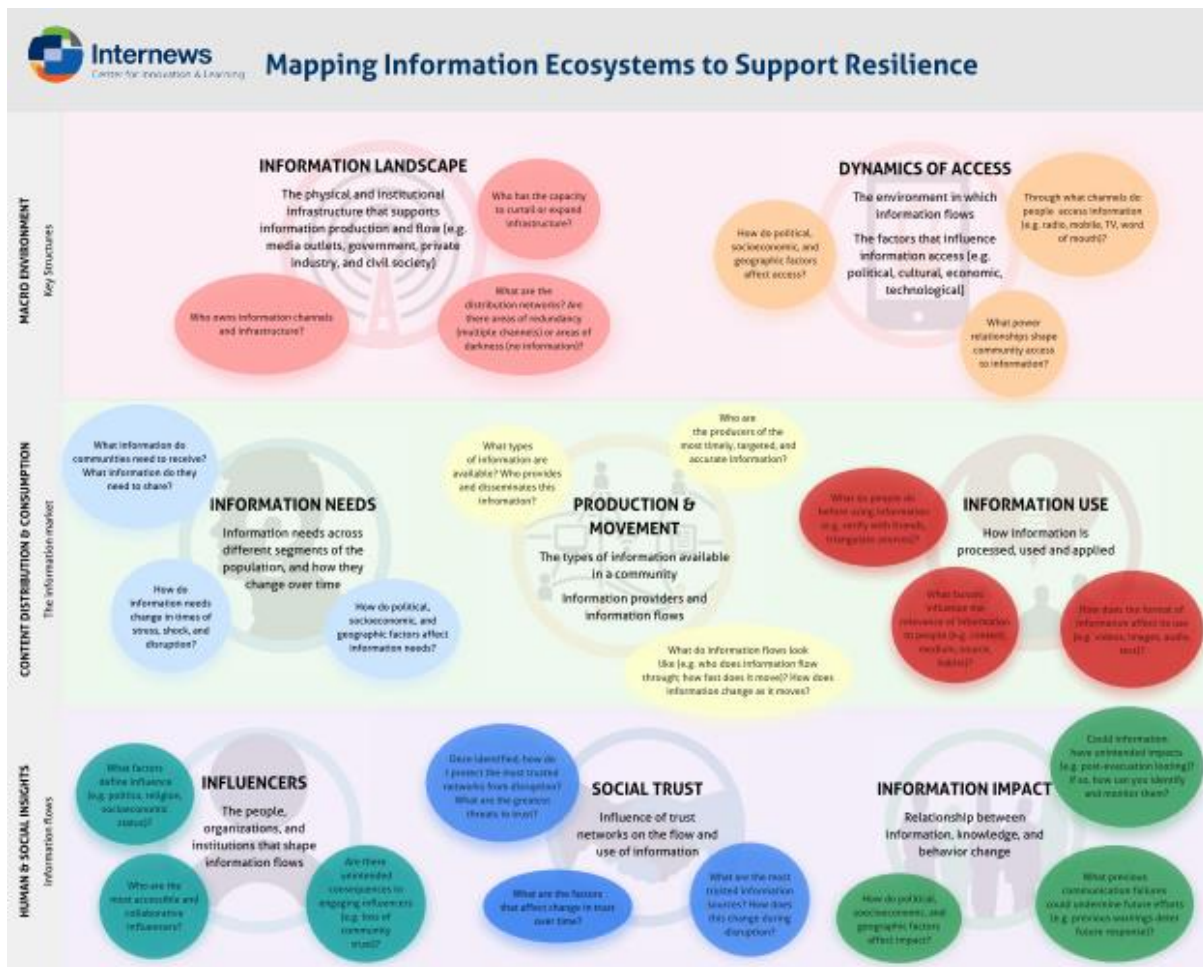


Figure 9: Mapping Information Ecosystems to Support Resilience

Source: Internews, 2018b

2.3 Community development

In the literature on community development, community development is defined as:

A *process*: developing and enhancing the ability to act collectively, and an *outcome*: (1) taking collective action and, (2) the result of that action for improvement in community in any or all realms: physical, environmental, cultural, social, political, economic, etc (Phillips & Pittman, 2009, p. 7).

Phillips and Pittman (2009) also identify five types of community capital that contribute to community development: 1) social capital or social capacity, 2) human capital, 3) physical capital, 4) financial capital and, 5) environmental capital. While acknowledging all forms of community capital, they claim that social capital is the ability of community members to effectively work together in terms of developing and sustaining strong relationships, solving

problems, making group decisions, planning and setting goals, and generally getting things done. They argue that “the more social capital a community has, the more likely it can adapt to and work around deficiencies in the other types of community capital” (p. 7).

Community development is either implicitly or explicitly embedded in governments’ policies, programs and approaches. It places value and a central focus on the improvement of people’s lives, and is seen as a practice where there is involvement from public and private sectors at many levels, ranging from local to national (Lee, Kim, & Phillips, 2015). To foster community development, the International Association for Community Development [IACD], whose mission is to support sustainable community development for social justice, prioritises the following agendas:

- Promote community development as a key method for addressing challenges, opportunities and priority issues in rural and urban areas locally, regionally and internationally.
- Facilitate quality practice exchange, education, training, research and publication in support of practitioners, educators, researchers, policy analysts, activists, other community workers and organisers.
- Engage practitioners, educators, researchers, policy analysts, activists, other community workers and organisers at a country and regional levels and thereby promote community-based planning and development work.
- Ensure the short, medium and longer term of sustainability of IACD (IACD, 2014 as cited in Lee et al., 2015, p.3).

2.3.1 Human rights

Human rights can be defined as:

Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination (United Nations, n.d.-b para. 1).

As specified in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right

to education, and primary education should be free and compulsory. Parents have the right to select the type of education for their children (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948). Nelson and Dorsey (2003) argue that the human rights declared by the United Nations [UN] in 1948 provide standardised benchmarks for the accountability of governments, NGOs, and corporations. With regards to the NGOs' development programmes, Nelson and Dorsey identify four major applications of human rights-based approaches:

- 1) *Human rights-based programme design*: Human rights can be taken into account when it comes to programme planning and design. Analysing the rights generates ideas and areas of focus that programmes can prioritise. An analysis of the rights that are not fulfilled, for example, helps identify service delivery gaps needed to be filled and ensure that resources provided are productive and accessible.
- 2) *Education about human rights*: Education on human rights can be integrated in programme services to enable all affected parties to realize the rights of citizens as well as the duties of governments.
- 3) *A right to participation*: Project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation can be carried out in a participatory way in which control and ownership of the project are shared and felt by affected people.
- 4) *Accountability*: The standards of human rights have significant implications for accountability in development. Human rights enable NGOs and citizens to hold international agencies and donors accountable to a set of standards (Nelson & Dorsey, 2003).

2.3.2 Gender equality

Gender equality is considered a basic human right and as an essential foundation of peace, prosperity and sustainability. Women and girls account for half of the world's population and therefore half of its potential so their full participation in the workforce could increase the rates of national growth (United Nations, n.d.-a). With regard to development, the World Bank (2012) points out that gender equality matters for two reasons.

Firstly, it matters in its own right, so in this respect, development is perceived as a process to expand freedoms to all people equally. Here, development is not only about reducing poverty but also about accessing justice, with the aim that there should be fewer gaps between men

and women. The evidence of this view can be witnessed in the international development community, as embodied in MDG 3 (currently presented in SDG 5), indicating that gender equality is a development goal in its own rights.

Secondly, gender equality matters as a tool for development because it can support economic productivity and improve the outcomes of other development areas in the following ways: 1) it removes barriers that bar women from having equal access to education, as well as economic opportunities, where they can provide huge gains in productivity, 2) it improves the relative and absolute status of women which feeds the outcomes of other development areas, and 3) it levels the playing field in which women have an equal opportunity to take part in social and political decisions and, therefore, leads to a better, more just, development path.

2.4 Education and development

According to the World Bank, education can be defined as “a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace and stability” (World Bank, 2018a, para. 1). Ranganath, Rao and As (2011) argue that education is viewed as a human right in itself and an essential means of realising other human rights. It acts as a primary vehicle which marginalised groups, including adults and children, can use to get out of poverty and fully participate in their community. The right to education links human rights to civil and political rights and combines the normally divided economic, social and cultural rights together. Ranganath et al. (2011) explain that the right to education is a civil and political right because it is the core realisation of freedoms and all human rights. In this respect, the right to education exemplifies interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognises that education deserves financial investment from all states. This is because the right to education plays an important role in empowering women, preventing children from exploitative labor and sexual exploitation, promoting democracy and human rights, protecting the environment, increasing incomes, as well as controlling population growth (Ranganath et al., 2011). Therefore, it could be suggested that education for all is vital for three reasons; “First, education is a right. Second,

education enhances the freedom of the individual. Third, education yields important development benefits” (Ranganath et al., p. 330).

2.4.1 Early childhood care and education

According to UNESCO (2018), early childhood can be regarded as the period between birth and eight years of age. It is a time of notable growth with peak brain development. Children at this stage are vastly influenced by the surrounding environment as well as the people who interact with them. In this respect, early childhood care and education [ECCE] helps prepare children for primary school and enables them to develop holistically in order to establish a solid and broad foundation for wellbeing and lifelong learning. ECCE plays a significant role in supporting disadvantaged children and combating inequalities existent in education. ECCE also arguably nurtures children to become capable, responsible and caring citizens. In this regard, ECCE is considered as “one of the best investments a country can make to promote human resource development, gender equality and social cohesion, and to reduce the costs for later remedial programmes” (UNESCO, 2018, para. 3).

2.4.2 Child development and education

As mentioned in the previous section, if children are educationally supported from an early age, they can become productive citizens that contribute to their country’s development. This indicates that it is important to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience early childhood education before progressing to the higher levels. McDevitt and Ormrod (2013) identify the three domains of child development and education as physical development, cognitive development and social-emotional development. They claim that although these three domains seem to be independent areas, they are, in fact, closely related. McDevitt and Ormrod illustrate this by explaining that an increase in the ability to see things from various points of view (which is cognitive development) enhances social skills (which is social-emotional development), and that brain growth (which is part of physical development) contributes to better planning.

A study by Grantham-McGregor et al. (2007), on the early development potential of young children in developing countries, reveals that the school progress of children is determined by two main factors; early social-emotional and cognitive development. Grantham-McGregor et al. (2007) illustrate this by referring to a case in Guatemala, in which pre-school cognitive

ability is used to predict the pupils' achievements scores during adolescence, and subsequent enrolment in secondary school. Their study also identifies stunting and poverty as the key indicators which detrimentally affects school progress for young children.

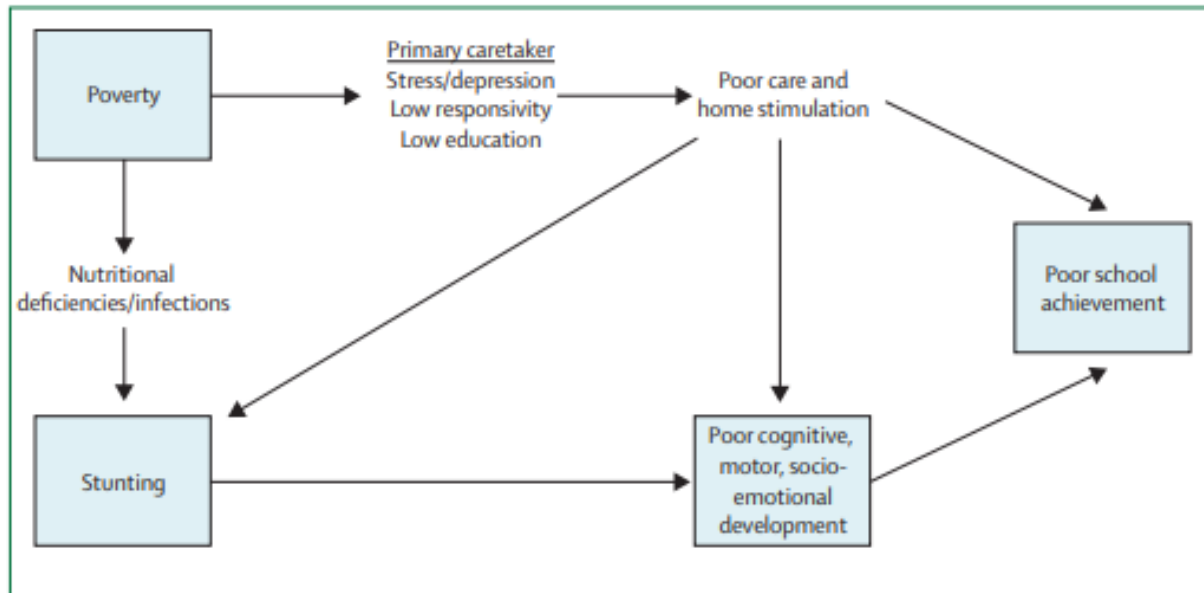


Figure 10: Hypothesised relations between poverty, stunting, child development, and school achievement.
Source: Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007.

Figure 10 indicates that poverty is associated with poor hygiene and sanitation, and inadequate food which results in malnutrition, infection, and stunting in children. Poverty is also associated with poor parental education, an increase in parental stress and inadequate home stimulation. These factors have a detrimental impact on child development and contribute to poor school achievement. An analysis of the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs theory by Gorman (2010) indicates that people focus primarily on their basic needs and put these ahead of other needs, including social ones. He points out that if education is perceived as basic needs, people will intensively focus on it.

2.5 Education in Laos

2.5.1 Background context

Laos was colonised for a long period of time, particularly in the era of French Indochina, which began in the 1800s. This had an enormous impact on Lao society, including upon education. Under French rule, the educational system was modeled on the French system, with instruction in French. Much of the colonial administration's energy was spent on educating a national elite group within Lao society, to take responsibility for the administration.

Therefore, education during this time period was not aimed at the entire population (Cooper, 2001, as cited in Berge, Chounlamany, Khounphilaphanh, & Silfver, 2017; Evans, 1998, as cited in Berge, Chounlamany, Khounphilaphanh, & Silfver, 2017).

Fox (2003) argues that Lao educational instruction was mostly based on the work of Buddhist monks and of French teachers. Education led by monks used the ancient Buddhist language of Pali and was mainly conducted in Buddhist pagodas where only boys and men were allowed to attend (Chagnon & Rumpf, 1982, as cited in Berge et al., 2017; Evan, 1998, as cited in Berge et al., 2017; Ngaosyvathn, 1995 as cited in Berge et al., 2017; Fox, 2003). Under the French, accessing education was very limited as schools were not set up for everyone. Only the elite could study in France for secondary school and tertiary qualifications. After becoming independent in 1975, the Lao government introduced Lao as the new school language and did not allow other mainstream languages, including Hmong and French, to be taught (Fox, 2003).

2.5.2 Gender roles and education

Attitudes towards the roles of men and women in society are the perception or ideology surrounding gender roles or sex role (Hochschild, 1989 as cited in Akotia & Anum, 2012). Williams and Best (1990) describe these attitudes as “one’s belief regarding the proper roles for men and women which may be characterised as existing along a continuum from tradition to modern” (as cited in Akotia & Anum, 2012, p. 5023).

Generally, women in Lao society have multiple roles and start working at an earlier age than men. These practices affect their well-being. The amount of time that women spend doing domestic work is four times higher than that of men; yet in terms of employment women are more likely to be excluded from formal sectors. Most Lao women are employed in elementary occupations and service sectors but in contrast, the majority of men work as civil servants, technicians, professionals, and in other sectors. The wage gap between men and women persists even though they make up equal proportions of the total working population (UNDP, 2018c).

Despite the narrowing gender equality gap in all levels of education in Laos, challenges still exist. There are two major determinants that drive gender inequality in education; firstly, household responsibilities and safety concerns mean girls are more likely to be kept at home,

particularly if there is a long distance between the family home and the secondary school. Secondly, many parents value a boy's education over a girl's education, particularly if the parents are financially disadvantaged, have limited education or no education themselves, or are influenced in their perceptions by socio-cultural traditions (UNDP, 2018c).

2.5.3 Ethnic groups and education

Ethnic groups in Laos are informally categorised into three main factions, namely Lao Loum, Lao Theung and Lao Sung (Berge et al., 2017). According to Chazee (1995, as cited in Inui 2015), the classification of the three groups is based on the topography of location of each group. Inui explains that Lao Loum (Lowland Lao) refers to those who live in lowland area; Lao Theung (Midland Lao) are those who live in the midland area; and Lao Sung (Highland Lao) refers to those who live in the highland area. Among the groups, Lao Loum has the largest numbers. The three main groups comprise 49 distinct ethnic groups, with more than 100 spoken languages (Lao Consensus, 2005, as cited in Berge et al., 2017; Pholsena, 2006, as cited in Berge et al., 2017).

In order to build a common national identity, the Lao government put considerable efforts into an educational expansion aimed at women's and ethnic minorities' participation (Ngaosyvathn, 1995, as cited in Berge, 2017; Pholsena, 2006, as cited in Berge et al., 2017). For instance, the Education for All – National Plan of Action [EFA-NPA, 2003-2005] is intended to develop educational activities. The EFA-NPA is aimed at equitability of access, quality improvement and relevance, and strength of education management for both formal and non-formal education across all levels (EFA 2015 Review Group and Secretariat Group, 2014).

Even though the government's emphasis is on the equality of all Lao citizens, in reality women and ethnic minorities are disadvantaged with regards to education. This is because, as Berge et al. (2017) argue, the language of instruction in the Lao education system is the Lao language which is the primary language of the majority group of Lao Loum. Berge et al. (2017) say this creates barriers for school children who are from minority groups because they have never spoken the instructional language prior to attending formal schooling. Tomasevski (2003) argues that this situation explicitly leads to an exclusion of a number of ethnic minority children from having access to schooling. Similarly, Inui (2015) contends that traditionally it is

the majority group of Lao Loum that has political and economic influence, and therefore has a better chance to access formal schooling than other ethnic groups. This issue is being addressed through the engagement of many development projects including BEQUAL Non-Government Organisation Consortium [BNC].

2.6 Development issues and challenges of inclusive and quality education in Lao PDR

Lao PDR is an ethnically diverse country, with a population of about 6.5 million people. Among 49 distinct ethnic groups, the Lao ethnicity is the largest group, accounting for more than a half of the nation's population. The second and third largest groups, each of which comprises about 10% of the population, are Khmou and Hmong (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011; Lao Statistics Bureau, 2015). The government of Lao [GOL] considers education as a priority for national development in order to help meet the twin goals: (i) exiting the Least Developed Country Status by 2020 and (ii) achieving Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] by 2015 (EFA 2015 Review Group and Secretariat Group, 2014). In this respect, the Lao government and development partners have initiated several strategies, plans and policy efforts including EFA-NPA 2003-2015 (UNESCO, 2013). However, a UN review reveals that Lao PDR has not fully achieved the MDG regarding universal primary education (United Nations in Lao PDR, 2017).

As a developing country, Lao PDR faces challenges that impede national development, including in the education sector. A study by the World Bank shows that the education system of Lao PDR faces several challenges in achieving its goals of providing all students with access to education and improving learning outcomes. One of these challenges is that although the government increased expenditure on education, the level of non-wage recurrent expenditure (which is money spent on things like school materials, facilities and teacher training) remains low. In this regard, individual families still shoulder the responsibility for purchasing most of the resources. This circumstance leads to low quality of learning facilities and inadequate learning materials (World Bank, 2014). In response to this, the government, along with development partners, has undertaken initiatives to aid the improvement of education quality. One of the typical initiatives is the School Block Grant programme implemented in 2011. The programme provides schools with resources and better administrative control, which enable schools, districts and provinces to improve the quality

of schooling and educational administration (ibid). However, because the programme is at an early stage, challenges to the local schools' capacity to manage and allocate limited funds still exist. Therefore, the intervention of other similar projects is still needed.

Lao PDR has a strong commitment to implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and is reported as one of the earliest nations to localise and integrate the UN Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] into a national planning framework (United Nations in Lao PDR, 2018). Lao PDR still faces many challenges in achieving inclusive and quality education by 2030 (SDG 4), although much progress has been made during the implementation of MDG 2, which is to achieve universal primary education ending by 2015. The following challenges have been identified:

- Areas with less educational access continue to lag behind. Primary education completion, attendance, and literacy are lowest amongst children and adolescents living in remote communities, those whose parents are uneducated, those who are not in the Lao-Tai ethnic groups, and those living in households that are in the poorest quintile. In these communities, the demand for education, particularly at secondary level, is low and 'school readiness' is claimed to be the main factor. In 2015, there was an estimate of 1500 incomplete primary schools (schools with only 3 grades) and most of these incomplete schools are in remote areas, causing children to leave school before achieving grade 5.
- Teaching and learning quality still need to be improved. Assessments conducted in 2006 and 2009 showed that grade-5 students had low learning outcomes in achieving Lao language. The other assessment in the academic year 2011/12 highlighted poor learning performance either in language and mathematics – one fourth of grade-4 students did not have a good reading command.
- Learning environments are often inadequate. Most of the schools are not able to meet the 1:1 student-textbook ratio specified in the education policy and, therefore, students still have limited access to learning materials. Almost half of primary schools are not equipped with basic facilities such as water and sanitation.
- The literacy target for youth remains to be achieved. There is still a large portion of children who do not continue their study at secondary level. Although non-

formal education programmes has been established to support such group, its quality and efficiency are not adequate.

- The issue of measurement: a proper mechanism to assess the quality and outcomes of educational service has not yet been established. Current data on primary school learning outcomes is derived from one-off or infrequent assessment conducted by external partners. The assessment is not always based on the same standards.
- Dropouts in the early grades remain an issue. In primary schools there are about 30,000 dropouts every year, leading to a low rate of basic educational achievement. In 2016, the rate of grade-5 students was only about 79.6%. A major factor contributing to this is supposedly a lack of 'school readiness' in children: there is limited access to early childhood education. In 2016, only around 56% of grade-1 pupils experienced preschool education, and a large proportion of this was those enrolled in urban areas.
- Poor quality of primary education largely contributes to a lack of skilled workers. It is challenging to ensure that the country's workforce, with poor literacy and numeracy skills, can meet the demands of the global labor market and gain benefits from the ASEAN integration (United Nations in Lao PDR, 2017; United Nations in Lao PDR, 2018).

In response to such challenges, the government of Lao PDR has adapted SDGs into its context and set out a development plan and objectives. More specifically, it sets out the plan to achieve SDG 4 by 2030 (see *table 3*). The table 3 shows that the SDG4 includes four key outcomes: 1) Free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, 2) Improved access to quality, early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, 3) Increased skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship and, 4) Universal literacy among youth. The table indicates that each of these outcomes requires particular development areas of focus and measurement indicators. To achieve outcome 2, for instance, there are three conditions that need to be fulfilled: 1) access to ECD and pre-primary education, 2) Quality ECD and pre-primary education services and facilities and, 3) Gender equality in the other first two conditions.

SDG formulation for Lao PDR	Key outcomes extracted from SDG 4	Relevant SDG targets	Indicative programmatic areas for the further development of interventions and indicators:
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	(i) Free, equitable and quality primary & secondary education	4.1, 4.5, 4.7 4.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal access to primary education, improved retention & graduation • Secondary education: improved access, retention and graduation • Improved quality of primary & secondary education, relevant and effective learning outcomes • Knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development (see target 4.7 for complete list, Table 4.2) • Gender equality in all of the above • Child, disability and gender sensitive quality education facilities
	(ii) Improved access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education	4.2, 4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to ECD and pre-primary education • Quality of ECD and pre-primary education services and facilities • Gender equality in all of the above
	(iii) Increased skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable and quality tertiary education • Affordable and quality TVET,* reform and modernisation of the TVET system • Knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development (see target 4.7) • Disability and gender sensitive quality education facilities • Gender equality in all of the above
	(iv) Universal literacy among youth	4.6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth literacy (15-24 years)^a • Adult literacy (age 15 and above)

* ECD = early childhood development, TVET = technical & vocational education and training

Table 3: SDG 4 and Implications for Development Planning.

Source: United Nations in Lao PDR, 2015.

2.7 Summary

A review of the literature reveals that development communication theories can be divided into two categories: the modernisation paradigm and the alternative paradigm. In the first paradigm, the problems of underdevelopment in the developing world are a lack of information and knowledge. Therefore, the top-down approach of intervention is applied to address such problem and mass media is used as a major communication tool to diffuse information. In the second paradigm, underdevelopment issues are associated with multiple factors and differ from society to society, community to community, and context to context. Therefore, development outcomes should not be imposed and pre-established by external actors. Under this paradigm, development is viewed as an integral and dialogic process where the engagement of the stakeholder at all levels is needed. This notion contributes to an emergence of participatory communication.

Communication for social change is conceptualised within two opposite perspectives: the development-based perspective and the structural transformation-based perspective. While the former applies the top-down approach of interventions as solutions for an underdeveloped status, the latter uses the bottom-up approach to change social and political structures that perpetuate social inequalities.

The review of the literature also indicates a correlation between development and education, which is conceptualised within community development setting, and identifies development issues regarding education sector in the context of Lao PDR. It indicates that early childhood education is significant for human resource development and, ultimately, for national development. The Lao PDR government considers education a priority for national development, to help Lao graduate from the status of being a 'least developed country' by 2020, and to achieve SDGs by 2030. However, the quality of education, especially at primary level, remains low. In response to this, the government, along with development partners, has undertaken initiatives to aid the improvement of education quality. One of the typical initiatives is BEQUAL, implemented in 2017. The programme aims to promote an increased participation in basic, quality education and target the most educationally disadvantaged communities. To evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, future research at a community level is needed.

Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Any discussion about research methodology must include the dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative approaches. While qualitative research is rooted in the naturalistic philosophies, quantitative study stems from positivistic ones (Jha, 2008). Jha (2008) argues that “virtually all qualitative researchers, regardless of their theoretical differences, reflect some sort of individual phenomenological perspective. Most quantitative approaches, regardless of their theoretical differences, tend to emphasise that there is a common reality on which people can agree” (p. 5-6). This chapter introduces the qualitative research design and methods that were used in the study that took place in Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province, from August to September 2018. The chapter explains how the chosen approaches are relevant and appropriate for the context, and how data collected through these methods (interviews, observations, focus groups, communicative ecology mapping and documentation) could help to answer the research questions. This chapter also includes the selection process for participants, a discussion of ethical considerations, and outlines the limitations of the research.

3.1 Research Design and Methods

This evaluative research applied qualitative methodology with ethnographic research techniques. According to O’Leary (2010), evaluative research is “research that attempts to determine the value of some initiatives. Evaluative research identifies an initiative’s consequences as well as opportunities for modification and improvement” (p. 138). There are two types of evaluative studies: 1) Summative or outcome evaluation and; 2) Formative or process evaluation (ibid). This research falls into the second type of evaluation due to the fact that the case study was still in progress when the research commenced.

Conducting evaluative research can lead to confrontation or political tension. O’Leary (2010) argues that this type of research is more political than any other type and researchers can be put under pressure to be successful. However, such pressure can be overcome if researchers know how to balance the political and scientific goals of the evaluative studies. For instance, the goals of having initiatives evaluated are not always the same. While some initiative operators are open to direct and honest feedback, others are not. Similarly, all evaluative researchers do not investigate with the same style or the same goals. Some regard themselves

as objective researchers and have clear aims that will produce credible findings regardless of the political context they are in, while others are likely to be overcritical and criticise others' work. With this issue in mind, the researcher sought to negotiate clear expectations that met the needs and goals of both researcher and client with integrity.

Applying qualitative methodology and ethnographic research techniques helped me gain an in-depth understanding of the context under study. Bryman (2012) argues that researchers have the opportunity to better concentrate on the context being studied, to focus on the data collection process, and to understand phenomena through the eyes of target participants, when using a qualitative approach. Similarly, Taylor (2001) claims that ethnographic research techniques allow the ethnographer to understand other people's worldviews through the perception of insiders of a particular society.

Additionally, the project's documentation, gained from BNC staff during my stay in the community, served as a source of secondary data to reinforce research outcomes. According to Smith (2008), use of secondary data usually allows the researcher to access the highest quality data and aids deeper understanding of historical events.

3.2 Data Sources and Collection

As O'Leary (2010) points out, when adopting ethnographic methodology the researcher is required to use several methods to gather information. Use of multiple methods insures the researcher gains sufficient data that will contribute to effective research results (Bryman, 2012). Ethnographic research techniques served as an important tool for the collection of data in this evaluative research. These techniques include ethnographic non-participant observation, communicative ecology mapping, in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

3.2.1 Ethnographic non-participant observation

Ethnographic non-participant observation was selected as one of the tools to collect data because it provides me the opportunity to stay in the community and observe the interaction of its inhabitants. Under this method, the researcher does not influence the community members being observed as the observation is made from a distance without interfering in their lives (Gobo, 2008). Non-participant observation, as LeCompte and Schensul (2010) and O'Leary (2010) describe it, is a systematic data collection method conducted in the

community to study cultural and social life without interfering the lives of the people in the community. In this respect, I was able to gain insights from observing and learned how the community members responded to the BNC project. The outcomes of these observations could therefore be used, along with other tools, to determine the level of community participation in the BNC project.

Doing ethnographic research requires the long term process of data collection. It requires researchers to learn about people's interactions, communication and events happening in their communities. After the data collection process is done, the researchers interpret and ascribe meaning to all the data collected (Shagrir, 2017). For this research, I spent a month (from early August to early September 2018) staying and collecting data in the community. In order to obtain precise and relevant data within a short time, which also supported valid and accurate research, I had to be well prepared before entering the community.

3.2.2 Communicative ecology mapping

Data was also collected by mapping the communicative ecology of the community under study. According to Lennie and Tacchi (2013), a participatory (bottom-up) approach, highly valued in ethnographic research, has been developed through the concept of communicative ecology. This method helps the researcher to understand the structure of communication and how information regarding people's lives flow within the community. By mapping the communicative ecology, therefore, the researcher can gain a holistic understanding of how such systems work. For instance, in this project it was important to see how local media and other communication tools formed part of the information flow, and who were the key influencers in terms of communication in the community. Although media was not the main focus of this research, it is important to understand how media is employed to facilitate communication that may assist in meeting the basic needs of community members. According to Internews (2018b), a total lack of, or limited access to quality local information leads to the reduction of informed choices and a limited freedom of expression. This issue was discussed within the studied context and used as an essential part of the data analysis of this research.

To identify the surrounding environment of the community, such as the school, village office, health center, playground, temple, market and other infrastructure (roads etc), a hand-drawing was made of a community map (social map). This drawing was done by me with

support from local authorities, especially a village chief and a member of the Village Education Development Committees [VEDC]. Location photographs, presented in Chapter One and Chapter Four of this thesis, were used in conjunction with a hand-drawn map and are essential parts of research data analysis. By working through this process, I better understood the structure of the community and the social interactions of the community members.

3.2.3 In-depth, semi-structured interview

An in-depth, semi-structured interview is another ethnographic tool that was used in this research as it allowed me to explore the complexity of the situation relating to the research topic. According to Galletta (2013), this method is designed to address specific issues associated with the studied phenomenon while participants are given space to introduce new meanings to the focus of the research. This occurs because the interview questions can yield multidimensional streams of data if attention is paid to the question preparation. Galletta (2013) points out that this kind of interview can be conducted in a singular or multiple settings, and that this can create reciprocity between the researcher and the participant. This reciprocity provides the researcher with the space to probe participant responses for critical reflection as well as clarification. A major benefit of this type of interview “is its attention to lived experiences while also addressing theoretically driven variables of interest” (Galletta, 2013, p. 24).

3.2.4 Focus group

In addition to ethnographic non-participation, communicative ecology mapping and in-depth semi-structured interview, the focus group was used to collect further relevant information. As Carey and Asbury (2012) argue, the aim of using this tool is to gather rich and detailed data. Such data emerges from a focus group because the spontaneous interaction of group members can elicit in-depth and broad information, and a comparison of the members’ perspectives contribute to a greater understanding of experiences. Carey and Asbury (2012) explain that this data collection tool enables the researcher to obtain insight into beliefs and attitudes that cause the behaviours of group members. It also provides the researcher with a perspective and context that can assist in understanding community members’ experiences more holistically. Like other approaches, Carey and Asbury point out that this method “can give voice to members of vulnerable populations who might not be heard” (Carey & Asbury, 2012, p. 18). In the context of the researched community in which the BNC project was

implemented, a focus group created a setting in which community members felt comfortable articulating and sharing ideas about the project implementation.

3.2.5 Documentation

Documents were included as an additional source of data for this research. Bowen (2009) argues that documents can serve several purposes. One purpose is to function as a source of additional data on the context of the target participants and their backgrounds, thereby enabling the researcher to understand the roots of existing issues and identify conditions affecting phenomenon under study. Documents may also contain information that suggest essential situations for observation and raise additional questions for exploration. According to Bryman (2012), documents may come from personal and official sources. These documents can be in visual or written forms such as photographs and diaries. Since there are a wide range of document types, I focused on official documents, which Bryman categorises as 'private sources', such as reports and documents produced by BNC. The document gathered from BNC staff during the month I stayed in the community was Xaybouathong District Education and Sports Bureau [DESB]'s statistics. This document contributed to the richness and detail of the data, and provided background context to my research.

3.3 Population and Sample

As the population and sample serve as representatives of the entire population of the research area, the process of identifying and selecting them is considered an essential step (Cargan, 2007). It is difficult to engage with everyone within the population being studied if the budget, timescale and number of interviewers are limited. However, this problem can be addressed by choosing a small number of participants, called sampling, to participate in the research (Dawson, 2009).

3.3.1 The community and participants

The target population of this research live in rural communities in Khammouane province. However, as specified in the research proposal approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committees [UREC], the case study's focus was specifically on the community in Xaybouathong district, which has been engaged with by the BNC project. After I was formally introduced to the community leaders by an official from Xaybouathong DESB, which works in partnership with BNC, I stayed with a local resident in a nearby village. I travelled to the

community each day to observe the community members' way of life, how they communicated and interacted with each other, and how they responded to the BNC project. This observation was done without interrupting their daily life activities, and carried out at public places such as a school and a local market.

3.3.2 In-depth semi-structured interview

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five local parents who had children attending a local primary school, three teachers who had been engaged with the BNC project, and two BNC field workers. The number of parents and teachers (eight in total) is greater than that of BNC staff (two in total) because the parents and teachers represent the members of the target community, and the number of community members is larger than those working on the project. As presented in Chapter One, the population of the researched community was 323 people. There were only five BNC staff working in the field. The community members are more directly affected by the intervention of the project, so it was necessary to hear their voices. The participants were selected by using a purposive sampling (Litosseliti, 2003): parents whose children had attended a local primary school, local school teachers who were trained by the BNC project and BNC staff who worked in the field. Snowball sampling techniques were employed as a means of recruitment. For instance, three interviewees from parents group were introduced by the first two interviewees who were also from parents group. These techniques helped me to ensure that participants had trust, openness and willingness to participate in the interview. Interviews with parents and BNC staff were conducted during the second and third week of the month I stayed in the community, while the group of teachers were interviewed in the fourth week. My interaction, including self-introduction and personal communication with these three groups during the first week, contributed to personal relationships and helped to make participants feel open and comfortable when being interviewed.

3.3.3 Focus group

I utilised both purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Litosseliti, 2003) to select community members for the group discussion. Focus group participants included parents of primary school children and teachers at the local school. These participants were chosen because they had been engaged with the BNC project and could therefore provide full insight into the overall situation of the community and the project intervention through their

experiences. To collect the most relevant data, parents with children of different age groups were considered, as the aim was to also understand the community's values regarding education, regarding their needs and regarding challenges they face in terms of access and participation. With respect to formative or process evaluative research, O'Leary (2010) claims that stakeholders' perspectives from differing backgrounds play an important role in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of an initiative. This is because they tend to have varied opinions in terms of what does and does not work well. The participants were placed into two groups; a group of parents and a group of teachers. The group of parents was made up of six members while the group of teachers consisted of four members – the total number of teachers at a local school. I decided not to mix parents and teachers together in one group, as I was mindful of power relationships and wanted to ensure that parents felt free to express their opinion. By using a purposive sampling method, I needed to ensure that participants selected would offer valuable insight into specific issues and represent the target population (Jensen & Laurie, 2016). Based on a mutual agreement between participants and I, the teachers' focus group was conducted at school, while the parents' focus group was carried out at an individual's house.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be regarded as identifying patterns in audio recordings and written information, as well as images or videos. To carry out the data analysis process, the researcher should be well prepared and organised because there are no fixed rules to indicate what must be done in each step (Jensen & Laurie, 2016). According to O'Leary (2010), the process of analysing data is time consuming, but provides the researcher with new understandings through an exploration and interpretation of complex data.

3.4.1 Ethnographic non-participant observation analysis

The data gathered from ethnographic non-participation observation over a period of one month was analysed to understand the social and cultural norms of the community, how local people communicated with one another, and how they responded to the BNC project engaging with the community. This information was used, along with other data from communicative ecology mapping, in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups, to examine the level of community participation in the BNC project.

3.4.2 Qualitative data analysis

Data collected in the form of audio recordings from semi-structured interviews and focus groups were categorised and transcribed from the participants' mother tongue into English. All participants in this research could speak Lao, so although some of them were from ethnic minority groups, the audio recordings were transcribed from Lao into English. To analyse the theme of this raw, qualitative data, a reflective qualitative analysis technique (O'Leary, 2010) was employed prior to the interpretation of the findings. This technique enabled me to extract underlying themes from the data, from the outset of the research through to the final conclusion, and to maintain a general sense of the project, while the process shifted between gathering data and research questions, to research aims and objective, to relevant theory, to methodology (ibid).

3.4.3 Document analysis

Document analysis can be regarded as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Similar to other qualitative methods, document analysis involves examining and interpreting data "in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, as cited in Bowen, 2009, p. 27).

The documents derived from the BNC were analyzed by using a qualitative content analysis approach. According to Bryman (2012), this method allows the researcher to extract underlying themes from the documents being analysed. The researcher is then able to reflect and compare this extracted theme with the data gained from observation, social mapping, interviews and group discussion, to evaluate the level of community participation in the project being studied.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The evaluative research was conducted under the ethical guidelines (Ethics Application Form A) and approved by UREC. Because ethical issues, as Bryman (2012) argues, could affect research principles, they were taken seriously into account during the research process. Conducting the research under the ethical guidelines helped me to ensure that the rights of target participants were respected; and that inappropriate research was avoided. Information sheets and consent forms (see *Appendix 7* and *8*), translated from English into Lao, were

distributed to all target participants prior to the start of the data collection process. For those who were illiterate, I read and explained all the related research materials to them and asked for their oral agreement. As mentioned in the previous section, participants could communicate in Lao even though some of them were members of an ethnic minority group. Oral consent was marked at the signing section of the form to indicate their acceptance of participation in the research. These actions helped ensure that participants understood the context of the research and accepted the participation feeling satisfied.

Before entering the target community to do fieldwork, local authorities, particularly the village chief, were contacted to ensure that I was not viewed as an intruder or a stranger. I also informed BNC project representatives about the start date and end date of my fieldwork (from early August to early September 2018), so they could inform community leaders of the research area. This meant community members were aware of any research activities happening in the community. To avoid confusion, which might occur during fieldwork, I notified local authorities about my role while staying in the community, on the first day of my arrival.

3. 6 Limitations of the Research

One of the limitations of this research is related to the data collection instruments. As specified in earlier sections of this chapter, the data collection tools applied in this research fall under the ethnographic research approach, including non-participation observation. Denscombe (2010) points out one of ethnography's characteristics is that during a period of time spent in fieldwork, "the ethnographer needs to share in the lives rather than observe from a position of detachment" (p. 80). However, with non-participation observation, I made distant observations of people being studied without intervening their lives (Gobo, 2008; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; O'Leary 2010). This practice, therefore, may have compromised the quality of the data gained.

The scope of the study is considered as another limitation. This research was conducted using BNC as a case study, to evaluate the level of community participation in increasing children's attendance in quality, primary education. However, out of four NGO Consortiums (Plan International, Save the Children, ChildFund and World Vision), only World Vision was chosen. In this regard, the findings of this research cannot be generalised to cover the overall

development work of the other three NGOs, or of the BNC as a whole. The findings may be used only as part of a reflection that could be shared among the consortiums for future development phases.

Apart from data collection tools and the scope of the study, failure to follow the research plan drawn up in the research proposal contributed to the limitations of this research. It was planned that the focus group of either teachers or parents would be conducted a few days after the interviews, in order to give group participants and the researcher space for reflection on issues under investigation, and to elicit as much information as possible. While the teachers' focus group was conducted in accordance with the plan, the group of parents was not. The parents' focus group was conducted on the same day as the interviews (interviews in the morning and a focus group in the afternoon). This was because by the time the research was conducted (during the rainy season), most of the parents who are farmers were committed to agricultural work and could not join the discussion at any other time. As explained by the community leaders, villagers are usually busy with agricultural activities during the rainy season, particularly planting rice and catching fish. The community leaders also suggested that they could not guarantee parents would come on the following days and that, in order to respect their privacy, it would be better to conduct the interviews and group discussion on the same day. The limited time for reflecting on issues raised during the interviews may have affected the richness and detail of data derived from the focus group.

All in all, this chapter discusses a qualitative research approach and the methods used in this evaluative study, including communicative ecology mapping, ethnographic non-participant observation, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documentation. It describes how relevant these techniques are to the context under investigation and presents the process of participant selection. The data collected through these tools and participants was grouped per source of data, and then thematically analysed. It is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 FINDINGS

This chapter reports research findings based on the primary source of data which was gained from in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with community members and BEQUAL NGO Consortium [BNC] field staff working in the researched community. An integration of the data derived from personal observation notes and related documents, contributed to the enrichment of the findings; it provided deep understanding of how the BNC project engaged with the community to promote an increase in children's attendance in quality basic education, as well as how community members respond to the implementation of the BNC project. A social map and communicative ecology of the researched community, presented in an early section of the chapter, illustrates the structure of communication and how information flows within a community. It therefore provides a holistic understanding of how such systems effect the level of community participation in the project.

4.1 Aim and objectives of the programme

According to BNC staff, a memorandum of understanding [MoU] was signed on 27 February 2017, between the Ministry of Education and Sports and World Vision International Lao PDR (on behalf of the BNC). It regarded basic education quality and access in Nyommalath and Xaybouathong districts, Khammouane province. The MoU stated that the aim of the project is to ensure that all children, especially girls, non-Lao speaking children and children with disabilities in disadvantaged schools and communities, have access to and achieve primary education with support from parents and communities. To achieve this aim, two objectives were set: 1) To enable access and increase participation in schooling for children disadvantaged by language, gender, disability or ethnicity, through improved oral Lao language skills and reading promotion in early grades (grade 1-3) and; 2) To strengthen community mechanisms to create healthy, supportive learning environments in homes and communities for all disadvantaged children. A number of activities were implemented in order to achieve these aims and objectives, including the delivery of an accelerated oral Lao language course (teaching Lao to non-Lao speaking grade 1 pupils at the beginning of school term); the allocation of approved supplementary materials such as books, flashcards, games and stories pictorial books; the provision of teacher training; the establishment of book banks at a community level; and the application of approved media (posters, brochures, CDs, videos,

etc) for students, teachers, parents and communities (BS1, personal communication, August 21, 2018).

4.2 Social map and context of the community

Within the first week of my stay, a hand-drawn map of the community was roughly created with the help of the village chief and a member of the Village Education Development Committee [VEDC]. Together, with village volunteers who were keen to walk me through every corner of the village during the second week, more details of the map were added.

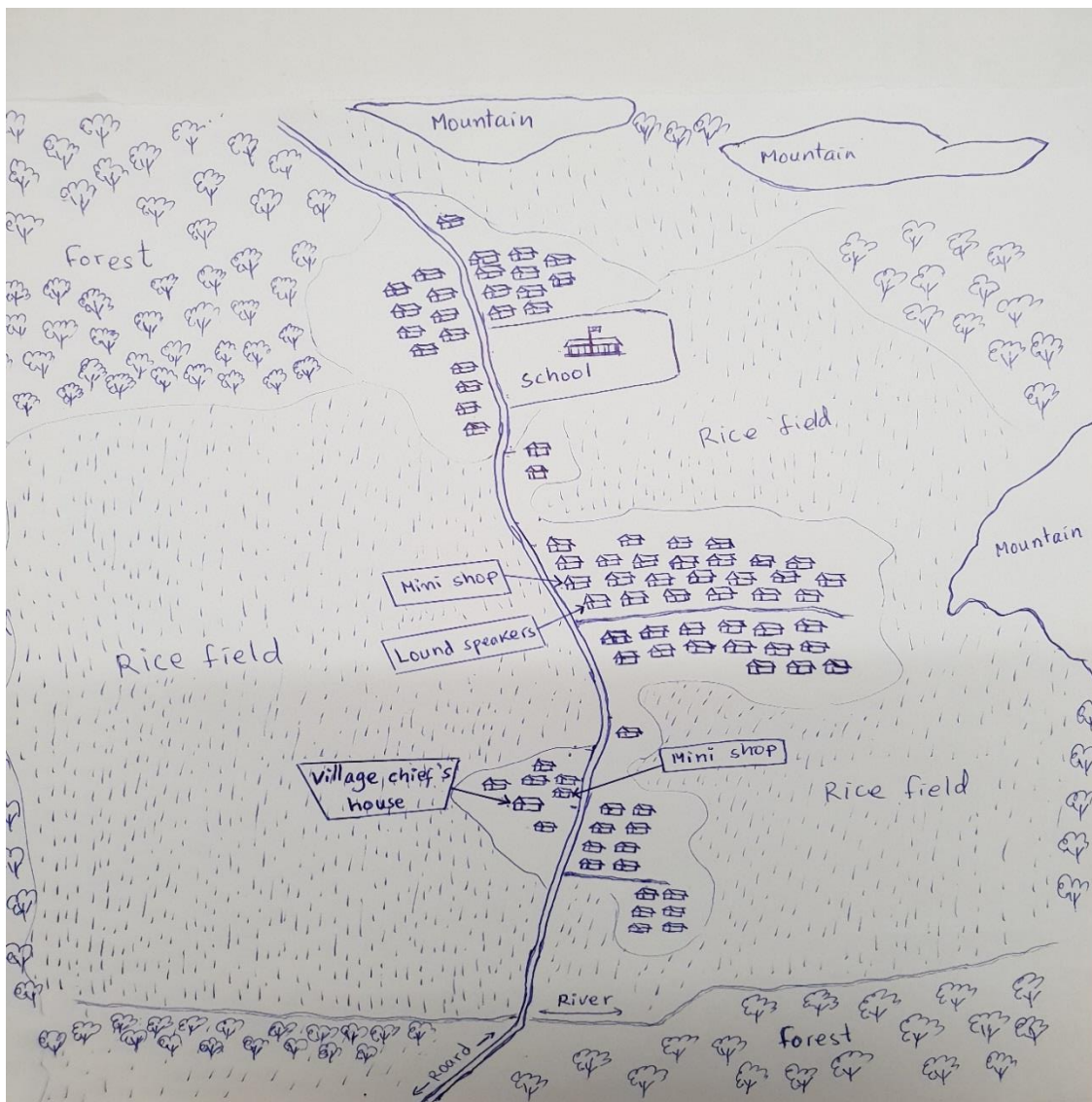


Figure 11: The hand-drawn map of Phonesa-ard village.

Source: Author.



Figure 12: Google map image of Phonesa-ard village

Source: Author.

Phonesa-ard village is among 21 other educationally disadvantaged villages in Xaybouathong district. It is a small village comprised of 64 households, with a population of 323 people. This includes the Makong minority group (a subgroup of upland Lao), whose native language is not the instructional language of schooling (Personal communication with a village chief, August 14, 2018). Although it includes an ethnic minority group, the main language used within the village is Lao. Inside the village, a large proportion of the land area is covered by farm land (as shown on the social map), particularly rice fields, with a small river running across the unsealed road which connects the village and the center of Xaybouathong town. Most local people rely on natural resources for their living, such as finding food from nearby rivers and natural ponds and collecting forest products. The main agricultural activities that support family economy include crop growing (particularly rice) and animal raising (such as cattle and goats). Electricity is available but does not fully operate during the rainy season, which lasts for six months (from May to October).

Entering the researched community from the centre of Xaybouathong town is not as difficult as I originally thought, because it is only about 7 km away. Travelling from the provincial capital city of Thakhek however, is a different story. From Thakhek, it is over 90 kms and nearly half of the road is unsealed, making it very difficult to travel, particularly during the rainy season. As noted in a later section of this chapter, during this season some roads linking the provincial capital to the researched community are impassable. According to the local people, it is only a four-hour drive to get to the capital during the dry season, but it takes up to six hours, or even longer during the rainy season. Additionally, on some days transportation services become unavailable due to severely damaged roads, and passengers traveling during this period of time may have to pay additional transportation fees.

4.3 The communicative ecology of the researched community

The map of communicative ecology was drawn based on the data gathered from personal observation and communication with local people during my stay in the researched community. Within the community, information flows through many different forms of communication such as face-to-face communication, television, mobile phones, radio, the internet and Tholakhong (loud speakers). Among these, face-to-face communication was found to be the most common form of communication, while radio and the internet were found to be the least popular mediums.

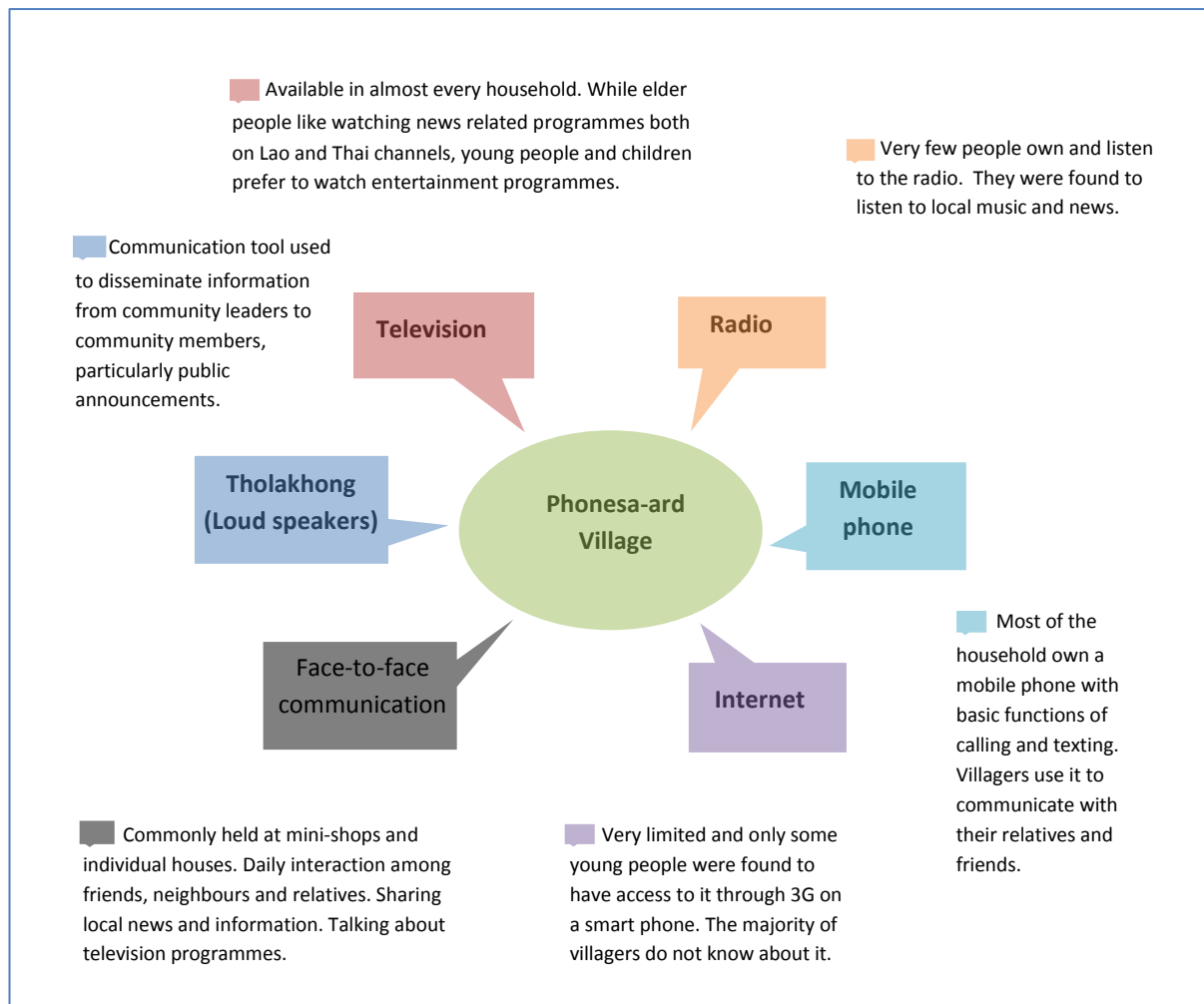


Figure 13: The communicative ecology of the researched community.

Source: Author.

Face-to-face communication is mainly used by the villagers for daily interactions with family members, relatives, friends and neighbours. The interactions involve sharing local information and news, talking about television programmes and exchanging food seeking techniques and crops growing knowledge and experience. It was observed that this form of communication commonly happens at grocery shops, in individual's houses and at a market where many different villagers gather every day to sell or buy forest products and food during the early hours. Within the community two different languages were used in the interactions, Lao and Makong. As the Lao is the national language it is mainly used both within and outside the community, while the latter language belongs to an ethnic minority group called Makong (a subgroup of midland Lao), and is only spoken within its group members. When I visited one of the community leaders at home, for example, I noticed that he used his own language, Makong, to talk to his cousin who came over.

Television is the main source of information as it is present in almost every household. It is free-to-air satellite television, delivering dozens of channels, both from Laos and the neighbouring country of Thailand. Lao channels include Lao National Television Channels (LNTV1 and LNTV3), which report national news relating to economic and government activity and international news; the Lao Police Station Television (Lao PSTV), which reports criminal incidents and news relevant to the Ministry of Public Security; and the Lao Star Channel (Lao Star), which mainly broadcast entertainment programmes. Although these Lao television channels are accessible, the majority of villagers, especially children who love watching animation and young people who like watching soap operas, prefer to watch Thai television programmes. This is because the language is similar, but the programmes are more diverse. However, local people, particularly community leaders, watch national television programs for news updates on a daily basis. For instance, they followed the news on the dam collapse in a southern province of Laos in July 2018.

Mobile phones are also an important channel of communication and widely used within the community. Most of the community members use a mobile with the basic functions of calling and texting because it is affordable. Only a few young people own a smart phone and use functions such as the camera, music and video players, and social media (particularly Facebook). No landline phone was found in the community. All of the phones are equipped with a SIM [Subscriber Identity Module] and need refill cards to top up the balance. These cards can be purchased at nearby shops. However, not all of the networks available in Laos can be applied in this particular region because some mobile network transmission stations are not available. The most popular networks in the area are MPhone and Unitel as local people indicate that these two networks have a higher speed than the others. Mobile phones are mainly used to keep in touch with family members, friends and relatives. In the case of community leaders, a mobile phone is also used to communicate with other community leaders, as well as local government officials, to arrange meetings related to public policies and announcements.

Tholakhong (loud speakers) are the next important tool of communication. Like many other Lao communities, this researched community has a set of loud speakers in its centre, enabling all members to hear the announcements, which are usually made by community leaders. Through this tool, villagers receive information related to new policies and regulations, but

often, they are also informed about meetings, activities for the day and emergencies. According to the village headman, this communication tool is useful and effective as it is time efficient and reaches all members of the community. It is especially for communicating meeting arrangements, as people can be informed about date, time, and venue within minutes (Personal communication, August 18, 2018).



Photos 4: (Left) Tholakhong and, (Right) free-to-air satellite television.

Source: Author.

During the month I spent in the community, I observed that a few local people listen to the radio, but not on a daily basis. They only listen to it for entertainment purposes while they are working in the rice field or on other crop plantations. Local radio stations are available and are located in a nearby district and a provincial capital. However, it seems that this communication channel is being replaced by television because, while most villagers own a television, only a few have a radio.

I also observed that there is no Internet café in the community and that most of its members, particularly the elderly and children, are unfamiliar with the word 'Internet'. Only some young people have access to it on their smart phones, but with low speed.

The common modes of transportation in the community are motorbikes, bicycles and small tractors. Motorbikes are mainly used by adults on a daily basis, to travel between villages or between a village and a city, while bicycles are popular among secondary and high school students, who regularly travel to and from school. Almost all households own small tractors normally used for farming. They are commonly used as a means of loading heavy goods, to transport and sell at the local market. These small tractors are also sometimes used as a passenger vehicle, carrying relatives and friends between villages, and between homes and crop plantations.



Photos 5: Small tractors used for heavy lifting and as a passenger vehicle

Source: Author.

Overall, the communicative ecology of the community is considerably diverse. Face-to-face communication is the most common mode of communication, followed by two other forms television and mobile phone. The next popular mode of communication is Tholakhong. It is seen as a practical and effective tool in terms of making announcement about public policies, regulations and meetings within the community. Other communication mediums like radio, the internet and printed materials are available, but limited. Common means of transportation include motorbikes, bicycles and small tractors.

4.3.1 Communication structure and flow within the community

Based on personal observation and communication with community members, including the village chief, VEDC members and village volunteers, communication in regard to community development projects operated by external development agents is jointly initiated by a village chief and a member of the VEDC. Messages are delivered to the rest of the community members in the form of face-to-face communication, particularly in meetings which are usually organised at two places: a local primary school and a village chief's house. If the meeting involves a large audience (more than 10 people), it is held at the school. Otherwise, it takes place at the village chief's house. Prior to the meetings, members of the community are informed about the meeting time and place, and the announcement is done through the Tholakhong (loud speakers) set in the centre of the village. It is also sometimes done through the word-of-mouth of village volunteers who act as communication facilitators.

Communication is established among many different stakeholders such as the village chief, VEDC member, teachers, village volunteers and role model parents or families (in each village 20 families are chosen to be role models for participating in the project). The patterns of communication presented in *Figure 14* (below) show that the village chief and the VEDC member work closely together to deliver messages about the BNC project to teachers and village volunteers. The messages are then transmitted from teachers and volunteers to parents, and from parents to children. The flow of information from the village chief and VEDC member to the rest of the community members appears to be a one-way interaction, while the information flow among teachers, village volunteers and parents seems to be a two-way interaction. It is interesting to note that while teachers and village volunteers share a role in engaging with parents and children, it is actually the village volunteers who engage more with them.

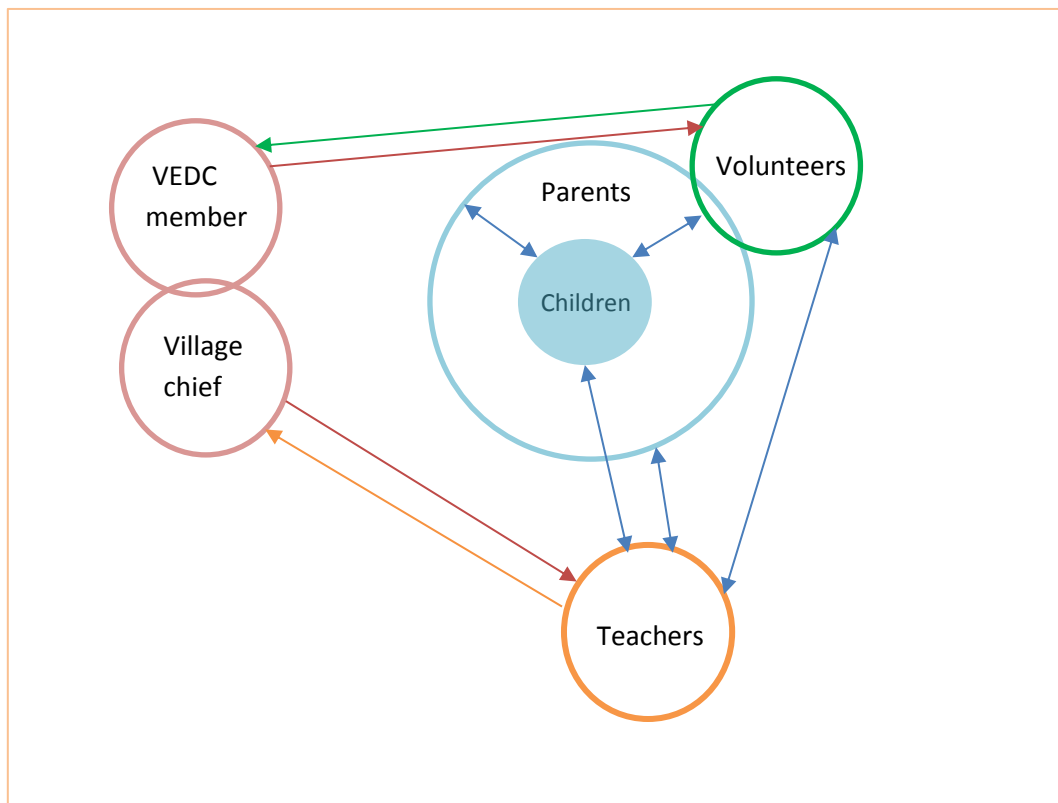


Figure 14: The visualisation of communication traffic – a communicative ecology mapping of the community

Source: Author

4.3.2 Communication structure between the researched community and external agents

Drawing on personal observations, field notes and an in-depth interview with the primary school director, there are external partners at district and provincial levels involved in the operation of project. At a district level there are BNC staff (field workers) and government officials from the District Education and Sports Bureau [DESB]. These people work closely together to provide community members, particularly teachers, with training, and to monitor and evaluate their performance and provide feedback for improvement. At a provincial level there are BNC officers and a government official from the Provincial Education and Sports Department [PESD]. Like those from the district level, these people are in charge of monitoring and evaluating the activities in operation in the community. The communication between the community and external agents can therefore be visualised as the image below (see Figure 15).

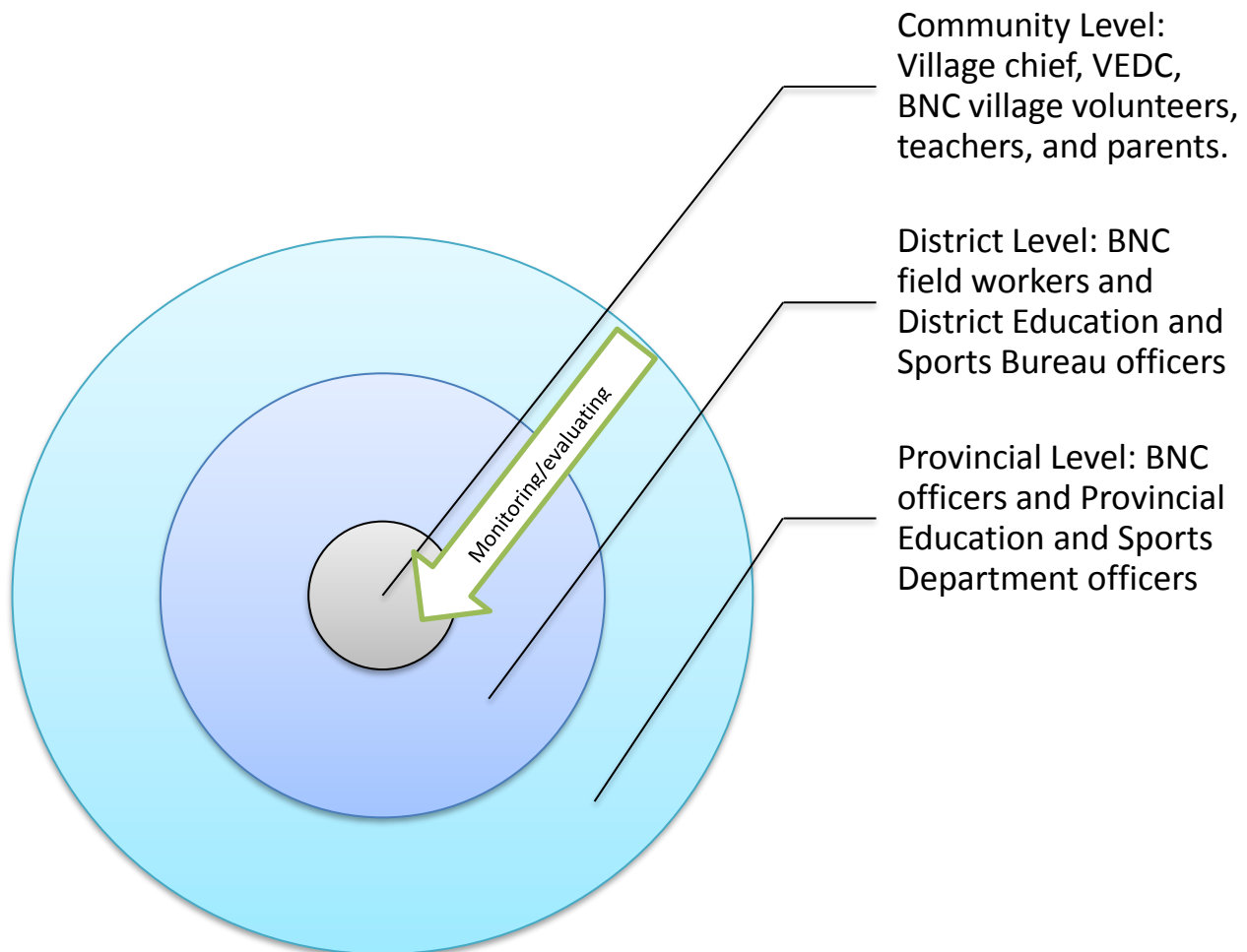


Figure 15: The communication structure between the researched community and external agents

Source: Author

4.3.3 Communication tools and methods

As specified in the BNC project's aims and objectives, communication tools include approved media: posters, brochures, CDs and videos. Based on my personal communication with BS1, the actual tools used to enhance the engagement with community members were posters and videos. While posters were used to promote hygiene and sanitation for children, videos were employed to reinforce understanding of key primary stakeholders (parents, teachers and village volunteers) about training contents. Contact was made with community leaders prior to the engagement with these stakeholders (Personal communication, August 23, 2018).

4.4 Findings from parents

The following themes have emerged from personal communication with local residents, in-depth, semi-structure interviews with five parents (P1-P5), and a six-member focus group discussion which was conducted while the project was in progress. Out of five interviewees, four of them (P1, P2, P4 and P5) consented to join a focus group with two other members, the village chief and a village volunteer (see *Table 4* below for their brief profiles). All of the participants are local residents living in Phonesa-ard village and have been engaged with by the project. Their viewpoints given during the interviews and discussion therefore reflect on the implementation of the project.

Parent 1 (P1)	A farmer who is illiterate and has one child attending local primary school.
Parent 2 (P2)	A farmer who is illiterate and has two children attending local primary school.
Parent 3 (P3)	A farmer who is illiterate and has two children attending local primary school.
Parent 4 (P4)	A member of the Village Education Development Committee [VEDC], a community leader, veterinarian.
Parent 5 (P5)	A farmer who is illiterate and has two children attending local primary school.
Parent 6 (P6)	A village chief who is also a farmer
Parent 7 (P7)	A village volunteer whose son is due to go to primary school in the next school year.

Table 4: Profiles of participants

Source: Author

4.4.1 Reasons for participation and level of understanding about the project

In responding to the interview question regarding why they decided to participate in the project, two out of five interviewees (P1 and P3) shared a similar reason; they did not have any particular reason to join. Their further explanation however, highlights different levels of understanding about the engagement of the project, and indicates the way they are engaged.

P1 said:

I had no reason to decide to participate in the project, but I did so because I was told to, and I just assumed that, in turn, I would benefit from the project. For example, my kids would be given learning materials like books and pencils for free. I do not understand the purpose of it, probably because of my low level of knowledge (P1, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

P3 also said, “I joined this project without any reason. I simply said ‘Yes’ when I got asked whether or not I want to join. I did not know exactly what it is for” (in- depth interview, August 18, 2018).

However, the answers from three other parents (P2, P4 and P5) suggest another aspect to their understanding level. With these three people they understand that the project is not only expected to supply resource materials for children, but also to build their capacity to reach their potential development and, ultimately, contribute to community development. The project’s aim is considerably well understood and valued in this instance. These parents are aware of the importance of basic education for their children in today’s society and are willing to support them. They believe that, with education, their children would have better opportunities:

The reason I decided to participate in this project is because I want my children to be literate and I believe that literate people have more opportunities than those who are not. I want my children to have literacy skills because we are now living in a modern world and I want them to develop themselves like many other people do (P2, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

I decided to take part in the project because I like its aim which is at promoting primary education. Even though I am not clear about how education effects life, I understand that it is good to achieve a primary education (P5, in- depth interview with, August 18, 2018).

An explanation provided by P4, who is a member of the VEDC, reinforced those of P2 and P5. He said:

The first reason I wanted to join the project is because I want our community to be developed, particularly in the area of child educational development. I want to identify factors that prevent children from accessing basic education and urge other parents to inculcate their children in learning to ensure that they are able to read and write. They must be able to read to avoid dangers or criminal charges, for example, when they see the sign which reads ‘No Entry’. The other reason for participation is because I want to know how

to induce my children not to drop out of school as basic education is compulsory and I hope that they could get a higher educational qualification than me (P4, in- depth interview, August 18, 2018).

4.4.2 Benefits of the project

Benefits that the project bring to the community are seen in the form of teaching-learning material distribution, and allocation of other relevant learning facilities. Parents are proud their children are given books and pencils, and have access to a variety of new and interesting learning resources. With such provisions, they even feel inspired, especially those who are struggling to supply learning aids for their children, to encourage and support their children to learn:

Apparently, what the project brings to our community is learning materials like books and pencils. Some of these materials were given to the school children directly and some are given in a form of rewards when children participate in the competitive activities such as a quiz (P2, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

Our community benefits from the project in terms of teaching-learning aids, sports equipment, as well as musical instruments. These facilities create an attractive learning environment which enables primary school children to be more engaged in learning. This is because children have more diverse resources to learn from (P4, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

Technical advice support is another benefit identified by parents. In the early stages of the project implementation, parents were advised to actively support their children to learn, regardless of their own education or qualification levels. This enables parents to realise that schools are not the only place where pupils can learn and that parenting skills are significant elements in helping children learn. Parents also realise that their state of being illiterate or having limited knowledge does not mean that they are unable to help children learn. In contrast, they have plenty of knowledge to contribute to their child's learning if appropriate action is taken. When at home, for example, they can discuss pictorial books, provided by the project, with their children. As two members of the focus group (P1 and P4) argued,

“Generally, the project brings to our community the invaluable knowledge which could contribute to a brighter future for the children. It helps raise our awareness of how important it is to get children basically educated” (P1, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

Another member added that,

“Guidance of how to encourage children to learn is introduced through the project implementation. For instance, parents must tell children not to watch television too much as this will interrupt their learning” (P4, parents’ focus group, August 18, 2018).

Another interviewee (P2), demonstrated how parenting skills contribute to the school readiness of children by saying:

What I have learnt from the project is to try to encourage children to learn by acting as a good caregiver such as preparing food for them and washing their clothes or school uniform. It was suggested that parents must be responsible for learning aids to children (P2, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).



Photos 6: (Left and Right) Examples of pictorial and story books provided by the project

Source: Author.

A change in primary school children’s behaviour is also viewed as a beneficial outcome of the project intervention. All of the interviewees and focus group members are of the opinion that the behavior of school children in their community has changed for the better since the project has intervened. They indicate that children are more eager to learn and are doing better in class. One interviewee (P4, who is a member of VEDC) said:

Based on my observation, positive changes in children’s behavior resulting from the engagement of the project are confidence and bravery. They are braver and more confident

to answer teachers' questions, sing a song and dance in front of the class. Previously, they were very shy and, therefore, ended up not showing their ability or talent. Since this project has engaged in our community, I would say that children's learning performance is getting improved by up to 90% (P4, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

Another parent (P5) said:

My children's behaviour has definitely changed in positive ways. They are more enthusiastic to learn. For example, they know when they should go to school and do not wait for me to tell them to do so like what they used to do before. After school, they also seek to learn from their friends who have a better learning performance (P5, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

Discussion among focus group members highlighted further positive change in children's behaviour and suggests significant factors contributing to such change. One member of the group (P1) explained:

I am very proud of the project intervention which arouses children's intelligence and makes them more eager to learn. Previously, my kids did not go to school if I did not take them. Now, they go to school by themselves and there is only one thing that they ask me for help about; that is, what the school days are as to ensure that they will not miss the classes (P1, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

Another group member (P6) said:

The project creates an attractive and competitive learning environment. This is because all school children are basically granted books and pencils. Students who frequently participate in classroom activities, or those who have the best learning performance, will even get more books, pencils or other learning material items in a form of reward. When those who have poor learning performance see their friends receive such rewards, they try to participate more in the activities and this, therefore, leads to better performance. Similarly, when those who do not go to school see their friends bring some presents home, they believe that they could get one if they go, and this results in an increase in school attendance of children. More importantly, when parents observe that their children get rewards from school, they realise that they apparently benefit from education and, therefore, begin to induce and support their kids to go to school, particularly those who do not have money to buy such materials (P6, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

The rest of the group members listened carefully to the explanations and nodded their head several times to show agreement.

As the discussion continued, types of activities implemented by the project are identified as other factors that contribute to the change. P6 indicates how the activity design effects school children's learning performance by explaining:

The children's learning outcome is getting better because the activities implemented by the project helps stimulate their thinking and test their memory. For instance, children are shown a model of colourful painting for a few minutes and then asked to draw up their own one and colour it without seeing the model again. A student who finishes the painting first and whose colours match the model is the winner and, as a result, gets a present (P6, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

Other members (P1 and P4) pointed out:

It is interesting to note that children were asked about their dreams and hopes related to education and jobs – 'What grade do you expect to achieve?' Some said 'grade 8' while others replied 'grade 13'. They then got asked, 'What do you want to be in the future?' Some said 'I want to be a police officer' while others said 'I want to be a nurse or a teacher'. An interaction like this helps create hope for them (P1 and P4, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).



Photos 7: (Left and Right) Pupils are drawing pictures based on a model

Source: Author.

4.4.3 Perspectives on gender equality in education

Some attitudes towards gender equality in education were observed among the group of parents involved in this research. They were asked the interview question, ‘Who would you choose to be educated between a son and a daughter, if you could afford education for only one child? In response, most parents (P1, P2 and P3) did not explicitly state that they would choose a son or a daughter. Instead, they showed their willingness to support both children regardless of their ability to do so with P3 saying, “I will support both my son and daughter. I treat them equally” (In-depth interview, August 18, 2018). P1 and P2 voiced similar opinions:

It depends on my children – whether or not they want to study. If they are both eager to learn, I am ready to support them no matter how hard it is. I treat them fairly and provide them with equal support (P1, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

I totally will not choose to send either a son or a daughter to school. I treat them fairly and equally and dedicate my life to financially support them. I want both of them to be educated. I am in favour of gender parity. No matter what gender they are, they are both my children (P2, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018)

Responses from P4 and P5, however, suggest some degree of gender inequality. These two respondents had higher expectations for a son rather than a daughter and their justification for this seemed to be the belief that men face less difficulties than women in pursuing education. Nonetheless, only P5 believed it was better to send a son to school:

I will send my son to school if I can afford education for only one child. I think a man has a better learning performance and more advantages than a woman. I also think that a man is braver than a woman (P5, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

P4 acknowledged the rights of his daughter, as a woman, and confirmed that he would get her educated:

If I can support only one child, I will choose my son because it is safer when traveling compared with my daughter. However, this does not mean that I do not value gender equality in education. I still highly value the rights of my daughter to an education. When my son gets basically educated, I will let him teach his sister at home and then send them to school together (P4, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

4.4.4 Participation obstacles

The factors impeding children's access to and achievement of primary education were associated with poverty and the qualifications of parents. The main source of family income for community members is derived from selling crops, especially rice, which is always in high demand from external buyers. However, this kind of crop can be harvested only once a year due to the fact that there is no irrigation system in the area. It can be grown only in the rainy season (Personal communication with VEDC member, August 25, 2018). Other crops such as corn and sugarcane are not in demand as most of the villagers grow them and they do not have any markets to which they can sell these products. One potential market is in the provincial capital, but it is hard to reach because it is many kilometres from their community and the roads are unsealed, making it difficult to travel, especially during the rainy season. One village elder explained to me:

No merchant is interested in buying the products and I think transportation is the factor because during the rainy season, a period of time that we can increase agricultural productivity, many roads are flooded and impassable. Therefore, we end up with leaving the crops rotting in the plantation (Personal communication with village elder, August 24, 2018).

In terms of qualifications, parents identified several challenges when it comes to encouraging and helping children to learn. While acknowledging the valuable guidance of the project, they argued that as a result of poverty, and their limited or absent literacy skills, they found it hard to teach them:

I sometimes face difficulties supporting my children to learn because of low family income and financial insecurity. When I do not have money to buy them learning aids like new school bags, books, pencils, as well as school uniforms, I have to borrow some from my relatives. My children will not go to school if they do not have these things because they feel shy when seeing their classmates who have all kinds of the materials (P2, in-depth interview with, August 18, 2018).

I have always applied what I have learnt from the project in my daily life, but I sometimes face difficulties in doing so because of my limited literacy skills. For instance, I sometimes cannot write down what I think on my paper because of word spelling problems. Teaching children at home is another issue. I want to teach them how to read and write, but I am unable to do so if course contents are more advanced. All I can do is to advise them to pay

attention to listen to and follow teachers' instructions. I tell them that, 'This is all I can help you' (P4, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

The major factor that prevents me from applying what I have learnt from the project is my state of being an illiterate person. When at home, I cannot teach my kids how to read and write. All I can do is repeatedly tell them to pay attention to listen to and learn from teachers as well as friends who have better learning performance. I do not want them to be illiterate like me (P5, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).



Photos 8: (Top Left and Right) Roads linking the researched community to central Xaybouathong district.
(Bottom Left and Right) Roads connecting Xaybouathong district to a provincial capital of Thakhek during the rainy season.

Source: Author.

The interaction between the focus group members suggests how poverty and illiteracy affect children's school attendance. One member (P4) pointed out:

Many uneducated parents in our community do not understand how important it is to have their children basically educated so they do not support them. They eventually want their

kids to help them work either at home or on the field and find food (P4, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

This point is supported by P5's life experience, shared during the interview:

As I am one of the poor living in this community, I hope that by participating in this project they may help me in some ways. They may give books or pencils for my kids, for example. When I was a child, I had no chance to go to school because my parents needed me to help them work to support the family. I was pushed to graze cattle throughout my childhood (P5, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

P4 continued to express his view, indicating that some uneducated parents send their children to school just because they see others doing so but they do not understand what education means for the lives of their children. Some parents even tell their children 'They do not understand why you need to learn'. Another member (P7) added:

The fact that almost all of the parents in our community are farmers – out of 63 families in the village, only three of them have a member working in the office; mainly relying on natural resources for a living tends to contribute to the perception that education is not important, or even unnecessary for them (P7, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).



Photo 9: (Left and Right) Primary school children are helping their mothers to catch fish

Source: Author.

4.4.5 Meeting the needs of disadvantaged children

According to the BNC, disadvantaged children are girls, children with disabilities and children from minority groups who cannot speak Lao. The findings from interviews and the focus group

reveal how the needs of these disadvantaged groups are addressed. While cases of disabled children and non-Lao speakers are frequently mentioned, the case for girls is not presented. Most of the interviewees (P1, P4 and P5) clearly indicate that children with disabilities are granted assistive devices based on the special needs of each person. Two other interviewees (P2 and P3) looked a bit confused and finally admitted that they have no knowledge about this issue.

In terms of non-Lao speaking children, all the parents confirmed that this was not a problem because all grade one students could speak Lao even though some of them were from the Makong minority group where the language is only in spoken form. They explained that this generation of the group within their community tend to communicate better in Lao than in their native language (Parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

In the in-depth interviews P1 also said: "The project helps disabled children by providing them with assistive devices such as wheelchairs for those who cannot walk" (August 18, 2018); P4 said: "The need of children with disabilities has been addressed. For example, wheelchairs were granted to school children to facilitate their travel between home and school" (August 18, 2018); and P5 agreed: "Disabled children were given facilities based on their special needs such as wheelchairs, glasses, etc" (August 18, 2018).

In the focus group discussion, parents also raised an issue reflecting the potential cause of the disability. Regarding solutions for disadvantaged children, one member (P6) said: "Disabled children are given assistive devices based on individual needs so that they can attend school. Some were granted wheelchairs while others were given glasses". P6, along with other two members (P1 and P4), added that "One of the factors contributing to disability is malnutrition." They all pointed their fingers to a neighbour's house and said, "Our neighbour's child is three years old but weighs only 6 kgs, cannot sit up, walk or even speak. His mother did not eat properly while she was pregnant because of a lack of nutritious food" (Parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

4.4.6 Suggestions for improvement

Recommendations for project improvement varied among interviewees and focus group members. However, most of them (P1, P2, P5 and P6) suggested that further learning aids should be provided. P1 proposed that, "If possible, the project should continue supplying

basic learning materials because many parents are still lacking them” (In-depth interview, August 18, 2018). Similarly, P2 stated, “If possible, I would propose the project should annually provide each family with approximately 3-4 books because in our community there are many of those, including me, who are very poor and struggling with affording these learning aids” (In depth-interview, August 18, 2018). Likewise, P5 also said, “If possible, the project should continue providing learning aids for children as many families, including mine, are still struggling with affording these materials” (In-depth interview, August 18, 2018). Apart from learning aids supply, P6 proposed that school meals should also be taken into consideration:

This is because there are a number of those who are living in poverty and do not have enough food to eat. As a result, they face malnutrition and, of course, they are not ready to attend school under this circumstance (P6, parents’ focus group, August 18, 2018).

Other members seemed to agree with him but did not add anything.

Trust and length of the project are defined as other areas for improvement. P1 explained:

Based on my observation, children usually feel frightened when seeing the project’s staff coming to our village. I therefore recommend that the project, first and foremost, should somehow build relationships with children as to ensure that they are not seen as strangers prior to implementing any activities designed to encourage them to attend school (P1, in-depth interview, August 18, 2018).

In relation to the project length, P4 also argued:

It should be extended at least 1-2 years because pupils have not adapted well to new intended learning activities which help improve learning outcome. Unlike school children in a city, students in our community are slow learners because they have to spend a considerably large amount of time helping parents work and find food. They do not have enough time to focus on study. I therefore think that the extension would enable them to adjust themselves to new learning methods (P4, parents’ focus group, August 18, 2018).

Two members of the focus group (P6 and P7) agreed with P4’s suggestion, and emphasised that there should be an extension for at least one year to ensure that children are fluent in applying what they have learnt.

Further training for village volunteers was also recommended. After the project comes to an end, training should be given to village volunteers at least once a year in order to foster efficiency and continuity of reading activity implementation within the village. Along with this, more reading classes should be added to increase the frequency of learning sessions for students. If training was not provided at the end of the project's operation, the volunteers would teach the same things and eventually forget teaching procedures as their class is held only once a week (P6, parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

4.5 Findings from teachers

Findings in this section are based on in-depth interviews with three local primary school teachers, a four-member focus group, and personal communication with a school director and an official who has a relevant background. All of the teachers had participated in the project training and have applied their new-found knowledge and skills to teaching.

4.5.1 Teachers' profiles

When this research was conducted, there were four teachers at Phonesa-ard Primary School, including a school director. The in-depth interviews were conducted with three teachers (T1, T2 and T3). These three interviewees also participated in the focus group with another participant (T4). Their short profiles are presented below (see *Table 5*).

Teacher 1 (T1)	A grade 5 teacher living in downtown of Xaybouathong, approximately 7 kms from the researched community. Has 13 years teaching experience and has attended the training provided by the BNC.
Teacher 2 (T2)	A teacher of grade 1 and grade 2 and a local resident living in the researched community. She graduated from Teacher Training College in Saravan province, has nine years teaching experience and has joined the BNC training.
Teacher 3 (T3)	A grade 4 teacher, and a local resident living in the researched community. He graduated from Teacher Training College in Savannakhet Province, he has four years teaching experience and has attended the BNC training.
Teacher 4 (T4)	A grade 1 teacher living in the centre of Xaybouathong district, about 7 kms from the researched community. She graduated from Teacher Training College in Saravan province, has 15 years teaching experience and has joined the training provided by the BNC.

Table 5: Teachers' profiles

Source: Author.

4.5.2 Benefits of the project

Similar to the findings from the parents, learning material allocation is identified as one of the key benefits among teachers. This allocation has contributed to the establishment of a reading club, a reading camp and a reading corner within the community. According to an official from Khammouane Provincial Education and Sports Service [PESS], the reading club is held at a school where students can easily access resource materials and do their reading using a 'reading buddy approach' (an approach that pairs older and younger students) on weekdays. The reading camp is an extra reading class that is run outside the school by village volunteers once a week during school holidays. It is usually held at a volunteer's house, but sometimes takes place in public place such as a village office yard. The reading corner is held at home by parents. All parents are advised to prepare a space where they can sit with their children and help them read or study in general. Such space is also used as a place where children can keep their materials tidy. The setting up of these three learning activities is aimed at promoting a reading culture for school children.



Photos 10: (Left) Resource materials given to the researched community. (Right) An example of reading corner.

Source: Author.

An official explained that the purpose of the provision of the resources materials was to create book banks for the villages and, in each target village, two book banks had been established, one at school and the other one at a village volunteers' house:

The project brought in our community two sets of teaching-learning materials which are very helpful. One set was given to the school and another set was given to village volunteers

who teach students after normal classes. The materials include storybooks, coloured pencils, small black writing boards, glues, scissors, tapes, A4 papers, flashcards, etc (T3, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

All parents are invited to borrow those materials, either from teachers or village volunteers, as a way to encourage their children to learn at home (Personal communication with an official from PESS, August 16, 2018).

The project brought into our community resource materials which can help reduce the dropout rate. This is because the materials can be used in reading camps led by village volunteers and in reading corners led by parents. The given materials include storybooks, pencils, coloured pencils, rubbers, etc (T1, focus group, August 31, 2018).

Based on the explanation of the official from PESS, in-depth interviews and the focus group, a pattern of reading activities within the researched community can be illustrated below (see *Figure 16*).

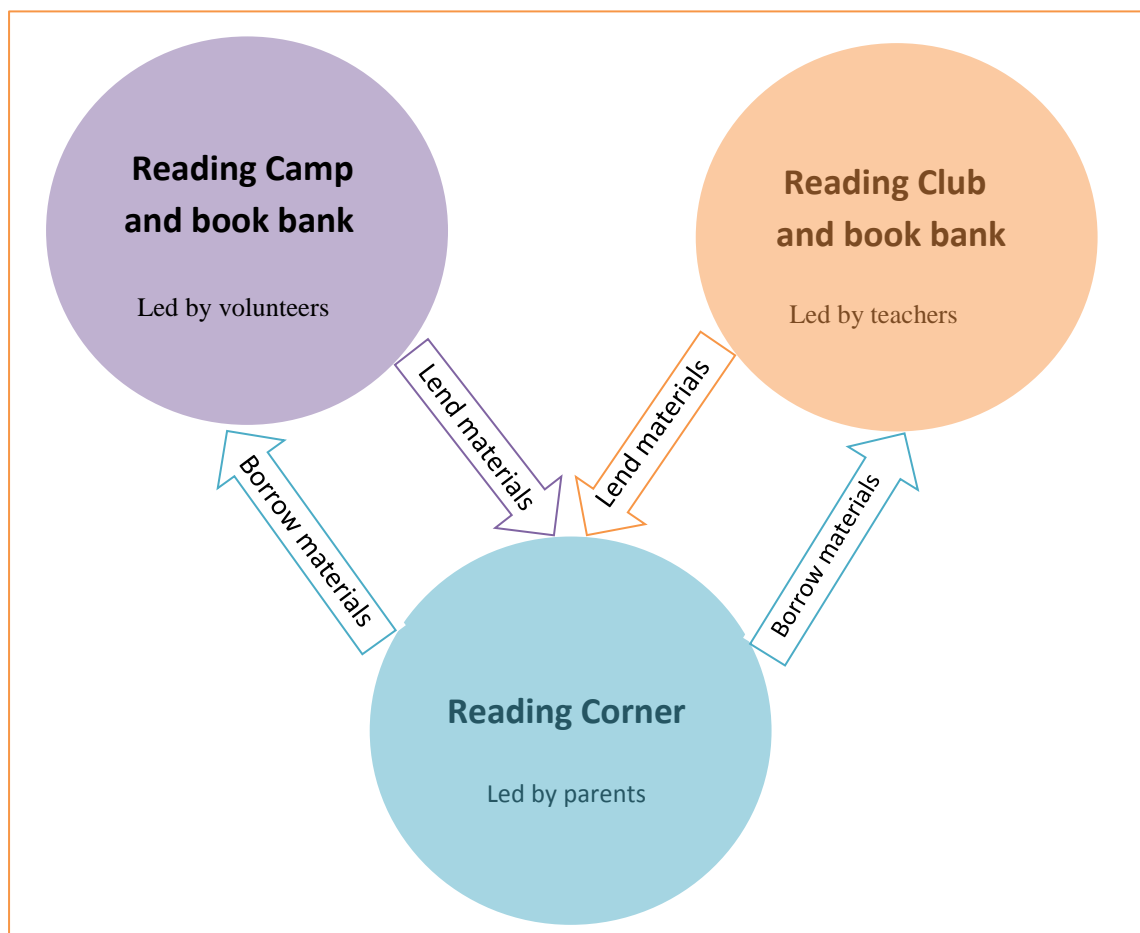


Figure 16: Reading activities within the researched community.

Source: Author.

Pedagogical knowledge improvement is another benefit identified by teachers. All teachers were engaged in training on teaching methods in the early stages of the project implementation. With new teaching techniques, in conjunction with new materials, teachers have helped students to learn more effectively:

The project provides training for us on teaching methods from grade 1 to grade 5. For example, a four-week course training, designed to inspire grade-1 students to learn and make them familiar with the school environment and instructional language of schooling, is organised for grade-1 teachers. Training content includes uses of stories, games and songs in teaching and guest lecture-giving in order to improve quality of teaching (T1, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

One of the benefits is we have new knowledge of teaching methods gained from the training and when we applied these new teaching methods in classes, students learnt more quickly because the new ways of teaching are more understandable. Previously, we repeatedly used a teacher-centered approach with a limitation of visual aids and authentic objects, so it is difficult to enable students to learn and leads to a boring learning atmosphere. With new teaching methods and materials from the project, students find it easy to understand lessons as they can see attractive visual aids and touch authentic objects (T2, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

The explanation from T3 (below) and teachers' focus group member T1 (further below), demonstrates a variety of newly gained teaching techniques:

I have learnt about how to help students learn reading and writing. For example, in case students cannot keep their writing straight on the lines of the book, I asked them to use a ruler as a controller in keeping their writing straight. I have also learnt about how to help weak students learn using basic techniques. For instance, I let them participate in classroom activities more frequently. Sometimes, I ask them to form words by using flashcards. I observed that it is effective. They have made progress in learning (T3, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

Using visual aids like colourful pictures to help students learn consonants and word formation. For example, students are shown a picture of a chicken, and asked what the initial letter of the word 'chicken' is, and how the word is spelled (T1, teachers' focus group, August 31, 2018).

Dropout resolution is also identified as a beneficial outcome of the project. In responding to interview questions about what they have learnt and what benefits they have derived from

the project, T2 indicated that, apart from new teaching techniques, she has “learnt about community engagement – talking to parents whose children drop out of school in order to bring them back to school” (T2, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018). In this respect, she explained:

I, as a teacher, together with BNC staff, meet and talk with parents at home to advise them to support their children’s study. In line with the convincing advice, we provide them with fundamental learning aids like books and pencils because we found out that one of the major causes of dropout is a lack of these materials. As a result, parents are proud of our support and ready to resend their children to school. We, as primary school teachers, had done this before, but it did not work because we lacked the material support (ibid).

4.5.3 Participation obstacles

From teachers’ perspectives, poverty and parents’ attitudes towards children’s education are viewed as obstacles in supporting children’s access to quality primary education. In a focus group discussion, T1 argued that:

One of the main factors that affect primary education access and achievement of children in our community is family economic impoverishment. Some parents are still struggling with supplying learning materials and school uniforms to their children (Teachers’ focus group, August 31, 2018).

Other members (T2, T3 and T4) believed that this issue directly affected parents’ attitudes towards children’s education and forced them to keep their children out of school:

Parents’ attitudes about their children’s education is another major factor. Some parents are not aware of the importance of education, so they do not care whether or not their kids go to school. They even want their child to help them work in the field or take care of younger siblings (T2, T3 and T4, teachers’ focus group, August 31, 2018).

All teachers’ focus group members concluded that “generally, parents do not encourage their children to go to school” (Teachers’ focus group, August 32, 2018).

Teachers do not face any difficulties in participating in the project or applying what they have learnt. This is because training is held in a local town, which is not too far from the community, so teachers find it easy to attend. The training on teaching methodology mainly focuses focus on creating teaching materials by using resources available in local communities. Doing this

means that the teaching materials can be created for free, so teachers do not need to worry about expenses:

As the project encouraged us to invent teaching aids using surrounding resources, I find it easy to do so. For example, stones, which we can get from several places, can be used as a teaching material to help students learn numbers by counting them (T1, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

I have no problem in applying what I have learnt from the project, as teaching materials recommended by the project can be created using surrounding natural resources (T3, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

4.5.4 Meeting the needs of disadvantaged children

Disadvantaged children's needs are addressed through both assistive device provision and special care. As with the findings from the parents, the case of female children (as one group of disadvantaged children defined by the BNC) is not included. Only children with disabilities, and those who are from minority groups, are mentioned. This is because, according to the findings from parents, most parents value gender equality in education, so girls are not likely to be seen as a disadvantaged group within the community:

Disabled children were given assistive devices like wheelchairs. Students who are from minority groups do not face difficulties with the instructional language of schooling (Lao language). They are familiar with it before coming to school because it is also a language that they and their family members use to communicate with people in wider societies. They use their own language only with their group members (T1, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

Assistive devices, like wheelchairs, were granted to children with disabilities. I, as a teacher, was advised to give them extra care when teaching. For example, organising appropriate seats for them and adjusting their learning materials if necessary, such as wrapping pencils with papers or tissues to make it easier for them to hold (T2, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

For minority group students, pictures are used to help them learn Lao language. For example, I showed a picture of a buffalo and asked them to say the word in their own language. Then I said the word in Lao and asked them to follow. Finally, I stuck that picture, with the Lao word on its bottom, on the board so that they can see how the word is written. For disabled children like those who are partially deaf, I let them sit at the front row, so they are more likely to hear what I said (T3, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

4.5.5 Suggestions for improvement

All of the interviewees and focus group members were satisfied with the project's engagement. To keep improving the quality of basic education however, most of them suggested that future academic support, such as training on new teaching approaches, should be provided because it "will help us stay updated and improve the quality of teaching" (T2, in-depth interview, August 29, 2018). In particular, T3 suggested that there should be more training on how to deal with weak students to ensure that they are able to read and write after finishing primary school, stating, "We appreciate all support from the project, but if possible, future academic training should be provided for us to continue improving the quality of primary education" (Teachers' focus group, August 31, 2018).

A suggestion from T1 is similar to those of many parents as he expressed his concern over a number of students after the end of the project. He said that the number of students might decrease if future support for learning materials was not available. He claimed that the provision of two books and pencils per student each year would be enough to encourage them to learn, claiming, "I, as a school director, may use part of the school funds to buy these basic learning materials for students if they are not provided by external development agents" (In-depth interview, August 29, 2018).

According to the teachers' focus group (August 31, 2018), any similar projects coming to the community in the future should focus more on building parenting skills which would help the parent to understand how basic education could benefit their children's lives. More importantly, when engaging with parents, the application of audio-visual aids should be taken into account, as parents tend to better understand when receiving information this way. They could be shown a video about the differences between the lives of those who are educated and those who are not:

Parenting skill training should be done by external actors because we, as local people, have repeatedly done it, but it did not work. Parents inferred that we are the same people talking about the same boring thing, so why should they care? We, as local people, noticed that parents tend to listen to someone coming from outside the community, particularly from the project. We believe that if our recommendation is considered, parents would care more about their children's school attendance (Teachers' focus group, August 31, 2018).

4.6 Findings from BNC staff

The interviews and personal communication with two BNC staff (BS1 and BS2), both of whom work in the field, provide insight as to how the project engages the community from the beginning, and how it contributes to change in the community and its people.

4.6.1 Community engagement

At the beginning of the BNC project, during the school year 2016-17, a baseline assessment of children's reading habits and skills was undertaken by the Implementation Management Committee [IMC]. The IMC was established by BEQUAL and is comprised of members at all levels, ranging from local to national. Out of 22 target villages in Xaybouathong district, four villages were selected for conducting the survey. The survey would be conducted again at the end of the project (the end of September 2018) (BS1, personal communication, August 23, 2018).

The interviews with BS1 and BS2 disclosed that a number of training and activities had been implemented to raise the awareness of parents about the importance of children's education and children's school attendance. Initially, according to BS2, training on equality and the rights of a child to education was provided for parents and Village Education Development Committee [VEDC] members. This was done to encourage them to support school attendance for children regardless of gender, ethnicity and physical or mental conditions. BS2 demonstrated this when he claimed that parents should understand that disabled people have the same right to education and opportunity as non-disabled people and, therefore deserve support. He argued "Although they cannot do many things like normal people, there must be something that they can do and even better than those who are not disabled" (BS2, in-depth interview, August 22, 2018).

A four-week course was designed in order to familiarise grade 1 students with the school environment and to provide primary school teachers training on teaching methods before school started (BS2, in-depth interview, August 22, 2018). A set of activities is implemented in each village and includes introducing child development (from one day old to seven years); presenting everyday relationships between parents and children; telling stories (encouraging parents to tell stories to children before bedtime using story books provided by the project); telling stories and discussing them (parents may ask comprehension questions after finishing telling the story); invention (parents may teach children how to invent alphabets or numbers

by using available materials such as paper); and creating a reading room (advising parents to create a reading room at home, called the Reading Corner) (BS1, in-depth interview, August 20, 2018).

To address the needs of disadvantaged children, a small grant of Lak 4 million (approximately US\$500) was allocated to each target village in the early stages of the project. The grant was used to support activities that promote education access and participation, such as assistive devices for children with disabilities and learning materials for children who were forced to drop out because of a lack of materials. Those who are most disadvantaged will receive the grant and this is decided upon by members of the VEDC, based on the level of disadvantage (BS1, personal communication, August 21, 2018).

The project has contributed to benefits in the community; for example, a primary school is equipped with a sink to promote sanitation and hygiene; and pupils' behaviour has changed in a positive way which can be seen in their willingness to participate in classroom activities, particularly reading. As with the findings from the teachers, the dropout issue has also been challenged; there has not been a single dropout since the project was implemented in the community. Parents now realise how parenting skills can contribute to their children's education, and better understand their role in encouraging and helping children to learn. As BS2 argued:

Parents have a deeper understanding of their roles in supporting their children to go to school and to assist them in learning, after being trained by our team on parenting skills as well as the rights of a child to education. Previously, they did not know how to help their children learn, especially those who are illiterate. They did not help them, not because they did not want to, but because they were not sure if they could help as they are not able to read and write. Now, they realise that their parenting skills can contribute to their children's learning (BS2, in-depth interview, August 22, 2018).

BS1 defines community benefits as the following:

I think the community definitely benefits from our project as we are supporting three main areas: reading, sanitation and disability. Based on my observation, children are more eager to participate in reading activities. Since supportive reading activities have been implemented, there is no dropout. The other benefit is that a school has a sink. Disability support is also a benefit the community gained from our project. Disabled children are

given assistive devices based on individual mental or physical condition, such as wheelchairs, glasses, hearing aids, etc (BS1, in-depth interview, August 20, 2018).



Photos 11: (Left) Posters related to hygiene and sanitation promotion. (Right) A hand wash sink.

Source: Author.

4.6.2 Factors hindering children's access to and achievement of basic education

Akin to the findings from the parents and teachers, the BNC staff also define poverty as one of the main challenges to quality, basic education access and achievement in children. BS2 indicated that some families were very poor and lacked literacy skills (also identified as a challenge), making it difficult for them to support their children to study (In-depth interview, August 22, 2018). BS1 also suggested that a parents' literacy may negatively affect the level of their participation in helping students to learn at home, especially in regards to the Reading Corner:

One of the difficulties in helping parents support children in learning is associated with parent's literacy knowledge and skills. Parents want to teach their children how to read and write, but they are not able to do so because they are illiterate (BS1, in-depth interview, August 20, 2018).

The inadequacy of the school environment is identified as another challenge. Schools in some villages are incomplete (schools that provide for only grade 1-3). According to statistics from DESB (2018), six of 54 primary schools in Xaybouathong district are in complete. BS2 explained that the infrastructure is not designed for people with disabilities:

Primary schools across Laos are not suitable for blind and deaf people. There are only two disability centres nationwide that these people can learn from, but they are very far away. One centre is in Vientiane, the capital city of Laos, and another one is in Louang Prabang province. We offered parents support in sending their children to the centres, but it was denied. In Xaybouathong district, there are many small villages located far from each other, and in these villages primary schools are incomplete. If students want to continue their study at grade 4 and 5, they have to travel a long way to complete schools in bigger villages. In this case, those who do not have vehicles face further difficulties (BS2, in-depth interview, August 22, 2018).

BS1 also shared a similar opinion about incomplete schools and concluded that “this condition forces them out of school before completing grade 5” (In-depth interview, August 20, 2018). With regards to parents’ illiteracy however, solutions have been provided. Parents were advised to use pictorial or story books containing colourful pictures to help students learn by showing them pictures and asking relevant questions. For example, parents may show a picture of a buffalo and ask the child a question about how many legs or ears a buffalo has. Another solution is that parents were advised to encourage older children, who study at a higher grade, to teach the younger ones.

The instructional language of schooling (Lao language) is seen as an additional obstacle, although it was not found to be in the researched community (as confirmed by community leaders). In many other target villages, as BS1 argues, grade 1 students who are from the Makong minority ethnic group cannot communicate well in Lao. This minority group has its own language which is not used in schools. However, BS1 said the number of grade 1 students from the Makong ethnic group was very small and village volunteers could help with translation (In-depth interview, August 22, 2018).

4.6.3 Reflection and expectations

When reviewing overall activities implementation and outcomes, BNC staff said more could be done to better help all children access quality schooling and achieve a quality, primary level education. They expect to integrate writing classes into supportive learning activities, to increase the frequency of extra reading classes conducted by village volunteers, and to increase the frequency of monitoring and feedback. As BS1 said:

If our project extends its phase of operation, I would add reading and writing activities that can be implemented after normal classes. Currently, village volunteers solely conduct a

reading class which is held only one time a week and I think it is not enough. It should be done at least 2-3 times a week. At the same time, our team would monitor the implementation of these activities and give feedback more frequently – twice a month, instead of once a month (BS1, in -depth interview, August 20, 2018).

Moreover, they expect to see teachers paying more attention to students from grade 1-3, as they indicate that a number of grade 3 students still struggle with reading and writing. They claim that the ability to read and write must be acquired by grade 3, or even lower than that, to ensure that learning progress can be made when advancing to grade 4 and 5. This is because the course content in higher grades is more advanced (BS2, in-depth interview, August 22, 2018).

4.7 Expectations about the education needs of the community

Expectations about the education needs of the community are held by three different groups; namely parents, teachers and the BNC staff (see *Table 6* below). This section of the findings chapter is derived from a summary of overall key findings from these three groups. As the expectations are put forth by the different stakeholders concerned, their collective opinion can be perceived as a holistic guideline for similar future projects which aim to improve the quality of primary education of the researched community and other Lao communities that share similar conditions. The following table presents the different stakeholders' expectations.

Stakeholders	Difficulties	Education Needs
BNC Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate school environments: Many villages have an incomplete primary school (a school with only 3 grades). Pupils have to travel to other villages for grade 4 and 5 and face difficulties like a lack of vehicles and bad road conditions. The school infrastructure is not appropriate for children with disabilities. Teaching and learning performance: Grade 3 students are still unable to basically read and write. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability of a complete primary school in each village to provide adequate school environments. More attention must be paid to pupils from grade 1 to 3 to ensure that they are able to basically read and write before proceeding to grade 4 and 5.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty: Leads to a lack of school readiness which forces children out of school. Limited communication tools: Parents tend to not understand how basic education has an impact on life when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of basic learning materials, particularly, books, pencils and a school uniform. Application of other communication tools, especially audio-visual aids, in

	<p>there is only the oral communication channel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition: Although it does not affect the school attendance of children, it affects their ability to learn. 	<p>conjunction with oral communication with parents to deepen their understanding of the impact of primary education.</p>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty: Leads to a lack of school readiness. • Malnutrition: Children do not have good concentration skills for learning when they have poor nutrition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a school meal and basic learning materials, particularly, books, pencils and a school uniform.

Table 6: Expectations about the education needs of the community

Source: Author

4. 8 Actors and factors

4.8.1. Actors

Based on my observations and personal communication with local residents during my stay in the community, the implementation of the project involves actors from many levels, including parents, teachers, village volunteers, community leaders, BNC staff, DESB officers and PESD officers. A group of parents, comprised of 20 families, is formed to represent all parents in the village and to function as a role model for supporting children's school attendance and reading skills. However, this does not mean that the rest of the parents within the village are not engaged. According to BS1 and BS2, the group of 20 families is meant to ease the project implementation in terms of monitoring and evaluation. Regarding role models, parents are advised to actively take part in helping children read when they are at home (in the Reading Corner), using materials provided by the project, creating learning facilities for their children, as well as applying parental skills to teach them. When at home, for example, parents tell children not to watch too much television and use stories books to teach them how to read. In cases where parents are illiterate, they may instead encourage older sisters or brothers to teach the younger children.

Local primary teachers are viewed as core actors in the community as their role has direct impact on children's learning performance. Teachers are engaged through attending the project training on teaching methods, which is designed to include disadvantaged children such as non-Lao speakers and children with disabilities. They are trained to create individual education plans [IEP] in order to respond to the needs of disadvantaged students, particularly

those with disabilities (Personal communication with a primary school director, August 27, 2018).

Village volunteers act as a teacher's assistant, conducting extra reading classes for pupils from grade 1-3, both during school terms and school holidays. The ratio of volunteers to pupils is one to 20. There are four village volunteers in the researched community. These volunteers also help BNC field workers organise and implement activities in the community (Personal communication with a village chief, August 14, 2018). Community leaders, including VEDC members and the village chief, coordinate with BNC staff and have multiple tasks in facilitating project implementation. Their tasks include introducing the project to the community, selecting parents (20 families from the whole community) to be role models for the project, encouraging community members to actively participate in the project, monitoring and giving advice on their performance. After the project ends, the community leaders continue to encourage parents and volunteers to play the role of supporting the school attendance of children (Personal communication with a member of the VEDC, August 18, 2018). BNC staff, in partnership with DESB and PESD officers, have the responsibility of selecting teachers and approaching village volunteers for training and workshop participation, encouraging them to take action, monitoring, and giving feedback on their performance.

4.8.2. Factors

Looking at the overall findings of the chapter, it is evident that the main factors which affect children's access to, and achievement of quality primary school are associated with poverty and the inadequacy of the school environment. Poor parents are unable to supply children with needed learning materials, which directly affects school attendance. Poverty also results in poor care and poor home stimulation, as parents have limited time to instill learning in their children's minds, with most of their time spent on farming and seeking food. Eventually, children are required to help their parents work, to seek food, or to look after younger siblings at home. As a result, they have limited time to focus on study which affects their school progress. In terms of the school environment, infrastructure plays an important role in terms of accessing education, and in many cases is not appropriate for those who are disabled. Children with mobility issues for example, face difficulties in traveling to school along roads which are poorly maintained and dangerous.

4.9 The involvement of media in the project

As specified in a previous section of this chapter, approved media use in the project includes brochures, posters, CDs and videos. According to BS1, videos were used when engaging with parents and village volunteers at early stages, to demonstrate how to tell children stories using story books provided by the project. This type of media is also applied with members of the VEDC, to demonstrate how to manage the US\$500 grants allocated for addressing the needs of disadvantaged children within the village (Personal communication, August 23, 2018). Another type of media used in the project, based on my observations and personal communication with local people, is posters. The posters are used to promote hygiene and sanitation and are displayed at only one place, the school (Personal communication with a member of the VEDC and village chief, August 19, 2018). The in-depth interviews with teachers and the teachers' focus group, as well as the in-depth interviews with parents and the parents' focus group, also revealed the same results as those given by BS1 and the VEDC member; that the application of local media does not include radio and television.

Media involvement at national level however, is in a form of television programme, called "*Learn Together*". The programme, which airs every Sunday on three different channels and at different times (Lao Police Station TV at 9:00-9:15 am, Lao National TV Channel 3 at 4:35-4:50 pm and Lao Star TV 5:00-5:15 pm), encompasses a series of creative and fun animated segments designed to assist children in learning through reading and play (BEQUAL, n.d.-b). However, *Learning Together* is not popular in the community. Although the majority of villagers have access to these three Lao television channels, the children and young people in the community prefer to watch Thai television (Parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

4.10 Findings summary

The aim of the BNC project is to ensure that all children, especially girls, non-Lao speaking children and children with disabilities in disadvantaged communities have access to quality, primary education, with support from parents and community. The engagement of the project involves local community leaders, primary school teachers, village volunteers and parents, who function as actors by participating in the activities which are designed to increase children's attendance in quality, primary schooling.

A sufficient level of understanding of the project's purpose can be seen among the participants who are parents. Although most of them are illiterate, they understand that involvement in the project will be beneficial for their children's education. For them, the definition of participation seems to be a state of being involved, doing or following what they are told or advised, rather than sharing, exchanging, and being involved in decision-making or co-designing the project. However, they are able to use their parenting skills, following the training delivered by the project, to provide basic support to their children's study.

Looking from three different perspectives (parents, teachers and the BNC staff), it can be seen that there has been a positive change in children's behaviour and that the needs of disadvantaged children have been addressed. All parties agree that the children in the community have better learning performances as they have become more confident and eager to learn following implementation of the project. Teachers and BNC staff have confirmed that the dropout rate has fallen to zero. In terms of disadvantaged children, those who are disabled were given assistive devices to enable them to attend school. For those who are from minority groups, a Lao language course was provided at the early stages of the project operation.

As identified by the three participant groups, the main factors that affect children's access to, and achievement of, primary education are associated with poverty and the school environment. Parents living in poverty find it difficult to provide children with the necessary learning materials and this directly affects the school readiness of children. School infrastructure is often not appropriate for children with disabilities. Some primary schools are incomplete and only teach grade 1-3, which forces students to travel to other distant villages to continue their studies at grade 4 and 5. In this situation, those who do not have access to a vehicle face even further difficulties.

The communicative ecology of the researched community is considerably diverse. Face-to-face communication is seen as the most common mode of communication, followed by two other major forms: television and mobile phone. The next popular mode of communication is Tholakhong. It is seen as a practical and effective tool in terms of making announcements about public policies, regulations and meetings within the community. Other communication

media like radio, the internet and printed materials are available, but very limited. Common means of transportation include motorbikes, bicycles and small tractors.

Within the researched community, communication regarding the involvement of the BNC project is initiated by the village chief and members of the VEDC. Information is then delivered to the rest of the community in the form of face-to-face communication, particularly during meetings. Prior to the meetings, members of the community are informed about the meeting's time and place, and the announcement is usually done through *Tholakhong* (loud speakers) set in the centre of the village. However, the announcement is sometimes made through the word-of-mouth of village volunteers, who act as communication facilitators.

Chapter 5 DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings, integrated with the literature explored in chapter two and other relevant studies. The discussion contributes toward answering the leading research question – *How effective is the community participation in the BNC project in increasing children’s attendance in quality basic education?* It makes this contribution through an analysis of the engagement of the BNC project in the intended community; the level of community participation; the way in which the BNC project contributes to change in the target community; the involvement of the media; the role of the catalysts for change and the barriers and challenges to the project. The researched community context is initially discussed in order to provide a ‘big picture’ of the local setting, and to understand how the local setting may affect the implementation of the BNC project.

5.1 Understanding the local setting

In line with the establishment of a relationship with a local community, Bessette (2004) stresses the importance of understanding the local setting, and argues that such understanding builds trust between development agents and community members. Similarly, Lennie and Tacchi (2013) claim that in order to bring about social change it is vital to understand the local context, and the relationships between local people within that context. Therefore, understanding the context of the community is also important for an educational program like BNC, which aims at increasing children’s school attendance, because as Hearn et al. (2009) argue, it is crucial to observe “everything that could count as a medium of communication. That is, not just press, broadcasting or telecoms, but also roads, buses and trains, visits to neighbours, gossip, and public and private places where people meet to communicate” (as cited in Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 50).

As identified in Chapter Four, educational development issues in the researched community are related to distance, infrastructure and poverty. According to Burkey (1993), poverty is defined as:

[A lack of] infrastructure of communication, resources for maintaining the health and wellbeing of community members in order to sufficiently maintain the community, political systems for leadership and decision-making, educational systems for learning, information sharing and

continuing the culture of the community, and physical and cultural security
(as cited in Dutta, 2011, p. 67).

By reflecting on this definition, it is evident that all of the educational development issues identified in this research are interconnected. These issues are integrated and discussed further in the sections below, to indicate how they affect the lives of local people as well as the operation of the BNC project.

5.2 The engagement of the BNC Project in the intended community

Like other development programmes, the BNC project's aim is at community development. As described by Phillips and Pittman (2009), community development involves a process of developing and boosting collective action to achieve improvement in either one of, or a combination of, the following areas: social, cultural, environmental, political and economic. The findings of this research reveal that to reach the aim of increasing children's participation in quality basic education, which in turn helps fulfill children's development potentials and, ultimately, improves the life of the community, the BNC project took collective action by working closely with all concerned parties such as community members, community leaders and local government officials from education sectors at district and provincial levels. For example, as clearly specified in its objectives, to ensure all children participate in and achieve quality primary education, the BNC project needs to create an attractive learning environment in primary schools, and strengthen mechanisms to create supportive environments in homes. This means that the intervention of the project involves not only primary school teachers but also all members in the community.

The fact that the BNC project involves bringing people from different groups (community leaders, teachers, village volunteers and parents) to work together, reflects an argument made by Tesoriero (2010). He claims that the aim of all community development should include community building, which "involves building social capital, strengthening social interactions within the community, bringing people together and helping them to communicate with each other in a way that can lead to genuine dialogue, understanding and social action" (p. 176). This notion is acknowledged by a member of the VEDC who said one of his roles, as a community leader, was to continue encouraging everyone in the community to keep practicing what they have been trained to do after the project left the community

(Personal communication, August 18, 2018). The VEDC member's statement indicates that social capital, which is the ability of community members to effectively work together for developing and sustaining strong relationships, solving problems, making group decisions, planning and setting goals, and getting things done (Phillips & Pittman, 2009), has been built by the engagement of the BNC programme.

Seeking to expand participation, by encouraging all community members to actively participate in the processes and activities of the community, is a crucial task of community development (Tesoriero, 2010). In this case, the BNC project maximises participation through the formation of parent and village volunteer groups. These two groups, along with local primary school teachers and community leaders, are involved in the activities designed to promote an increased attendance of children in basic education. While parents play a role in supporting children's learning, volunteers conduct additional reading classes. Teachers, who attend the project training, utilise their gained knowledge and skills in their teaching. In the meantime, community leaders urge all community members to actively take partake in their responsibilities. This suggests that, at a local level, everyone in the community participates in the community development process and activities in order to meet the objectives. To assist children who are disadvantaged by language, a Lao language course, conducted by teachers and assisted by village volunteers, are provided for grade 1 students at early stages of the project. Activities such as this help to increase children's participation at school and to achieve the ultimate goal of the project.

Sanoff (2000) differentiates how development agents engage the community. He states that, while development programmes of the past 40 years have excluded the involvement of community members from key decision making, budget control and risk taking, community intervention in the present era advocates for community's vital involvement in design and implementation. BS1's confirmation that the project employs the same set of activities in all target villages in Xaybouathong district (In-depth interview, August 23, 2018) indicates that the project design and objectives are set by outside professionals. Although groups of parents and village volunteers are formed by the project, they are not involved in the process of programme design and decision making. Instead, the groups are formed to help implement the project activities. However, the groups, along with local primary school teachers and community leaders, are involved in the process of identifying education needs during early

stages of the project operation. They are engaged in a discussion about the main factors which prevent children achieving primary education and in finding solutions. As explained by teacher 2 (T2), she and BNC staff talked with parents in homes in order to find out why their children dropped out of school. What they found was that parents could not provide children with learning materials because of poverty. To address these needs, the project gave such parents the required materials, so children could re-enter schooling (In-depth interview, August 29, 2018). The findings on meeting the needs of disadvantaged children also revealed that the needs of children with disabilities had been addressed through distribution of assistive devices.

Considering how the researched community has been engaged, the intervention of the BNC project mainly reflects the way development agents have engaged with communities in the past four decades (Sanoff, 2000) in which community members only take part in implementation but not design. In meaningful participation, Bessette (2004) argues that local people must be viewed as beneficiaries and development partners, taking part in both activities implementation and the process of decision making, as well as the development initiative planning. Although community members involved in this research have opportunities to identify their needs regarding access to quality primary education, the opportunities are given during the implementation of the project, not during the design and planning process.

5.3 Level of community participation

As discuss in Chapter Two, participation is categorised into four types, each of which refers to different levels of participation: 1) passive participation, 2) participation by consultation, 3) participation by collaboration and, 4) empowerment participation (Tufté & Mefalopulos, 2009). This section discusses and analyses the engagement of community members in the BNC project and identifies which participation level their engagement falls within.

People in the researched community are well aware of the BNC project. This is probably because they are familiar with the name of the project operator, World Vision Laos [WVL]. According to BNC staff, WVL had previously implemented an Area Development Programme [ADP] in the community for a five-year period (see Chapter One for more details). It is not surprising, then, that when I first entered in the community, that people assumed I was one

of the BNC staff. This suggests that the local people have some sense that the project has been embedded in their community. However, they had a tendency to perceive that they would gain benefit either in the form of funds or materials allocation, rather than in the form of technical advice and support, which can be put into practice to result in self-reliance. Based on the findings from the parents P1, P2, P5 and P6, the supply of future learning material is a high priority among what they recommend to the BNC project (In-depth interview, August 18, 2018). This recommendation is consistent with that of a local primary school director (T1), who raised concerns about a number of students and said that the numbers may decrease if further learning aids are not provided (In-depth interview, August 29, 2018). This perception contrasts with that of Bessette (2004), who argues that, for meaningful participation in the process of development, people “must develop the perception that they can make a difference, moving from a passive attitude of waiting for donors to an attitude of self-help” (p. 45). He also claims that the change of attitude must not come only from outside professionals, but also from community members.

As identified in Chapter Four, communication actors in the researched community include community leaders (the village chief and VEDC member), village volunteers, teachers and parents. These actors have a different role to play in implementing the project’s activities which are designed to increase children’s school attendance. At a community level, community leaders are generally perceived as powerful people and general members of the community (villagers) may feel uncomfortable speaking to them or in front of them. The interaction between community leaders and villagers in this case study however, is natural and lively. This was noticeable during the parents’ focus group, in which a member of the VEDC and the village chief also joined. All parents perceived everyone else as just another one of the group members and expressed their opinion openly. For example, when discussing children with disabilities in the village, most of them, without any hesitation, shared the same opinion that such disabilities are partially attributable to malnutrition (Parents’ focus group, August 18, 2018). They saw community leaders as consultants and felt comfortable talking to them. They also perceived them as active listeners, who were attentive to the voicing of common concerns within the community, trusting them to discuss issues with local government officials in order to seek solutions.

Looking back at the findings on the communicative ecology of the researched community, it is clear that, apart from face-to-face communication and mobile phone use, Tholakhong were the next most prevailing communication tool in the village. Community leaders find them useful and effective for announcing new public policies, activities for the day, and meeting times and locations; they are especially useful for the BNC project intervention when a subject matter requires the opinions of villagers. For villagers, meetings arranged within the village are seen as a forum where they can discuss common issues. My personal communication with community leaders indicates that the Tholakhong are mainly used for meeting arrangements because it is fast and reaches all members at the same time, and it has become part of community life. In relation to the BNC project, Tholakhong are employed to inform community members about dates and location they need to gather for activities with the project team.

Despite the fact that all community members can be reached and kept informed through the previously mentioned medium of communication, the way they are engaged with cannot be defined as genuine participation (Deshler & Socks, 1985, as cited in Sanoff, 2000). This is because community members are not empowered to take control of the action. The communication between the project team and the community members appears to be monologic (one-way communication) rather than dialogic (two-way communication) (Tuftte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Although they have a space for discussion, it does not happen in the process of planning and decision making. Rather, the discussion is about how to implement activities which is already designed by external development practitioners. Because, in this instance, villagers are present to do what they are told, their participation level can be referred to as what Deshler and Socks (1985, as cited in Sanoff, 2000) call 'pseudo participation'. One of the participants (P1) actually said: "I had no reason to decide to participate in the project, but I did so because I was told to do it" (In-depth interview, August 18, 2018). This statement is supported by findings from the teachers' focus group, where all members affirmed that they were not given the opportunity to give feedback or recommendations on the project operation. Instead, they were monitored and evaluated on their teaching performance when applying new techniques gained from the project training (Teachers' focus group, August 31, 2018).

The points raised by the parents' focus group and community leaders however, indicate that feedback and recommendations were sought in the assessment process of the project. To reflect on the implementation of the project, parents, along with community leaders, are invited to attend a meeting held in the village to discuss the project's strengths and weaknesses. However, the discussion takes place in such a way that input from local people is garnered by having them answer a set of questions posed by the project team. As P4 and P6 confirmed during the parents' focus group discussion, there was no other way of giving feedback or recommendations. Comment boxes were not available in the community (Parents' focus group, August 18, 2018).

By summarising the ways community members engage in the project, it can be concluded that the level of community participation remains low and could be categorised as the second type of participation identified by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), 'participation by consultation'. As described in Chapter Two, participation by consultation is a process in which stakeholders answer questions which are posed by external experts or researchers. Input from stakeholders is unlimited, but at the final stage of analysis all power in making decisions rests with the outside professionals, who are not obliged to incorporate the input of stakeholders.

5.4 How the BNC Project contributes to change in the target community

Communication for development [C4D] is a communication tool used to enhance participation and social change through the application of various communication methods and channels such as interpersonal communication (public meetings or hearings, field visits, workshop, seminars, etc), community media (printed and electronic materials, radio and television), and modern information technologies (social media like Facebook, Twitter, etc.). In project management C4D is aimed at facilitating dialogue with partners, authorities and beneficiaries in order to create a sense of local ownership of projects and ensure that the impact is sustainable (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC, 2016). In the implementation of the BNC project, interpersonal communication and community media have been used to communicate with members of the intended community to achieve the set goals.

Interpersonal communication, as described by Devito (2009), is an interaction between two or more interdependent people through verbal or non-verbal communication. By its nature, individuals involved in the talks are not only connected, but also independent and therefore the form of the interaction between them can influence one another. In this regard, Bessette (2004) points out that the way development practitioners approach and interact with local people echoes the way communication between two sides is established, and the way this communication is established has an effect on “how involved people will feel about the issues raised and how they will participate – or not – in a research or development initiative” (p. 8). The interpersonal communication applied in the BNC project is in the form of field visits, workshops and seminars. In the early stages, the project team undertook field visits in order to carry out a baseline assessment on the children’s reading habits, skills and needs. Parents and community leaders were engaged through training in equality and the rights of a child to education, while village volunteers and local primary school teachers were trained in teaching methods and techniques. The purpose of these activities was to encourage local people to support increased school attendance of local children regardless of gender, ethnicity and physical or mental conditions (BS2, in-depth interview, August 22, 2018) and ultimately to build social capital (BS1, personal communication, August 23, 2018).

In terms of community media, printed materials, particularly posters related to hygiene and sanitation, were employed and displayed on the school building wall. As Bessette (2004) argues, the posters encourage participants to discuss the illustrated issues with their friends, neighbours or acquaintances. The posters have been designed to be used in conjunction with a hand washing station installed at the local school, in order to promote school children adopting hygienic practice. While identifying beneficial gains in the community, BS1 argues that the project supports reading, sanitation and people with disability (In-depth interview, August 22, 2018).

Another form of community media applied by the BNC project is television. The programme ‘*Learning Together*’ provides educational content for school children and is aired once a week, and runs for about 15 minutes (see Chapter Four for more details). However, as noted in Chapter Four, this educational programme is broadcast by national television stations instead of local ones and tends not to be effective because, although most local people own a television set, the children and young people in particular prefer to watch Thai television

programmes. In this case, it is worth considering actions that could be taken to promote the viewing of Lao programmes.

The project intervention has generated some positive changes at multiple levels, including personal and organisational. At the personal level, children are more eager to learn and more confident to participate in classroom activities. Parents realise that their parenting skills are a significant element in supporting their child's learning and are able to apply them to encourage and help their children to learn the basics, regardless of their own literacy levels. Teachers feel empowered and confident with new teaching methods gained from the project's training. At the organisational level, a local primary school has a greater variety of resource materials with which teachers are able to run a class, and in a way that includes all children such as girls, children with disabilities and those who are from ethnic minority groups. Pupils have access to new and interesting learning materials. This has led to a better quality of primary education and the dropping out rate of dropouts has declined to 0%.

The change would be more effective and longer-lasting if BNC chooses the right communication tools to engage with three potential change agents (discussed in a later section) in order to build relationships, trust and make villagers feel that they are part of the project. Because different contexts require distinct approaches, it is important to select the appropriate tools to communicate with differing audiences (Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC, 2016). Bessette (2004) suggests that development practitioners should consider using communication tools that are already available in the community, and with which people feel comfortable. The findings on communicative ecology reveal that face-to-face communication is predominantly used to exchange information among community members, and this usually takes place at individuals' houses, at grocery shops, or at a local market. This suggests that face-to-face communication is an important channel that the BNC needs to take into account when designing or selecting communication tools because, as supported by similar Vietnam-based research by Le-Quang, "it provides the maximum amount of information to be transmitted during a communication episode" (Mills et al., 2007, as cited in Le-Quang, 2014, p. 101). It is important to select the tools which will enhance two-way communication (Bessette, 2004) because the purpose of tools is to facilitate the process of participatory communication, not simply to spread information.

To reinforce messages about the importance of school attendance, literacy and other related issues, the BNC could take Tholakhong into consideration as they are a well-known means of information dissemination and reach everyone in the community. Since the loudspeaker is already being used to arrange meetings and public announcements, it might be more useful if it is also employed as a channel to deliver radio programmes on a daily basis, since only a few of the community members own a radio. The BNC could also consider an entertainment-education (edutainment) model, (discussed in the following section), as an approach to communication because local people identify it as a practical channel to disseminate information and feel that it is more understandable.

5.5 The involvement of the media

As mentioned in the previous section and in Chapter Four, the media employed in the BNC project is considerably limited. In order to extend communication channels and make information more available for audiences, the BNC could consider employing local radio stations that are operating in nearby districts if funding is available to cover costs. Community radio can be successfully employed to enhance development by enhancing two-way communication and encouraging 'grassroots participation' (Melkote, 1991, as cited in Fuller, 2007; Mody, 1991, as cited in Fuller, 2007; Dagrón, 2001, as cited in Fuller, 2007). A study on tribal audiences in south India revealed that local community radio needed to adjust its time of broadcast since its audiences were influenced by television. That is, the audience preferred listening to radio in the mornings and watching television in the evenings (Fuller, 2007). It would be worth taking this finding into consideration if the BNC decided to use community radio to engage the researched community.

Community radio has been used in many parts of Lao PDR, particularly in remote areas where access to information is limited. According to the UNDP (2018a), eight community radio stations were launched across Lao PDR by the Community Participation and Community Support Programme in 2011. These radio stations broadcast local news and educational programmes in eight different ethnic languages, aiming to allow marginalised groups to share knowledge and make informed decisions related to their lives. One of the striking examples of community radio in Lao PDR is Lakonepheng Radio Station (UNDP, 2018b), in which a local school teacher volunteers to broadcast a basic education programme to influence her community's attitude toward education and to teach basic education to those who do not

have the opportunity to learn at school. The programme reaches more than 45,000 listeners, most of whom struggle to access even very basic education. This example is also worth the BNC's consideration if planning to employ community radio.

Television is another promising communication tool that can be used to enhance participation of community members. The findings from communicative ecology reveal that most households own a television set on which they can receive free-to-air television, meaning that accessing information through this communication medium is convenient for them. A study on the use of television as a community medium by farmers in rural areas of Bangladesh reveals that television plays an important role in providing farmers with highly useful technical information on various aspects of agriculture (Fuller, 2007). In Basque, television is employed as a medium to promote the use of the Basque language, previously only allowed to be spoken at home, in every sector of society in order to validate local language and culture (Fuller, 2007). In the context of this case study, *Learn Together*, which is produced by BEQUAL, is considered the most relevant programme as it integrates basic education content with entertainment to attract school children. However, since this programme is broadcast only once a week, an increase in its frequency and length of time should be considered. In line with this, appropriate action should be taken to promote the viewing of Lao television programmes due to the fact that most community members prefer to watch Thai programmes.

The point raised by the participating teachers regarding communication media indicates that audio-visual aids are practical tools to deliver information to community members, particularly parents who have limited or even no literacy skills. This suggests that it would be effective to use an edutainment model as an approach to communicate with these audiences. Singhal and Rogers (1999) describe edutainment as "the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour" (as cited in Waisbord, 2001, p. 13). This approach is related to social change from an individual to community level, and focuses on how to use entertainment media to convey information that can contribute to prosocial behaviour (Waisbord, 2001). T3 suggested that more use should be made of audio-visual material because parents better understood messages transmitted this way, such as "a series of videos showing differences between a life of those who are educated and a life of those who are not" (Teachers' focus group, August

31, 2018). As reported by Phrasayamongkhounh (2016), the use of an edutainment model as an approach to communication in the health sector in the context of Lao PDR has led to adolescents' awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention methods and reproductive health. This suggests that parents' awareness of the importance of children's education could potentially be increased if an edutainment model was employed in the education sector.

According to the Internews' Global Theory of Change (2018b), extending access to information at a local level is very important because limited or no access to information contributes to a loss of freedom of expression and a reduction in informed choices. By extending the access, local people have greater freedom of expression, enlarged knowledge and a better understanding of critical local development issues. Once they have an understanding of the issue, they are able to make informed decisions. One of the stories highlighted by Internews (2018a) was the use of media to transmit information to the Maasai community in Tanzania regarding women's rights and health. By cultural practice, women in this community are forced to undergo female genital mutilation [FGM] prior to marriage, which leads to gender-based violence and mental and physical suffering. As a result of the media coverage, this issue has now been addressed. This story indicates how a strengthening of information access significantly contributes to the improvement of community life. It is another aspect that should be taken into consideration when designing community interventions.

5.6 The role of the catalyst for change

According to Figueroa et al. (2002), a potential catalyst of change can be either an internal or external resource of the community such as internal stimulus, a change agent, innovation, policies, technologies or the mass media. Among these catalysts, a change agent is commonly used by NGOs. Moyer, MacAllister and Soifer (2001) refer to change agents as those who represent the general public and "are directly involved and affected by the social problem being addressed, but not the power holders" (p. 25). Change agents play a key role in redefining the problem and demonstrating how it affects every sector in order to allow everyone to engage in the process of resolution. By reflecting on this notion, it is evident that the key change agent in the context of this researched community are the teachers. Compared with other communication actors in the community, (parents, village volunteers and community leaders), the teachers have the most significant role in pursuing the common

goals of the community; that is, in ensuring that all children have access to and achieve primary education. In this regard, teachers not only educate school children, but also work collaboratively with community leaders to motivate and mobilise parents to support and encourage their children to learn. T2, one of teachers, said she met parents at home and talked to them to find out the reason why their children did not go to school in order to seek potential solutions (in-depth interview, August 29, 2018). This suggests that teachers work constructively to help the community resolve social issues.

Apart from helping community members to redefine the problems, change agents promote alternatives in order to bring about social change (Moyer, MacAllister & Soifer, 2001). To illustrate this, Moyer et. al refer to the case of pollution reduction and explain that change agents not only oppose the use of nuclear energy, but also promote the use of renewable energy as an alternative. Similarly, in addition to identifying social problems and demonstrating how basic education has an effect on child's life, teachers can motivate and convince people in the community to change their entrenched attitudes towards education because, according to the teachers' focus group (August 31, 2018), parents generally do not support their child's education because they do not realise how important education is for their child. As part of social change, the teachers aim at increasing the number of pupils enrolling in school. By looking at the overall social issues, it can be argued that social change in this context requires the achievement of the common goal – that all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity and mental or physical condition, have access to and achieve a quality basic education.

Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) study the role of teachers as change agents in regards to school reform and argue that teacher change agents basically have four characteristics: 1) contextual expertise, 2) collaborative expertise, 3) problem-solving expertise and, 4) ownership.

Regarding contextual expertise, teachers are able to 'read' the school environment and assess school conditions. It also means they can describe the conditions in a way that can motivate students and colleagues to initiate change in order to improve teaching practice and pupils' achievement. In the context of this researched community, local primary teachers could apply this contextual expertise to contribute to their school improvement as well as their community development. Apart from describing school conditions in a way that

influences students and colleagues to improve teaching and learning performance, teachers may describe school conditions to raise other relevant issues, thereby convincing the rest of the community members, (particularly parents), to initiate change by actively encouraging their children to learn.

In terms of collaborative expertise, Lukacs and Galluzzo claim that “teacher change agents are more than members of a professional community” (2014, p. 104). While being members of an educational institution, teacher change agents attempt to influence coworkers in order to increase capacity for change. They possess a strong ability to bring their colleagues together and deal with issues. This suggests that it is possible for teachers in the researched community to apply their collaborative skills to engage with parents and other members of the community. In relation to problem-solving expertise, Lukacs and Galluzzo (2014) contend that teacher change agents are creative and responsive to collective work, and aware of tensions that might occur as a result of being focused into a solution and maintaining a collaborative environment.

Ownership is arguably embedded in the three other features of teacher change agents. It acts as a stimulator that inspires teachers to become change agents because “It is unlikely that teacher change agents would persist in pursuing a goal unless they felt a personal responsibility to do so” (Lukacs & Galluzzo, 2014, p. 104).

In the context of this research, teachers were highly respected by community members who traditionally accord them a high status. The fact that they live in these communities means they already have an established relationship with community members, which could feasibly make their interventions more readily accepted.

In *Figure 17* the dotted line around teachers, parents and volunteers indicates that they are each identified as change agents for the community.

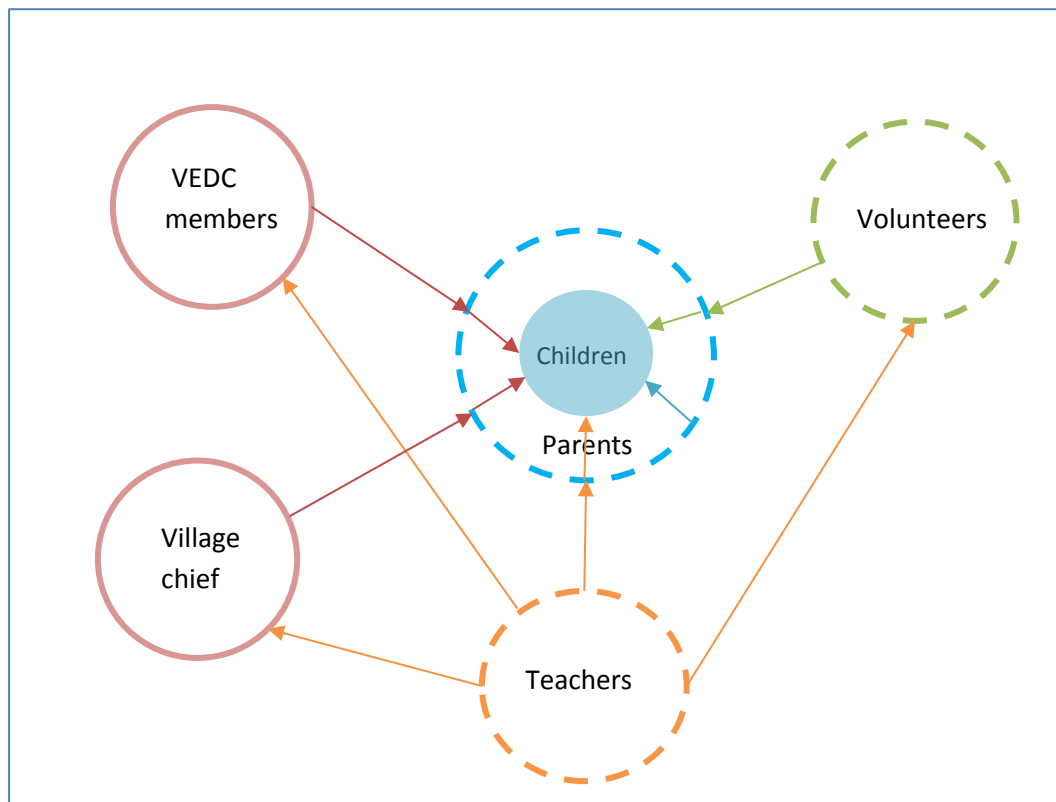


Figure 17: Catalyst for change in the researched community.

Source: Author.

Parents can be seen as another change agent because they play a significant role in mentoring their children. Although they may not initiate discussion about the issues in the process of change, their participation can make a difference to a child's education. Rhodes, Grossman and Resch (2000) studied the connection between parental relationships and school performance of adolescents and found that "improvements in perceptions of parental relationships led to improvements in the value that adolescents place on school" (p. 1668). Furthermore, they found that improvements in the value led to better school performance, including attendance. Similarly, a study by Eccles (2005) revealed that parents' perceptions definitely affect children's academic motivation and participation. This suggests that parents play a vital role in modeling and creating an initial supportive learning environment for their children. Therefore, it can be argued that it is worth using parents as agents of change, since the aim of the project is children's access to, and achievement of, primary education. Although in this case parents are the project participants, they could potentially become the agents of change in their own community if they were empowered to participate in a more proactive way.

Village volunteers can also be viewed as potential agents of change. The point raised by BS1, that volunteers help teachers with translation during a language preparation course designed for grade 1 students suggests that volunteers make a significant contribution to the community development. Brennan (2007) argues that policy makers or programme designers need to understand the role of volunteers:

Volunteers are at the core of effective community development and are routinely catalysts behind successful efforts. Through their efforts, volunteers shape channels of communication, and more importantly, facilitate interaction that cuts across class and other divides, serving to connect local citizens (p. 5).

Reflecting on the roles of volunteers in the researched community, it can be seen that they act as translators, facilitating the delivery of the language preparation course, and as communication channels, connecting teachers and non-Lao speaking children. For them to become a change agent in their own community, however, the BNC needs to find the right approach to select them. Shin and Kleiner (2003) identify several strategies to manage volunteers for the long term, including a recruitment plan and volunteer recognition.

Regarding the recruitment plan, Shin and Kleiner (2003) suggest that volunteer managers should have a job description, target population and recruitment source. They argue that with a clear job description, which includes the main responsibilities, contact details and other background information, volunteers would know exactly what they were committing to. The description should also include motivational messages such as “You have the power to make an impact” (Shin & Kleiner, 2003, p. 66), to make individuals more likely to become volunteers. With regard to target population, Shin and Kleiner (2003) argue that recruiting volunteers from age/gender/experience appropriate populations would satisfy volunteers’ “psychological need for self-esteem and confidence” (p. 66). In relation to a recruitment source, volunteer managers needed to study the geographic area and identify which media are the most relevant tools for recruitment. Shin and Kleiner (2003) illustrate this by referring to the Independent Sector’s survey which reveals that the most effective tool is word-of-mouth.

In terms of volunteer recognition, Shin and Kleiner (2003) claim that volunteers gain a commitment to the organisation only when their importance is acknowledged; the opportunity to articulate their voice is given; they are involved in decision making; and they have a sense of ownership. Volunteer recognition can be done through tangible rewards, such as appreciation letters, or intangible ones including making them feel they are part of an organisation. These techniques are something that the BNC should take into account when planning to recruit volunteers from the target communities as “showing appreciation satisfies the volunteer’s need for self-fulfilment and self-esteem” (Shin & Kleiner, 2003, p. 70).

5.7 Barriers and challenges

Generally, the intervention of the BNC project has been highly appreciated by local stakeholders. However, the researched community faces challenges in sustaining the project for long-term development. Phillips and Pittman (2015) note that an emphasis on long-term development is the starting point of community development and that it is essential to get beneficiaries and development practitioners to understand long-term impacts of current trends. Although this notion is acknowledged by the BNC and specified in its objectives (to strengthen community mechanisms to create healthy supportive learning environments in homes and communities for all disadvantaged children), the findings of this research suggest there are several factors that may hinder the community from maintaining the education initiative after the project leaves the community (September 2018). Predominantly, this is because local people still rely on further assistance from the project. It is worth noting here the failure of charitable nutrition programmes in Canada (Raine, McIntyre, & Dayle, 2003), in which hungry school children are perceived as a matter of charity instead of social justice. Raine et al. (2003) claim that dependency, poverty and social inequality would be reduced if the programmes drew attention to the underlying causes.

As noted in Chapter Four, poverty is one of the factors that affects school children’s attendance and achievement, and this issue has been addressed by the BNC through learning material support. However, it is difficult to imagine that this issue will not persist in the community without such support continuing. Findings from both parents’ and teachers’ groups indicate that further allocation of basic learning aids is still needed. According to community leaders and teachers, poverty affects parents’ attitudes towards their child’s education. They explain that as a result of the poverty, parents do not care about education

for their children. This perspective is supported by Grantham-McGregor et al. (2007) who claim that poverty is associated with poor parental education, an increase in parental stress and inadequate home stimulation. The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs' model also reflects this notion, indicating that people will not seek out other needs at higher levels, including social needs, unless their basic needs have been met (Gorman, 2010). In this case, the BNC should consider taking the appropriate action to enable parents to perceive education as a basic need. Gorman (2010) argues:

People are motivated to participate in activities that they perceive as helping them to meet their needs. If education is not perceived as meeting a need, then there will be little motivation to strive for a higher level of education (p. 29).

According to United Nations in Lao PDR (2019), the poverty rate in Lao rural areas is almost three times higher than that of urban areas. This suggests that there remains a significant inequality in national development. Coburn (2000,2004) defines inequality as “the differences in socioeconomic status that exist within a nation state, as well as between nation states in a global landscape” (as cited in Dutta, 2011, p. 71). Developed from neoliberalism, structural inequality has contributed to a gap between the rich and the poor, and minimised the opportunity for the poor to access public services, including education (Coburn, 2000, 2004 as cited in Dutta, 2011). It is clear that in the context of this study, poverty affects nutrition and parents' buying capacity for books and other learning materials, leading to more limited opportunity for their children to access education. This suggests there is a need to incorporate structural inequality into poverty reduction plans because “if inequality had not increased, a greater extent of poverty reduction would have been achieved nationally” (United Nations in Lao PDR, 2019, para. 2).

The community leaders' statement that village volunteers may not be able to continue carrying out reading activities for children without future training also poses a challenge to the sustainability of the project (Parents' focus group, August 18, 2018). According to them, after the end of the project, training should be provided for this group at least once a year to strengthen their ability to teach because they may forget teaching techniques as their class is held only once a week. Similarly, a statement from a Provincial Education and Sports Service

[PESS] official highlights the challenge to the maintenance of the group, noting that these people are financially supported by the BNC during the project implementation, but doubting their continual and active implementation of reading activities without some degree of future financial support (Personal communication, August 16, 2018). In an interview BS1 said that the village volunteers played a significant role in translating the ethnic language during a grade 1 preparation course run by teachers (In-depth interview, August 20, 2018). This suggests that a lack of participation from the group could potentially halt the educational development practice within the community. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the project, it is important, if not necessary, to take this issue into account.

While poverty and further technical and financial support for volunteers pose challenges to the sustainability of the project, school inadequacy creates a barrier to the achievement of quality primary education. According to UNICEF (2000), quality education refers to the integration of:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and community;
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparity;
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (p. 4).

Reflecting on the findings from this research and on the above definition, it can be argued that the first and second notions continue to be issues in the research community. Findings reveal that poverty, which includes malnutrition, has led to a lack of children's readiness for school. This directly affects children's school attendance and learning progress. During the

group discussion, T2 said that although malnutrition may not affect school attendance, it affected learning performance as malnourished children had less attention for learning (Teachers' focus group, August 31, 2018). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, physiological need, which includes food, is the most fundamental as it dictates individual survival. One will not move to the next level of needs (safety, belonging, esteem and self-accomplishment) unless this basic need is fulfilled.

With regard to the second notion listed by UNICEF above, although the school environment in the researched community is safe and enhances aspects of gender equality, the provision of resources and facilities is considerably inadequate. As identified by BS2, the environment of schools across Lao PDR is not appropriate for school children with disabilities due to the non-availability of proper facilities (In-depth interview, August 22, 2018). Statistics from the DESB show that out of 54 primary schools in Xaybouathong district, six of them are incomplete, providing education only for grade 1-3 (Xaybouathong DESB, 2018). These challenges present the need for future development projects to look at development issues in a holistic and long-term manner. The issue of malnutrition, for instance, affects children's learning, but is excluded from the BNC's aims.

5.8 Summary

Understanding the local context helps development practitioners build relationships and trust with local people, and to identify the right approach for engaging the community. Knowing what communication channels the community already has, or what source of information its members mostly access, is useful for programme design and planning, especially in the process of selecting tools to communicate with intended audiences. The BNC, for example, should take into consideration the finding that Tholakhong is an existing communication channel which is effective and widely reaching within the researched community.

The implementation of the BNC project enhances participation from all parties involved, and stresses social capital building by bringing different groups of people to work together, so that social interactions may be strengthened within the community. However, the participation, which involves having everyone in the community identify education needs, does not happen in the process of design and planning, but implementation. The involvement of the BNC in the community therefore, is in such a way that community members are seen as beneficiaries,

not stakeholders or partners who take part in both design and implementation processes. It can be concluded that the level of community participation is still low and could be referred to as 'participation by consultation'.

The use of communication tools in the project implementation is considerably limited. However, some positive change has been made at personal and organisational levels. The BNC project could have brought even more benefit to the community if other appropriate communication tools and approaches, especially entertainment-education, were incorporated. It is suggested by the local people that this approach works well with parents who have limited, or totally lack literacy skills and knowledge, and that parents tend to better understand what they are being engaged in through the application of audio-visual aids.

Among communication actors within the researched community, teachers are perceived as a key change agent, while parents and village volunteers can be perceived as potential ones. These three groups play the most significant role in promoting children's school attendance and achievement of a quality basic education. However, there are challenges facing the achievement of quality education and continuation of development practice after the project leaves the community. The challenges are associated with poverty, technical and financial support, and the inadequacy of schools.

Chapter 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has used the Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR Non-Government Organisation Consortium [BNC] project as a case study and was conducted at Phonesa-ard village, Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province. The study set out to evaluate the level of community participation in the project for increasing children's attendance in basic education in Lao PDR, and was guided by the key research question: *How effective is the community participation in the BNC project in increasing children's attendance in quality basic education?* The answer to this question has been indicated and enriched through a series of answers retrieved in response to the following sub-questions.

- How does the BNC project engage in the community to promote an increase in the participation of children in primary education?
- What challenges does the project face in engaging with the target community?
- What challenges does the target community face in supporting children's access to quality primary education?
- How is the Khammouane provincial media involved in the project implementation?
- How are the needs of disadvantaged children, especially girls and those with disabilities, addressed?

Answers to these questions have been sought using a qualitative research approach and ethnographic research tools, including communicative ecology mapping, non-participation observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Research involved 13 participants from three different groups concerned with the BNC project: parents, teachers and project staff. To enrich the data, documentation related to the BNC has also been used. All the data collection processes were carried out during the fieldwork, which lasted for one month (early August to early September 2018).

All collected data was catalogued thematically and analysed using a reflective qualitative analysis approach (O'Leary, 2010) and qualitative content analysis techniques (Bryan, 2012). By applying these methods, the researcher was able to extract underlying themes from the data and maintain a general sense of the project being studied by being involved in organising raw data, entering and coding that data, searching for meaning through an analysis of theme, interpreting meaning and drawing conclusions. The analysis of the data contributed to the

following themes: understanding of the local setting, the engagement of the project in the community, the level of community participation, how the project contributes to change in the community, the involvement of the media, the role of the catalyst for change, and barriers and challenges. Summaries of the key analyses and discussions of these emerging themes provided answers for the research questions, as well as recommendations for the BNC project.

- ***How does the BNC project engage in the community to promote an increase in the participation of children in primary education?***

Phonesa-ard is one of the educationally disadvantaged communities in Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province. It consists of two ethnic groups, Lao and Makong. Among these, the Lao language, which serves as an instructional language of schooling across the country, is mainly used within the community. The majority of community members are farmers relying on natural resources and rice farming for family income. The dominant mode of communication is face-to-face communication. Motorbikes, bicycles and small tractors are the common forms of transportation.

Aiming at increasing children's attendance in quality basic education, the BNC has worked in partnership with Khammouane Provincial Education and Sports Service [PESS] and Xaybouathong District Education and Sport Bureau [DESB]. In the early stages of the project, a baseline assessment of the reading habits and literacy needs of the children was undertaken in target communities. A group of parents was trained on the rights of children to education and how to assist their children in learning at homes. Groups of teachers and village volunteers were trained on teaching methodology. These activities were designed to raise the awareness of parents about the importance of child education and to equip teachers and volunteers with new teaching techniques that are more effective and inclusive. Book banks, which were managed by teachers (at school) and village volunteers (at the volunteer's house), were created to promote a reading culture in the community. All parents were invited to borrow books and other teaching materials to help teach their children at home. Community leaders were advised to encourage the three groups (teachers, parents and volunteers) to actively implement the activities and monitor their performance. The collective work of the community members, from all groups, created a supportive learning environment for the children.

The analysis of the ways the community members participate in the project indicates that community members were not involved in the process of decision making, design or planning. They only played a part in the project implementation and, therefore, are seen as beneficiaries. It might be because of this, that community members had the perception that by participating in the project they would receive support in terms of materials or money, rather than technical advice, which could be put into action and ultimately generate self-reliance. Analysing this with regard to the four types of participation in community development identified by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) (passive participation, participation by consultation, participation by collaboration and empowerment participation), it could be argued that the level of community participation in this research remains low and could be regarded as 'participation by consultation'.

Despite the low level of community participation, positive changes have been brought to the community. A supportive learning environment, designed to address the needs of disadvantaged children and to promote reading for early grade students, has been created. This has made children more eager to learn and more confident about taking part in classroom activities. After joining the training, parents realised how they could use their parenting skills to support their child's learning, regardless of literacy levels. With technical and material support from the project, teachers were able to conduct teaching in a more inclusive way. As a result, the high rate of students dropping out of school within the community has been successfully addressed.

- ***What challenges does the project face in engaging with the community?***

The implementation of the project within the community involved different groups: community leaders, parents, teachers and volunteers. Among these, a group of parents was found to be challenging in terms of encouraging them to support their children in learning at homes through one of the promoted reading activities, the Reading Corner. The analysis indicated that parents found it difficult to do so because of their illiteracy. Although some solutions have been suggested, including the use of pictorial and story books to discuss with children, BNC staff were still doubtful how much this would help since most of the books contain basic texts describing different situation of the stories. The Reading Corner, one of the project's three main reading activities (Reading Club led by teachers, Reading Camp led

by village volunteers and Reading Corner led by parents) is designed to promote children's reading skills and requires some degree of literacy knowledge and skills.

- ***What challenges does the target community face in supporting children's access to quality primary education?***

Poverty was identified as one of the challenges the community face in supporting children's access to quality basic education. Most of the community members are farmers relying on natural resources for their living. Selling crops, especially rice, is the main source of family income. However, the rice can be grown only once a year (during the rainy season) because of the unavailability of irrigation systems, leading to a limited amount of rice for sale. Parents living in poverty struggled to supply their children with the required learning materials, which led to a lack of school readiness for children. This condition has directly affected children's access to and achievement of quality primary education. Evidence from this research indicates that poverty reflects the inequality in national development, as poverty rates in remote areas are much higher than in urban areas.

Another challenge is associated the inadequacy of the school environment. Schools in some villages were incomplete, providing for only grade 1-3 students. Complete schools provide for grade 1-5 students. Those who want to continue their study after finishing grade 3 needed to travel to other villages that had complete schools. BS2 indicated that these villages were located far from each other, making it more difficult for those who did not have vehicles, and that these conditions forced children out of school before finishing grade 5. In addition, infrastructure, especially roads which play an important role in terms of literally accessing education, was not suitable for children with disabilities.

- ***How is the Khammouane provincial media involved in the project implementation?***

Khammouane provincial media have not been involved in the project. The local radio station was available in nearby districts, but it was not used. This is probably because this medium is not popular due to the fact that only a few people own radios and the majority watch television instead. Television was involved in the project implementation, but it was on the national channel, which broadcast an educational programme, *Learn Together*. This is an animated programme designed to help children learn, and aired once a week on three different channels (Lao Police Station TV, Lao National and Lao Star TV). However, since most

community members, especially children and young people, were more likely to watch Thai television, little was known about the programme.

Videos and posters were used by the project to facilitate implementation, as well as to deepen the audiences' understanding of the issue being addressed. At early stages of the project, videos were shown to the community leaders in order to demonstrate how to manage funds allocated by the project. Videos were also shown to the volunteers and parents, demonstrating how to tell children stories by using the story books provided. Posters relating to health issues were used to promote hygiene and sanitation. Some of these posters belong to the Ministry of Public Health and some belonged to the project.

- ***How are the needs of disadvantaged children, especially girls and those with disabilities, addressed?***

As defined by the BNC, the term 'disadvantaged children' refers to girls, children with disabilities and those who are from an ethnic minority group whose mother tongue is not the Lao language. However, in the eyes of the researched community members, girls were not viewed as disadvantaged children, as the findings showed that parents valued gender equality in education. In other words, parents sent their children to school regardless of their gender.

In response to the needs of any ethnic minority group children, an oral Lao language preparation course (a four-week course), designed for grade 1 students, was provided prior to the start of the new school term. The course was run by local school teachers and village volunteers who were trained by the BNC. While the teachers played the role of teaching, volunteers helped with translations when necessary. Apart from Lao language preparation, the course was aimed at getting children familiar with the school environment and ready to learn.

In terms of children with disabilities, assistive devices were provided based on the special needs of each person, such as glasses, wheelchairs and hearing aids. Special care was also provided by teachers when disabled students were at school, including particular seat designation and learning material adjustment.

- ***How effective is the community participation in the BNC project in increasing children's attendance in quality basic education?***

Summarising all answers from the sub-questions, it can be concluded that overall the community participation in the BNC project, to promote an increased attendance of children in quality basic education, has been effective. The participation has created supportive learning environments in the community where all disadvantaged children have been positively affected. The implementation of the project has highly satisfied all three groups of community members. The parents' awareness about the importance of children's education has generally been raised, which also resulted in the understanding of how parenting skills affect child education. However, since the community members were given opportunities to identify their needs in the process of implementation, instead of decision making and planning of the project, they have not been perceived as stakeholders but rather, beneficiaries. Their participation level therefore, remained low and their attitude towards the development project was passive, waiting for assistance from donors rather than helping themselves. The effectiveness of the community participation would be improved if community members were: viewed as equal stakeholders; involved in decision making about predetermined goals set by development agents; empowered to take control of the development process and; had a sense of ownership of the project. To fulfill these conditions, recommendations are offered in the following section.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research findings.

1. The BNC should increase the level of participation. Since face-to-face communication is largely used in the community, increased participation could be achieved by using this form of communication as a tool to facilitate participation. In this instance, the BNC could act as a facilitator, involving and empowering all primary stakeholders (community leaders, teachers, village volunteers and parents) to participate in the process of problem identification, problem solving, and decision making. To do so, the BNC needs to "learn to listen to people, to help them express their views and to assist in building consensus for action" (Bessette, 2004, p. 10). This would also help to build trust and relationships, and create a more participatory environment, making villagers feel they are part of the project and bringing change to their own lives. If the

participation level is increased, their passive attitude of waiting for donors may shift to a positive, self-reliant attitude.

2. For long-lasting change, the BNC should consider teachers, village volunteers and parents as agents of change for the community. Although in this case study they are participants implementing the project activities, their role in addressing the focused issues suggests that they could potentially become change agents in their own community. For them to become agents of change however, the BNC should have better participatory practice, empowering them to have a sense of ownership of the project. According to Figueroa et al. (2002), a sense of ownership refers to “the community’s feelings/belief that the problem/issue and/or programme belong to them and they have a commitment to the program ...It reinforces what people learn and encourages them to integrate the shared learning into related solutions” (p. 32), which in turn helps strengthen outcomes of other social change.
3. To help reinforce messages about the importance of school attendance and literacy, the BNC should consider employing more channels of communication. Loudspeakers, which can function as a community radio are recommended, because they are familiar to and reach all community members. Posters should be displayed beyond the school, making them more available for everyone in the community. It is also worth considering using more audio-visual aids, as the local people, particularly parents who have limited or no literacy skills, found them easy to understand. Participatory video, which “involves the community in telling a story, listening to the story, interpreting the story through its own lens and being empowered to retell to change it to create a community – a political reality – that matches one’s desired condition” (White, 2003, p. 102), is highly recommended. School attendance and achievement in the researched community are affected by various factors that need to be voiced by the local people.

Future Research

As previously specified, this research used only World Vision (one of four BEQUAL NGO Consortia including Plan International, Save the Children, ChildFund and World Vision) as a unit of analysis. This forms a basis and presents the need for future research on this topic to investigate the other three members of the consortium. The findings of future studies

could then be used to compare and reflect on the findings of this research, in order to identify challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt for the organisations. The fact that this research focuses on process evaluation suggests there is an opportunity for future investigations to assess the effectiveness of development projects based on outcome evaluation. Future investigations which evaluate the level of community participation in development programmes for other social issues are also recommended, as evidence from this study suggests that the level of participation affects the sustainability of the project.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Organisational Consent Form

Organisational Consent Form



6 September 2018

To: Somphien Mahaphom

Address: 31B, Cradock st, Avondale, Auckland, New Zealand


Dear Somphien,

Re: Organisational Consent

I, Khounthanong Vanthanouvong, central zone manager for World Vision Khammouane province, give consent for *Somphien Mahaphom* to undertake research in this organisation as discussed with the researcher. This discussion also included permission to the researcher to take relevant photos to supplement community mapping capturing an overview of the community. The researcher will need to include photographs of target community public places. The researcher will refrain from taking any photos that identify children. In the case the researcher needs some evidence; he will ensure any children in photos will be taken from a distance and wide angle while using photoshop to blur their faces.

This consent is granted subject to the approval of research ethics application No. 2018- 1026 by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and a copy of the application approval letter being forwarded to the organisation as soon as possible.

Signature:


 ຄຸນທະນົງ ວັນທາງບຸວົງ

Date: 07 August 2018

Appendix 2: An approval letter from the Khammouane Provincial Education and Sports Department

Department



ສາທາລະນະລັດ ປະຊາທິປະໄຕ ປະຊາຊົນລາວ
ສັນຕິພາບ ເອກະລາດ ປະຊາທິປະໄຕ ເອກະພາບ ວັດທະນາຖາວອນ

ກະຊວງສຶກສາທິການ ແລະ ກິລາ
ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ຈຳປາສັກ

ເລກທີ: 313/ມຈ /2018
ນະຄອນປາກເຊ, ວັນທີ: 6.../.../2018

ໃບສະເໜີ

ຮຽນ: ທ່ານ ຫົວໜ້າພະແນກສຶກສາທິການ ແລະ ກິລາ ແຂວງຄຳມ່ວນ.
ເລື່ອງ: ຂໍອະນຸມັດ ໃຫ້ພະນັກງານ ພາຍໃນ ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ຈຳປາສັກ ລົງເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນກ່ຽວ
ກັບການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດ ໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ
ທີ່ໄດ້ຮັບການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອຈາກ ໂຄງການ ສຸພະນິມິດ.

- ອີງຕາມ: ໜັງສືນຳສົ່ງຈາກກົມກິດຈະການບັນທຶກສຶກສາ, ກະຊວງສຶກສາທິການ ແລະ ກິລາ ສະບັບເລກທີ
0236/ກນ, ລົງວັນທີ 06/02/2017 ວ່າດ້ວຍການສົ່ງພະນັກງານໄປສຶກສາຕໍ່ຢູ່ຕ່າງປະເທດ.

ອະທິການບໍດີ ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ຈຳປາສັກ ຂໍຖືເປັນກຽດຮຽນສະເໜີມາຍັງທ່ານຊາບວ່າ ທ້າວ ສິມພຽນ
ມະຫາພິມ, ອາຊີບ ຄູ ສັງກັດຢູ່ ພາກວິຊາ ພາສາອັງກິດ, ຄະນະສຶກສາສາດ, ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ຈຳປາສັກ. ປະຈຸ
ບັນ ຜູ້ກ່ຽວກຳລັງສຶກສາຕໍ່ລະດັບ ປະລິນຍາໂທ ຢູ່ປະເທດ ນິວຊີແລນ ແລະ ຢູ່ໃນໄລຍະກະກຽມລົງເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນ
ເພື່ອປະກອບເຂົ້າໃນການຂຽນບົດລາຍງານຈົບຊັ້ນ ພາຍໃຕ້ຫົວຂໍ້: ການປະເມີນລະດັບການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງ
ປະຊາຊົນຂັ້ນທ້ອງຖິ່ນ ໃນການສົ່ງເສີມການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດ ໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນ
ນະພາບ ຢູ່ ສປປ ລາວ: ກໍລະນີສຶກສາກ່ຽວກັບ ໂຄງການສຸພະນິມິດ ທີ່ເມືອງ ໄຊບົວທອງ, ແຂວງ ຄຳມ່ວນ.
ດັ່ງນັ້ນ, ຈຶ່ງຮຽນສະເໜີມາຍັງທ່ານ ເພື່ອຂໍອະນຸມັດໃຫ້ຜູ້ກ່ຽວ ລົງເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນ ກ່ຽວກັບການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດ
ໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ ຢູ່ທີ່ບ້ານ ກຸດນ້ຳໃສ, ເມືອງ ໄຊບົວທອງ, ແຂວງ ຄຳ
ມ່ວນ ໃນລະຫວ່າງວັນທີ 13/08 – 10/09/2018. ການລົງເກັບກຳຂໍ້ມູນມີດັ່ງນີ້: (1) ການສຳພາດ (ຄູຮຸ້ນປະຖົມ,
ພໍ່ແມ່ນັກຮຽນ ແລະ ພະນັກງານໂຄງການ), (2) ການສືບທະນາແບບກຸ່ມ (ກຸ່ມພໍ່ແມ່ນັກຮຽນ ແລະ ກຸ່ມຄູຮຸ້ນ
ປະຖົມ) ແລະ (3) ການສັງເກດ ການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງປະຊາຊົນພາຍໃນບ້ານ ຕໍ່ກັບການສົ່ງເສີມທາງດ້ານການສຶກ
ສາຂອງໂຄງການ ສຸພະນິມິດ.

ດັ່ງນັ້ນ, ຈຶ່ງຮຽນສະເໜີມາຍັງທ່ານເພື່ອພິຈາລະນາ ແລະ ອະນຸມັດຕາມເຫັນສົມຄວນ.

ຮຽນມາດ້ວຍຄວາມເດົາລົບຢ່າງສູງ

ຫົວໜ້າພະແນກສຶກສາທິການ ແລະ ກິລາ ແຂວງ ຄຳມ່ວນ

ສິໂຣ ແກ້ວໂກຖິ້ມ

ອະທິການບໍດີ ມະຫາວິທະຍາໄລ ຈຳປາສັກ

ປອ.ນິ.ພອນສະຫວັນ ເທບພະສຸລິທອນ

Appendix 3: Draft questions for individual (parents) in-depth semi-structured interview
(English and Lao languages)

Prior to the beginning of a formal interview, the researcher will introduce himself and express his appreciation for having an interviewee participate in the interview. At the same time, the interviewee will be asked to introduce herself/himself and answer some general questions related to occupation, age, family size, and role in a family. The purpose of doing this is to build the interviewee's confidence so that enable him/her to feel comfortable and be prepared for the formal interview. The researcher will then start the interview officially by using a following set of guiding questions while allowing space for new questions to emerge depending on responses of the participants. To ensure that participants fully understand, the questions will be adapted to local literacy and cultural or social level of the participant by giving some examples.

1. Why did you decide to participate in the project?
2. What have you learnt from the project?
3. How does the project engage your perceptions of quality basic education?
4. What benefits does the project bring to the community?
5. What factors that prevent you from applying what you have learn from the project in your daily life?
6. Do you think you have put in enough effort to participate in the project? How?
7. If you have two children, a boy and a girl, but you can afford education for only one of your children. Who will you choose to be educated? Why?
8. How has your children behavior changed through the process of the project implementation?
9. How are the needs of disadvantaged children (girls, disabilities and those coming from minority groups whose language is not instructional language of schooling) addressed through the project implementation?
10. If you are given an opportunity to give suggestions with regard to the improvement of the project, what would you suggest?

ຮ່າງຄໍາຖາມສໍາພາດບຸກຄົນ (ສໍາລັບພໍ່ແມ່ນັກຮຽນ)

ກ່ອນທີ່ຈະເລີ່ມການສໍາພາດຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງ ແລະ ສະແດງຄວາມຮູ້ບຸນຄຸນທີ່ໄດ້ຮັບການຮ່ວມມືຈາກຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດ. ພ້ອມກັນນັ້ນ, ຜູ້ຖືກສາພາດກໍ່ຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງເຊັ່ນກັນ ແລະ ຕອບຄໍາຖາມທົ່ວໄປກ່ຽວກັບ ອາຊີບ, ອາຍຸ, ຄອບຄົວ ແລະ ບົດບາດຂອງຕົນພາຍໃນຄອບຄົວ. ຈຸດປະສົງໃນການເຮັດສິ່ງດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ແມ່ນ ເພື່ອເຮັດໃຫ້ຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດມີໝັ້ນໃຈຕົນເອງ, ຮູ້ສຶກສະບາຍ ແລະ ກຽມພ້ອມຕໍ່ການສາພາດຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ. ການສໍາພາດແມ່ນອີງຕາມຄໍາຖາມທີ່ຢູ່ຂ້າງລຸ່ມນີ້ ແລະ ໃນຄະນະທີ່ສໍາພາດ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າມີຄໍາຖາມເຈາະຈົງເພີ່ມຕື່ມ ເຊິ່ງອີງຕາມຄໍາຕອບຂອງຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດ. ເພື່ອຮັບປະກັນຄວາມເຂົ້າໃຈຂອງຜູ້ຖືກສາພາດ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າຈະໄດ້ອະທິບາຍບາງຄໍາຖາມໂດຍການຍົກຕົວຢ່າງ ແລະ ໃຊ້ຄໍາສັບທີ່ເໝາະສົມກັບທ້ອງຖິ່ນ.

1. ເປັນຫຍັງທ່ານຈຶ່ງຕັດສິນໃຈເຂົ້າຮ່ວມໂຄງການນີ້?
2. ເຈົ້າໄດ້ຮຽນຮູ້ຫຍັງແດ່ຈາກໂຄງການນີ້?
3. ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ໄດ້ກະຕຸ້ນຄວາມເຂົ້າໃຈຂອງທ່ານ ກ່ຽວກັບການສຶກສາໂດຍຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານ ຄືແນວ ໃດ?
4. ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວໄດ້ນໍາຜົນປະໂຫຍກຫຍັງແດ່ມາສູ່ຊຸມຊົນ?
5. ມີປັດໃຈຫຍັງແດ່ ທີ່ເຮັດໃຫ້ທ່ານສາມາດນໍາເອົາສິ່ງທີ່ຮຽນຮູ້ຈາກໂຄງການມານໍາໃຊ້ໃນຊີວິດປະຈໍາວັນ?
6. ທ່ານຄິດວ່າທ່ານໄດ້ປະກອບສ່ວນໃນການເຂົ້າຮ່ວມໂຄງການຢ່າງເຕັມທີ່ແລ້ວບໍ່? ດ້ວຍວິທີໃດ?
7. ສົມມຸດວ່າທ່ານມີລູກສອງຄົນ ຍິງໜຶ່ງຊາຍໜຶ່ງ ແຕ່ວ່າທ່ານສາມາດສົ່ງເສີມໃຫ້ເຂົ້າໂຮງຮຽນໄດ້ພຽງຜູ້ດຽວ ທ່ານຊິເລືອກເອົາໃຜເຂົ້າ? ຍ້ອນຫຍັງ?
8. ຜ່ານການດໍາເນີນໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ ທ່ານເຫັນວ່າພຶດຕິກຳລູກຂອງທ່ານປ່ຽນແປງໄປແນວໃດ?
9. ບັນຫາຄວາມຕ້ອງການເດັກນ້ອຍທີ່ດ້ອຍໂອກາດ ເຊັ່ນວ່າ ຄົນພິການ, ຄົນຊົນເຜົ່າທີ່ໃຊ້ພາສາຕ່າງຈາກພາສາລາວທີ່ໃຊ້ສອນຢູ່ໂຮງຮຽນ ໄດ້ຮັດການແກ້ໄຂ ແລະ ຊ່ອຍເຫຼືອແນວໃດ?
10. ຫາກທ່ານມີໂອກາດ ສະເໜີຄໍາຄິດເຫັນເພື່ອປັບປຸງໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວ ທ່ານຢາກສະເໜີຫຍັງ?

Appendix 4: Draft questions for individual (teachers) in-depth semi-structured interview (English and Lao languages)

Prior to the beginning of a formal interview, the researcher will introduce himself and express his appreciation for having an interviewee participate in the interview. At the same time, the interviewee will be asked to introduce herself/himself and answer some general questions related to occupation, age, family size, and role in a family. The purpose of doing this is to build the interviewee's confidence so that enable him/her to feel comfortable and be prepared for the formal interview. The researcher will then start the interview officially by using a following set of questions while allowing space for new questions to emerge depending on responses of the participants.

1. Why did you decide to participate in the project?
2. What have you learnt from the project?
3. What benefits does the project bring to the community?
4. Do you think you have put in enough effort to participate in the project? How?
5. Have you applied your new knowledge gained from the project to your school children? Why or why not?
6. What factors that prevent you from applying what you have learn from the project in your daily life?
7. How has school children behavior changed through the process of the project implementation?
8. How are the needs of disadvantaged children (girls, disabilities and those coming from minority groups whose language is not instructional language of schooling) addressed through the project implementation?
9. If you are given an opportunity to give suggestions with regard to the improvement of the project, what would you suggest?

ຮ່າງຄໍາຖາມສໍາພາດບຸກຄົນ (ສໍາລັບຄູ - ອາຈານ)

ກ່ອນທີ່ຈະເລີ່ມການສໍາພາດຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງ ແລະ ສະແດງຄວາມຮູ້ບຸນຄຸນທີ່ໄດ້ຮັບການຮ່ວມມືຈາກຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດ. ພ້ອມກັນນັ້ນ, ຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດກໍ່ຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງເຊັ່ນກັນ ແລະ ຕອບຄໍາຖາມທົ່ວໄປກ່ຽວກັບ ອາຊີບ, ອາຍຸ, ຄອບຄົວ ແລະ ບົດບາດຂອງຕົນພາຍໃນຄອບຄົວ. ຈຸດປະສົງໃນການເຮັດສິ່ງດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ແມ່ນ ເພື່ອເຮັດໃຫ້ຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດມີໝັ້ນໃຈຕົນເອງ, ຮູ້ສຶກສະບາຍ ແລະ ກຽມພ້ອມຕໍ່ການສໍາພາດຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ. ການສໍາພາດແມ່ນອີງຕາມຄໍາຖາມທີ່ຢູ່ຂ້າງລຸ່ມນີ້ ແລະ ໃນຄະນະທີ່ສໍາພາດ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວາມມີຄໍາຖາມເຈາະຈົງເພີ່ມຕື່ມ ເຊິ່ງອີງຕາມຄໍາຕອບຂອງຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດ.

1. ເປັນຫຍັງທ່ານຈຶ່ງຕັດສິນໃຈເຂົ້າຮ່ວມໂຄງການນີ້?
2. ເຈົ້າໄດ້ຮຽນຮູ້ຫຍັງແດ່ຈາກໂຄງການນີ້?
3. ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ໄດ້ກະຕຸ້ນຄວາມເຂົ້າໃຈຂອງທ່ານ ກ່ຽວກັບການສຶກສາໂດຍຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານ ຄືແນວ ໃດ?
4. ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວໄດ້ນໍາຜົນປະໂຫຍກຫຍັງແດ່ມາສູ່ຊຸມຊົນ?
5. ທ່ານໄດ້ນໍາໃຊ້ຄວາມຮູ້ໃໝ່ທີ່ໄດ້ຈາກໂຄງການເຂົ້າໃນການສອນນັກຮຽນບໍ່? ຖ້າໃຊ້ຍ້ອນຫຍັງ? ຫຼື ຖ້າບໍ່ໄດ້ໃຊ້ຍ້ອນຫຍັງ?
6. ມີປັດໃຈຫຍັງແດ່ ທີ່ເຮັດໃຫ້ທ່ານສາມາດນໍາເອົາສິ່ງທີ່ຮຽນຮູ້ຈາກໂຄງການມານໍາໃຊ້ໃນຊີວິດປະຈໍາວັນ?
7. ຜ່ານການດໍາເນີນໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ ທ່ານເຫັນວ່າພຶດຕິກຳຂອງນັກຮຽນປ່ຽນແປງໄປແນວໃດ?
8. ບັນຫາຄວາມຕ້ອງການເດັກນ້ອຍທີ່ດ້ອຍໂອກາດ ເຊັ່ນວ່າ ແມ່ຍິງ, ຄົນພິການ, ຄົນຊົນເຜົ່າທີ່ໃຊ້ພາສາຕ່າງຈາກພາສາລາວທີ່ໃຊ້ສອນຢູ່ໂຮງຮຽນ ໄດ້ຮັດການແກ້ໄຂ ແລະ ຊ່ອຍເຫຼືອແນວໃດ?
9. ຫາກທ່ານມີໂອກາດ ສະເໜີຄໍາຄິດເຫັນເພື່ອປັບປຸງໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວ ທ່ານຢາກສະເໜີຫຍັງ?

**Appendix 5: Draft questions for individual (NGO staff) in-depth semi-structured
interview (English and Lao languages)**

Prior to the beginning of a formal interview, the researcher will introduce himself and express his appreciation for having an interviewee participate in the interview. At the same time, the interviewee will be asked to introduce herself/himself and answer some general questions related to occupation, age, family size, and role in a family. The purpose of doing this is to build the interviewee's confidence so that enable him/her to feel comfortable and be prepared for the formal interview. The researcher will then start the interview officially by using a following set of questions while allowing space for new questions to emerge depending on responses of the participants.

1. Why did you decide to work for the project?
2. What kind of activities does the project implement to raise awareness of parents in encouraging their children to go to school?
3. What challenges are you facing in engaging with the community?
4. How does the community benefit from the project?
5. What are the factors that prevent children from accessing and achieving quality basic education?
6. How are the needs of disadvantaged children (girls, disabilities and those coming from minority groups whose language is not instructional language of schooling) addressed through the project implementation?
7. What do you expect to do more to help all children access to and achieve quality primary education?

ຮ່າງຄໍາຖາມສໍາພາດບຸກຄົນ (ສໍາລັບພະນັກງານ ໂຄງການ)

ກ່ອນທີ່ຈະເລີ່ມການສໍາພາດຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງ ແລະ ສະແດງຄວາມຮູ້ບຸນຄຸນທີ່ໄດ້ຮັບການຮ່ວມມືຈາກຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດ. ພ້ອມກັນນັ້ນ, ຜູ້ຖືກສາພາດກໍ່ຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງເຊັ່ນກັນ ແລະ ຕອບຄໍາຖາມທົ່ວໄປກ່ຽວກັບ ອາຊີບ, ອາຍຸ, ຄອບຄົວ ແລະ ບົດບາດຂອງຕົນພາຍໃນຄອບຄົວ. ຈຸດປະສົງໃນການເຮັດສິ່ງດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ແມ່ນ ເພື່ອເຮັດໃຫ້ຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດມີໜັ້ນໃຈຕົນເອງ, ຮູ້ສຶກສະບາຍ ແລະ ກຽມພ້ອມຕໍ່ການສາພາດຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ. ການສໍາພາດແມ່ນອີງຕາມຄໍາຖາມທີ່ຢູ່ຂ້າງລຸ່ມນີ້ ແລະ ໃນຄະນະທີ່ສໍາພາດ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າມີຄໍາຖາມເຈາະຈົງເພີ່ມຕື່ມ ເຊິ່ງອີງຕາມຄໍາຕອບຂອງຜູ້ຖືກສໍາພາດ.

1. ເປັນຫຍັງເຈົ້າຈຶ່ງຕັດສິນໃຈເຮັດວຽກຢູ່ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວ?
2. ມີກິດຈະກຳໃດແດ່ທີ່ທາງໂຄງການນໍາໃຊ້ ເພື່ອກະຕຸ້ນໃຫ້ພໍ່ແມ່ນັກຮຽນມີຄວາມຕື່ນຕົວໃນການສົ່ງເສີມລູກເຂົ້າໂຮງຮຽນ?
3. ມີສິ່ງທ້າທາຍຫຍັງແດ່ທີ່ທ່ານພົບພໍ້ໃນການປະຕິບັດໂຄງການຢູ່ຊຸມຊົນ?
4. ຊຸມຊົນໄດ້ຮັບຜົນປະໂຫຍດແນວໃດຈາກທາງໂຄງການ?
5. ມີປັດໄຈຫຍັງແດ່ທີ່ເຮັດໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍບໍ່ສາມາດໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາ ແລະ ຈົບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ?
6. ບັນຫາຄວາມຕ້ອງການເດັກນ້ອຍທີ່ດ້ອຍໂອກາດ ເຊັ່ນວ່າ ແມ່ຍິງ, ຄົນພິການ, ຄົນຊົນເຜົ່າທີ່ໃຊ້ພາສາຕ່າງ ຈາກພາສາລາວທີ່ໃຊ້ສອນຢູ່ໂຮງຮຽນ ໄດ້ຮັດການແກ້ໄຂ ແລະ ຊ່ອຍເຫຼືອແນວໃດ?
7. ທ່ານຄິດວ່າ ຢາກເຮັດຫຍັງເພີ່ມຕື່ມອີກ ເພື່ອຊ່ວຍໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍທຸກຄົນໄດ້ເຂົ້າຮຽນ ແລະ ຈົບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ?

Appendix 6: Draft questions for focus group interview (for both parents and teachers groups) (English and Lao languages)

As a purpose of getting everyone ready for the formal discussion, the researcher will initially introduce himself. The researcher will then ask everyone in the group to introduce themselves and share a little bit about their personal information such as age, occupation, and family. The following set of guiding questions will be answered by group members one by one. To ensure that participants fully understand, the questions will be adapted to local literacy and cultural or social level of the participant by giving some examples.

1. What is your first impression when you participate in the project?
2. What have you learnt from the project?
3. What benefits does the project bring to the community?
4. Have you seen positive change as a result of the project intervention in the community? Can you give some examples?
5. How has school children behavior changed through the process of the project implementation?
6. How does the project seek your feedback about its implementation in the community?
7. If you are given an opportunity to give suggestions with regard to the improvement of the project, what would you suggest?

ຮ່າງຄໍາຖາມສິນທະນາແບບກຸ່ມ (ສໍາລັບ ກຸ່ມພໍ່ແມ່ນັກຮຽນ ແລະ ກຸ່ມຄູອາຈານ)

ກ່ອນອື່ນໝົດ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າຈະໄດ້ແນະນໍາຕົນເອງ ເພື່ອເຮັດໃຫ້ສະມາຊິກແຕ່ລະຄົນມີຄວາມກຽມພ້ອມຕໍ່ການສິນທະນາຢ່າງເປັນທາງການ. ຫຼັງຈາກນັ້ນ ສະເໜີໃຫ້ສະມາຊິກແຕ່ລະຄົນພາຍໃນກຸ່ມແນະນໍາຕົນເອງ ພ້ອມທັງແລກປ່ຽນຂໍ້ມູນສ່ວນເລັກນ້ອຍ ເຊັ່ນ: ຂໍ້ມູນກ່ຽວກັບ ອາຍຸ, ອາຊີບ ແລະ ຄອບຄົວ. ການສິນທະນາແບບກຸ່ມ ແມ່ນອີງຕາມຄໍາຖາມທີ່ຢູ່ຂ້າງລຸ່ມນີ້. ເພື່ອຮັບປະກັນຄວາມເຂົ້າໃຈຂອງສະມາຊິກແຕ່ລະຄົນ ນັກຄົ້ນຄວ້າຈະໄດ້ອະທິບາຍບາງຄໍາຖາມໂດຍການຍົກຕົວຢ່າງ ແລະ ໃຊ້ຄໍາສັບທີ່ເໝາະສົມກັບທ້ອງຖິ່ນ.

1. ແມ່ນຫຍັງທີ່ເຈົ້າປະທັບໃຈທີ່ສຸດໃນການເຂົ້າຮ່ວມໂຄງການຄັ້ງທໍາອິດ?
2. ເຈົ້າໄດ້ຮຽນຮູ້ຫຍັງແຕ່ຈາກໂຄງການນີ້?
3. ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວໄດ້ນໍາຜົນປະໂຫຍກຫຍັງແຕ່ມາສູ່ຊຸມຊົນ?
4. ທ່ານສັງເກດເຫັນມີການປ່ຽນແປງທີ່ດີຫຍັງແດ່ ທີ່ໄດ້ຈາກຜົນຂອງການປະຕິບັດໂຄງການນີ້?
5. ຜ່ານການດໍາເນີນໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ ທ່ານເຫັນວ່າພຶດຕິກຳຂອງນັກຮຽນປ່ຽນແປງໄປແນວໃດ?
6. ໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວໄດ້ໃຊ້ວິທີໃດໃນການຂໍຄໍາຄິດເຫັນຈາກທ່ານ ກ່ຽວກັບຜົນຂອງການປະຕິບັດໂຄງການ?
7. ຫາກທ່ານມີໂອກາດ ສະເໜີຄໍາຄິດເຫັນເພື່ອປັບປຸງໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວ ທ່ານຢາກສະເໜີຫຍັງ?

Appendix 7: Participant consent form



Participant Consent Form

Evaluating the level of community participation in increasing children's attendance in quality primary education in Lao PDR – A case study of BEQUAL NGO Consortium project in Xaybouahong district, Khammouane province

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don't have to be part of this research project should I chose not to participate and may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the research project.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researchers and their supervisor. I also understand that all the information that I give will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be taped and transcribed.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Name:

Participant Signature: *Date:*

Project Researcher: *Date:*

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2018 - 1026

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 9th July 2018 to 9th July 2019. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

ໜັງສືຕົກລົງເຫັນດີເຂົ້າຮ່ວມການສຳພາດ



ໜັງສືຕົກລົງເຫັນດີເຂົ້າຮ່ວມການສຳພາດ

ຫົວຂໍ້ບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວ: ການປະເມີນລະດັບການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງປະຊາຊົນໃນການສົ່ງເສີມການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ ຢູ່ ສປປ ລາວ. ກໍລະນີສຶກສາກ່ຽວກັບໂຄງການຮ່ວມ ບິຄວາ(ໂຄງການ ສຸພະນິມິດ) ທີ່ເມືອງ ໄຊບົວທອງ, ແຂວງ ຄຳມ່ວນ

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຂໍຢັ້ງຢືນວ່າ: ໄດ້ອ່ານເນື້ອໃນ, ຈຸດປະສົງ ແລະ ບົດອະທິບາຍ ກ່ຽວກັບບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວນີ້ແລ້ວ ແລະ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າກໍ່ມີຄວາມຮັບຮູ້ເຂົ້າໃຈຕໍ່ກັບບັນດາເອກະສານແນະນຳຄົ້ນຄ້ວທີ່ໄດ້ນຳສະເໜີແກ່ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ຮັບຮູ້ດີວ່າ: ການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມໃນບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວນີ້ແມ່ນອີງຕາມການສະໝັກໃຈ ເຊິ່ງຂ້າພະເຈົ້າມີສິດທີ່ຈະເລືອກເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ ຫຼື ບໍ່ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ ແລະ ອາດຖອນໂຕຈາກການຮ່ວມໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນກ່ຽວກັບບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວນີ້ກ່ອນທີ່ບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວຈະສຳເລັດ.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮັບຮູ້ວ່າ: ຂໍ້ມູນທຸກຢ່າງທີ່ໄດ້ໃຫ້ສຳພາດໄປນັ້ນເປັນຄວາມລັບ ແລະ ບໍ່ມີຂໍ້ມູນໃດໆທີ່ຈະຖືກໃຊ້ເພື່ອເປີດເຜີຍຕົວຕົນຂອງຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ. ທຸກໆຂໍ້ມູນທີ່ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າໃຫ້ໄປມີພຽງ ນັກຄົ້ນຄ້ວ ແລະ ອາຈານທີ່ປຶກສາເທົ່ານັ້ນ ທີ່ຮັບຮູ້. ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮັບຮູ້ວ່າ ຂໍ້ມູນດັ່ງກ່າວຈະຖືກເກັບໄວ້ໃນສະຖານທີ່ ທີ່ປອດໄພ ນັ້ນກໍ່ຄື ໃນລະບົບຄອມພິວເຕີ ຂອງສະຖາບັນການສຶກສາ ຢູນິເທັກ (Unitec Institute of Technology)ຂອງປະເທດນີວຊີແລນ ເປັນເວລາ 5 ປີ.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮັບຮູ້ວ່າ ທຸກການສົນທະນາກັບນັກຄົ້ນຄ້ວແມ່ນຈະຖືກອັດສຽງໄວ້ ແລະ ຈົດບັນທຶກໂດຍນັກຄົ້ນຄ້ວເອງ. ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮັບຮູ້ວ່າ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າມີສິດທີ່ຈະອ່ານບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວນີ້ ຫຼັງຈາກຈັດພິມສຳເລັດ.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮັບຮູ້ວ່າ ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າມີເວລາພຽງພໍໃນການພິຈາລະນາທຸກຢ່າງ ແລະ ຕົກລົງເຫັນດີໃນການເຂົ້າຮ່ວມການໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນກັບນັກຄົ້ນຄ້ວ.

ຊື່ຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ.....
ລາຍເຊັນຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ ວັນທີ
ລາຍເຊັນນັກຄົ້ນຄ້ວ ວັນທີ

ເລກທະບຽນຂອງຄະນະກຳມະການ ດ້ານຈັນຍາບັນຂອງການຄົ້ນຄ້ວ ຢູນິເທັກ 2018 - 1026
ບົດຄົ້ນຄ້ວນີ້ໄດ້ຮັບການອະນຸມັດຈາກ ຄະນະກຳມະທິການ ດ້ານຈັນຍາບັນຂອງການຄົ້ນຄ້ວ ຢູນິເທັກ ເລີ່ມແຕ່ວັນທີ 9 ກໍລະກົດ 2018 ຫາວັນທີ 9 ກໍລະກົດ 2019. ຖ້າທ່ານມີຂໍ້ຂ້ອງໃຈກ່ຽວກັບຈັນຍາບັນໃນການດຳເນີນການຄົ້ນຄ້ວນີ້ ທ່ານສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ ຄະນະກຳມະທິການ ໂດຍຜ່ານທາງໂທລະສັບ 09 815-4321, ຕໍ່ 8551. ທຸກບັນຫາທີ່ທ່ານນາສະເໜີຈະຖືເປັນຄວາມລັບ ແລະ ນຳມາພິຈາລະນາ ແລ້ວ ຈະແຈ້ງຜົນໃຫ້ຊາບ.

Appendix 8: Information for participants



Information for participants

Evaluating the level of community participation in increasing children's attendance in quality primary education in Lao PDR – A case study of BEQUAL NGO Consortium project in Xaybouahong district, Khammouane province

Synopsis of project

This research aims to evaluate the level of participation of community members in the BEQUAL NGO consortium project in promoting an increase in children's attendance in quality primary education.

The researcher will collect your views on how you participate in the project to support children in accessing and achieving quality basic education, as well as on how school children's and your behavior have changed throughout ongoing process of the project implementation.

If you agree to participate, you and your parent/guardian will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. Your parent/guardian can also ask for you to be withdrawn. However, because of our schedule, any withdrawals must be done within 1 weeks after we have interviewed you.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you will be stored on a password protected file and only you, the researchers and our supervisors will have access to this information.

Please contact us if you need more information about the project. At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can contact our supervisor:

My supervisor is: A/Prof. Evangelia Papoutsaki, phone 815-4321 ext. 8746 or email epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2018 - 1026

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 9th July 2018 to 9th 2019. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

ຂໍ້ມູນສໍາລັບຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ



ຂໍ້ມູນສໍາລັບຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມ

ຫົວຂໍ້ບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ: ການປະເມີນລະດັບການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງປະຊາຊົນໃນການສົ່ງເສີມການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ ຢູ່ ສປປ ລາວ. ກໍລະນີສຶກສາກ່ຽວກັບໂຄງການຮ່ວມ ບິຄວາ(ໂຄງການ ສຸພະນິມິດ) ທີ່ເມືອງ ໄຊບົວທອງ, ແຂວງ ຄໍາມ່ວນ

ຂໍ້ສະຫຼຸບ

ຈຸດປະສົງຂອງບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ແມ່ນ ເພື່ອປະເມີນການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງປະຊາຊົນໃນໂຄງການຮ່ວມ ບິຄວາ (ໂຄງການສຸພະນິມິດ) ທີ່ສົ່ງເສີມການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ. ນັກຄົ້ນຄົ້ວຈະໄດ້ເກັບກໍາຄວາມຄິດເຫັນຂອງທ່ານກ່ຽວກັບວິທີທີ່ທ່ານໃຊ້ໃນການຊຸກຍູ້ສົ່ງເສີມເດັກນ້ອຍໃຫ້ໄດ້ເຂົ້າຮຽນ ແລະ ຈົບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ ພ້ອມທັງຄໍາຄິດເຫັນກ່ຽວກັບການປ່ຽນແປງພຶດຕິກຳຂອງເດັກນ້ອຍທີ່ອາດມີຜົນມາຈາກການດໍາເນີນໂຄງການດັ່ງກ່າວ.

ຖ້າທ່ານເຫັນດີທີ່ຈະເຂົ້າຮ່ວມໃນການໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນ ທ່ານ ແລະ ຜູ້ປົກຄອງຂອງທ່ານ(ກໍລະນີອາຍຸບໍ່ເຖິງ 18 ປີ) ຈະໄດ້ເຊັນຊີໃສ່ໜັງສືຕົກລົງເຫັນດີເຂົ້າຮ່ວມການສໍາພາດ. ການເຊັນຊີບໍ່ໄດ້ໝາຍຄວາມວ່າທ່ານຈະບໍ່ສາມາດປ່ຽນໃຈຕອນຕົວອອກຈາກການໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນໄດ້. ແຕ່ເນື່ອງຈາກເວລາການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວມີຈໍາກັດ ຫາກທ່ານຈະຕອນຕົວອອກຈາກການໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນຕໍ່ກັບນັກຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ກະລຸນາແຈ້ງພາຍໃນ 1 ອາທິດຫຼັງຈາກການສໍາພາດ.

ຊື່ ແລະ ຂໍ້ມູນຕ່າງໆກ່ຽວກັບຕົວທ່ານຈະຖືກເກັບໄວ້ເປັນຄວາມລັບ. ທຸກໆຂໍ້ມູນທີ່ໄດ້ຈາກທ່ານຈະຖືກຮັກສາໄວ້ໃນລະບົບຄອມພິວເຕີທີ່ໃຊ້ລະຫັດຜ່ານ ແລະ ມີພຽງທ່ານ, ນັກຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ແລະ ອາຈານທີ່ປຶກສາເທົ່ານັ້ນສາມາດເບິ່ງໄດ້.

ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ພວກເຮົາໄດ້ທຸກເວລາ ຫາກທ່ານຕ້ອງການຂໍ້ມູນເພີ່ມຕື່ມ ຫຼື ມີຄວາມກັງວົນກ່ຽວກັບການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ. ທ່ານສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ ອາຈານທີ່ປຶກສາ ທີ່ຊື່:

(ຜູ້ຊ່ວຍ ສາດສະດາຈານ) ອິແວນຈິເລຍ ພາພຸດຊາກິ, ໂທລະສັບ 815-4321, ຕໍ່ 8746 ຫຼື ອີເມວ: epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz

ເລກທະບຽນຂອງຄະນະກຳມະການ ດ້ານຈັນຍາບັນຂອງການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ຢູນິເທັກ 2018 - 1026

ບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ໄດ້ຮັບການອະນຸມັດຈາກ ຄະນະກຳມະທິການ ດ້ານຈັນຍາບັນຂອງການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ຢູນິເທັກ ເລີ່ມແຕ່ວັນທີ 9 ກໍລະກົດ 2018 ຫາວັນທີ 9 ກໍລະກົດ 2019. ຖ້າທ່ານມີຂໍ້ສ້ອງໃຈກ່ຽວກັບຈັນຍາບັນໃນການດາເນີນການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ ທ່ານສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ ຄະນະກຳມະທິການ ໂດຍຜ່ານທາງໂທລະສັບ 09 815-4321, ຕໍ່ 8551. ທຸກບັນຫາທີ່ທ່ານນາສະເໜີຈະຖືເປັນຄວາມລັບ ແລະ ນໍາມາພິຈາລະນາ ແລ້ວ ຈະແຈ້ງຜົນໃຫ້ຊາບ.

Appendix 9: Participant information form



Participant Information Form

My name is Somphien Mahaphom. I am currently enrolled in the Master of International Communication degree in the Department of Communication Studies at Unitec New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to evaluate the level of community participation in BEQUAL NGO Consortium project that promotes an increased participation of children in quality primary education in Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province, Lao PDR.

I request your participation in the following way: Participating in the interview. As a purpose of research, the interview will be audio recorded.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person in your organisation without the prior agreement of everyone involved. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

I hope that you find this invitation to be of interest. If you have any queries about this research, you may contact my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

My supervisor is: A/Pro. Evangelia Papoutsaki phone: 815-4321 ext. 8746 or email: epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2018 - 1026

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 9th July 2018 to 9th July 2019. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

ໃບຄໍາຮ້ອງການຮ່ວມໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນ



ໃບຄໍາຮ້ອງການຮ່ວມໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນ

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າທ້າວ ສິມພຽນ ມະຫາພິມ ປັດຈຸບັນກຳລັງສຶກສາຕໍ່ໃນລະດັບ ປະລິນຍາໂທ ຢູ່ຄະນະວິຊາ ການສື່ສານ ທີ່ສະຖາບັນ ການສຶກສາ ຢູນິເທັກ ປະເທດນິວຊີແລນ. ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ຂໍຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອຈາກທ່ານໃນການຮ່ວມໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນ ໃນການເຮັດບົດຄົ້ນ ຄົ້ວ ເຊິ່ງເປັນສ່ວນປະກອບທີ່ສໍາຄັນທີ່ຂາດບໍ່ໄດ້ໃນການຂຽນບົດຈົບຊັ້ນຂອງຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ.

ຈຸດປະສົງຂອງບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ແມ່ນ ເພື່ອປະເມີນການມີສ່ວນຮ່ວມຂອງປະຊາຊົນໃນໂຄງການຮ່ວມ ບົດວາ (ໂຄງການສຸພະນິມິດ) ທີ່ ສົ່ງເສີມການຂະຫຍາຍໂອກາດໃຫ້ເດັກນ້ອຍໄດ້ຮັບການສຶກສາຂັ້ນພື້ນຖານທີ່ມີຄຸນນະພາບ ຢູ່ທີ່ ເມືອງ ໄຊບົວທອງ, ແຂວງ ຄໍາ ມ່ວນ, ສປປ ລາວ.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຂໍໃຫ້ທ່ານເຂົ້າຮ່ວມການສໍາພາດ ແລະ ເພື່ອຈຸດປະສົງໃນການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ການສໍາພາດຈະໄດ້ຖືກບັນທຶກສຽງ.

ຂໍ້ມູນທີ່ທ່ານໃຫ້ໃນການສໍາພາດຈະບໍ່ໄດ້ເປີດເຜີຍຕົວຕົນຂອງທ່ານ ຫຼື ອົງການຈັດຕັ້ງຂອງທ່ານ. ຈະບໍ່ມີໃຜໃນອົງການຈັດຕັ້ງຂອງ ທ່ານທີ່ຈະສາມາດອ່ານຜົນຂອງບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ນອກຈາກຈະໄດ້ຮັບການອະນຸຍາດຈາກບຸກຄົນທີ່ກ່ຽວຂ້ອງ ນີ້ກໍ່ຄື ທ່ານເອງ, ນັກຄົ້ນ ຄົ້ວ ແລະ ອາຈານທີ່ປຶກສາ. ທ່ານມີສິດທີ່ຈະແນະນຳນັກຄົ້ນຄົ້ວວ່າ ຂໍ້ມູນທີ່ໃຫ້ສໍາພາດໄປແລ້ວນັ້ນ ໂຕໃດທີ່ຄວນໃຊ້ ແລະ ໂຕ ໃດບໍ່ຄວນໃຊ້. ທ່ານຍັງສາມາດຂໍເບິ່ງບົດຈົບຊັ້ນ ກ່ອນທີ່ຈະຖືກສົ່ງໄປກວດ.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຫວັງວ່າທ່ານຈະມີຄວາມສົນໃຈ ແລະ ໃຫ້ການຮ່ວມມືເຂົ້າຮ່ວມການໃຫ້ຂໍ້ມູນໃນຄັ້ງນີ້. ຫາກທ່ານມີຂໍ້ຂ້ອງໃຈກ່ຽວ ກັບບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ ທ່ານສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ສອບຖາມ ອາຈານທີ່ປຶກສາຂອງຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ທີ່ຢູ່ ສາຖາບັນການສຶກສາ ຢູນິເທັກ, ປະເທດ ນິວຊີແລນ.

ອາຈານທີ່ປຶກສາຂອງຂ້າພະເຈົ້າແມ່ນ (ຜູ້ຊ່ວຍ ສາດສະດາຈານ) ອິແວນຈິເລຍ ພາພຸດຊາກິ, ໂທລະສັບ 815-4321, ຕໍ່ 8746 ຫຼື ອີເມວ: epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz

ເລກທະບຽນຂອງຄະນະກຳມະການ ດ້ານຈັນຍາບັນຂອງການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ຢູນິເທັກ 2018 - 1026

ບົດຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ໄດ້ຮັບການອະນຸມັດຈາກ ຄະນະກຳມະທິການ ດ້ານຈັນຍາບັນຂອງການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວ ຢູນິເທັກ ເລີ່ມແຕ່ວັນທີ 9 ກໍລະກົດ 2018 ຫາ ວັນທີ 9 ກໍລະກົດ 2019. ຖ້າທ່ານມີຂໍ້ຂ້ອງໃຈກ່ຽວກັບຈັນຍາບັນໃນການດາເນີນການຄົ້ນຄົ້ວນີ້ ທ່ານສາມາດຕິດຕໍ່ ຄະນະກຳມະທິການ ໂດຍ ຜ່ານທາງໂທລະສັບ 09 815-4321, ຕໍ່ 8551. ທຸກບັນຫາທີ່ທ່ານນາສະເໜີຈະຖືເປັນຄວາມລັບ ແລະ ນຳມາພິຈາລະນາ ແລ້ວ ຈະແຈ້ງຜົນໃຫ້ ຊາບ.



Full name of author: Somphien Mahaphom

ORCID number (Optional):

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):

Evaluating the level of community participation in increasing children's attendance in quality primary education in Lao PDR – A case study of BEQUAL NGO Consortium project in Xaybouathong district, Khammouane province.

Practice Pathway: Business Practice Pathway

Degree: Master

Year of presentation: 2019

Principal Supervisor: A/Prof. Evangelia Papoutsaki

Associate Supervisor: Dr. Philip Cass

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