

LIWG Newsletter

Volume of January - March 2020

Welcome to LIWG Newsletter. Our newsletter provides updates on activities implemented by the secretariat, its members and its network related to land advocacy, natural resource protection, and the promotion of human rights related to land and natural resource tenures.

Highlight story

Legal Calendar Evaluation



LIWG conducted the assessment to better understand how the legal calendar is used in mainstreaming legal information at the grassroots level and also to get ideas to improve the quality of future calendar development to better meet the needs of the target recipients in rural areas.

Read more inside

Here, what's inside:

Meeting and activities organized by LIWG

LIFE project and LIWG members

Communication and Stories sharing

Upcoming activities

Key note:

In the year 2019, there were many events and news regarding land and natural resources. Media, both internal and international, covered a wide range of development, land and natural resources related topics which happened in Laos. LIWG also captured **19 most highlights** of events in 2019.

Meeting and activities organized by LIWG secretariat

Legal Calendar Evaluation

LIWG conducted the assessment to better understand how legal calendar is used in mainstreaming legal information at grassroots level. In the same, it's also to get ideas to improve the quality of future calendar development and meet the needs of the target recipients and villagers in rural areas.

The result of the assessment will be shared among members and as well as to use for improving work on the development Legal calendar of this year.

Legal Calendar from 2010 - 2020 can be found here:
<http://bit.ly/2lFcK3u>



Sharing session on the Use of Legal Calendar

To reflect the changes and experiences of using the Legal Calendar from LIWG members, the secretariat organized the sharing session on lessons learnt and experiences on using legal calendars to disseminate legal knowledge on land and natural resources to communities.

In the discussion, members shared on how the legal calendar has changed and evolved over the past 10 years, strengths and weaknesses (successes and challenges) of the project and how to strengthen the project and make it as effective as possible.

Many thoughts and stories were shared in the meeting which could be put in the plan to improve the use of the legal calendar, especially to have more trainings on how to use and disseminate laws and regulations from legal calendar to community to ensure that they understand how to use it. A highlight during this session was the role play by members to show how they delivered knowledge on the legal calendar to partners and as well as to communities.

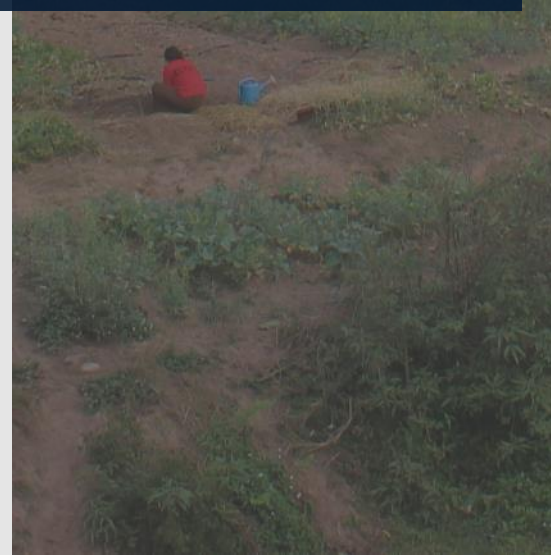
Some reflections from the evaluation of the legal calendar were also shared with participants in the meeting.

Training on development case study related to land issues

Working in different communities, LIWG members have many stories to be told. In order to provide skills to members to frame stories in the way that they can be shared with different audiences, LIWG organized the training for some LIWG members on the development of case studies related to land issues including a socio-economic approach.

For this training, we were happy to have external trainers who have experience on capturing stories related to land issues in the Mekong region to provide skills and tips for our members.

Throughout the 3-day period of learning, all participants developed the template that they can use to collect stories based on the context in different communities.



The LIWG annual general meeting

To present the work the secretariat has done in the year 2019 and the plan for 2020 to the core members, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was organized.

In the meeting, we presented our main achievements, the challenges we faced as well to share back our evaluation survey results on the work of the network.

In this meeting, the LIFE project, as a LIWG network initiative, updated about their work and their plan for a series of coaching on land and natural resources for Lao CSOs and their government counterparts.

To help the secretariat better understand members' interest to work together in some thematic areas, a World Café about LIWG thematic work was organized for members to discuss several potential thematic areas such as gender, responsible investment and policy advocacy. From the group discussion, members provided key recommendations on the need and options for working on the selected thematic areas which was shared to members via email for the result of the discussion.

The meeting also discussed the need to elect 3 new members to join the steering committees to replace some members who have left.

Provincial Networking: Jhai Coffee Cooperation

In early March of this year, to strengthen the relationship with member organizations in the communities, the LIWG secretariat visited Jhai Coffee Cooperation in Paksong who is supported by our member, [DGRV](#)- German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation. Our visit was to learn how Jhai Coffee Cooperation is working and supporting the local community on coffee production as well to explore their relation to land.

From our visit, we learned that DGRV provided a wide range of training and capacity building to the members in the cooperative as well as to enhance their network with the coffee groups in another Asian country.

Jhai Coffee Cooperation is working with young people in the community to build up the new generation to promote local coffee production. So they set up the youth center, a space for young people to learn about coffee and adding value to coffee production.



With support from the [Lao Farmer Network](#) (which was coordinated by CLICK – a LIWG member), youth members from Jhai Coffee Cooperation have the chance to increase their knowledge and skills and so they are more confident to be young entrepreneurs, adding value to coffee production which their parents are involved in.

The story of the Jhai Coffee Cooperative will be featured on LIWG social media soon, please follow us on [website](#) and [Facebook](#) to learn more about this story.

Lots of work to better structure the administration and finance of LIWG

Starting with the year 2020, the secretariat spent time to reorganize the administration and finance to have a better structure. The team, taking the results from the AGM into consideration, reflected on what were successes and challenges in the past year to identify areas and steps to improve.



LIWG involved in Voice project

As part of the project together with LIFE and Stella on to 'Empower youths with ethnic background to become agent of change in protecting land rights in their communities', LIWG played a key role to capture stories of several youth who have joined in different activities within this project. All stories, including article, publications, photos and videos, will be posted on LIWG social media and website as well as shared with LIWG members through internal communication channels.

More detail about the project can be found in the session of the LIFE project and blog in this Newsletter.

LIWG's Initiatives and members

LIFE project

LIFE Coaching on Legal Calendar

To enhance the capacity of field staff of CSOs and local authorities on the use of the Legal Calendar, the LIFE team organized two coachings to provide facilitation skills for field staff from 3 organizations: JVC in Savannakhet province, CCL and SAEDA in Oudomxay province, all of them being LIWG members, who were jointly trained with their government counterparts.

This coaching was based on the 6 topics from the Legal Calendar 2020 by using the interactive LIFE approach including games, role play, group discussion, posters, SMART, Bloom, PMI and the River Of methodologies.



These methodologies helped participants to learn more on the content of the Legal Calendar 2020 and how to use this content in their work, especially when they do dissemination in the communities.

After the coaching, all participants applied the skills they learned in a 1-day activity at village level in their target areas.

Learn more about LIFE: <https://laolandinfo.org/category/life/>



Voice Project: Empower ethnic youths to become agent of change in protecting land rights in their communities

This project on dissemination of tools and methods on how to preserve land and natural resources is supported by Voice, (funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and supervised in Lao PDR by OXFAM) and implemented by **LIFE project, LIWG and Stella**. 10 youths, from various ethnic backgrounds, from the Faculty of Law and Politics, National University of Laos and their 10 peers in the home villages have joined this project.

The project has a duration of 15 months (July 2019-September 2020) with the goal to enable youth to become agents of change in their villages in the planning of the use of natural resources. The idea is to teach youth on the respective laws and regulations related to natural resources and land and empower them to have a stronger voice in their village when it comes to natural resources use.

The preparatory workshop on soft skills and Community Dialogue Facilitation was organized to build capacity for the 10 youths in Vientiane in November 2019 to obtain skills before leading activities in their communities. This workshop was led by **Stella**.

The 'River Of' activity led by young people in villages

The intergenerational dialogues between youth and their village communities took place from 24th January - 12th February 2020. The 10 youths took the lead to implement the activities at their villages. They spent 1 day to organize the intergenerational dialogue by using the 'River Of' activity as the tool for learning. The goal was to find out the changes and problems that arose in the villages within the last 5 to 10 years from natural resources use and destruction.

This was the first time for this young group to lead the activities to discuss about the change of natural resources in their communities.

Read story of their journey [here](https://bit.ly/2UCUN4N), and see photos of this activity at: <https://bit.ly/2UCUN4N>



The reflection workshop for the result of activities from villages

After implementation of activities in their villages, all youth participants shared back what they learned from their own villages among the youth group, so everyone could learn from each other. In a next step, the youth will learn about mitigation techniques and the respective laws to tackle problems in their villages and prepare a role play for their communities.

Youth group and LIFE team sharing their works to Voice Grantees

As part of a **sharing session of Voice grantees** organized by Click under the Community of Practice (CoP) on youths, representatives of youth group together with the LIFE team shared their experiences among Voice grantees who came to visit them. This was a good opportunity for the youth group and LIFE team to share what they had done under the Voice grant in order for grantees to learn from each other and also for LIFE and youths to share tips and methodologies they used in the activity implementation.

See more photos of this event: <https://bit.ly/2R1sTNO>

This is the progressive step that we have seen the growth of these dynamic youth group member which can build up their confidence to lead activities awaiting them in the near future.



Legal Calendar launching in Savannakhet by JVC

Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) organized the launching of the legal calendar 2020 on 31st January 2020 at the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office, Savannakhet province.

This launching was to introduce the importance of the legal calendar 2020 to key government counterparts before doing dissemination to local communities in the target areas. In the meeting, all participants shared comments and suggestions to legal calendar which could be put in the consideration to improve the work of the legal calendar better.

There were also representatives from MONRE and the task force team of the legal calendar attending this launching.

JVC is one of our members who is active in using the legal calendar to disseminate legal knowledge to communities especially in the part of using and protecting natural resources.

Learn more about JVC at: <https://bit.ly/2RigogC>

Multiple stakeholder Dialogue on Improving Natural Resource Governance and Climate Change Adaptation

To enhance the capacity of local authorities, Lao CSOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) on good natural resource governance especially on land and forest, **Green Community Alliance** (GCA) organized the workshop on 'Multiple stakeholder Dialogue on Improving Natural Resource Governance and Climate Change Adaptation' in the end of the year 2019 in Northern Agriculture and Forestry College (NAFC), Lungprabang province. The two-day workshop provided a place to reflect on the collaboration between local authorities and Lao CSOs and CBOs to promote and implement activities on good governance on land and forest in the community level.

The workshop included the sharing session with a wide range of topics related to natural resources with guest speakers from Souphanouvong University, local authorities and Lao CSOs. The workshop also included the study trip for all participants to visit Pak Seung campus to learn about organic farming practices and the agroforestry concept. Students from Souphanouvong university also joined the workshop.

See photos of the event here: <https://bit.ly/3bGwitd>



Communication and Stories sharing

Highlight of the year 2019 on land and natural resources

19



ເລື່ອງເດັ່ນແຫ່ງປີ 2019

ວ່າດ້ວຍປະເດັນທີ່ດິນ ແລະ ຊັບພະຍາກອນທຳມະຊາດ ໃນລາວ

In the year 2019, there were many events and news regarding land and natural resources. Media, both internal and international, covered a wide range of development, land and natural resources related topics which happened in Laos. To capture some highlights of events in 2019, we have summarized 19 most highlights which you can read about here: <http://bit.ly/37P44dH>

LIWG Blog stories

Starting with the year 2020, there are some interesting readings on our website including inspiring stories, reflection and updates regarding land and natural resources. Some highlights to wet your appetite include:

The price of land: 'Is the land my parents left behind for me worth only ten million kip?'



The garden is very important to Somphorn's family as it provides the main source of income. When they return from a weeklong trip to Savannaket, they go to see their garden, but they see a picture of devastation. Their garden is now a flat expanse of red dirt scarred with the tracks of a bulldozer.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2JckIJW>

People story: young people go back to their homes to learn about natural resources by using 'River Of'



The discussion happened during the 'River of' activity, ethnic youths who are main leads of activities learn how the nature and environment are changes from the past and the concern of communities' future lives under the depression of degraded nature.

Read more: <http://bit.ly/2PWJnWT>

Women's voices at the National Assembly: Women members raised issues about natural resources and environment at the 8th Ordinary Session



What is interesting and quite different from previous sessions is that there are more women members who are standing up to raise issues of concern over the exploitation of natural resources, impacts from development projects, and even the transparency and corruption issues of some officials.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/340wLUI>

Highlight News of January - March 2020

Authorities plough through 438 project assessments in search of land tax

The assessment focused on seven scenarios, namely so-called ghost projects, cancelled projects, expired projects, implementing projects, those without land leases and concessions from the government, conflicted projects, and projects transferred from state ownership to private use.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2WZNRR2>



Tourism project licenses revoked to make way for special economic zone

Champasak provincial authorities have revoked licenses previously issued for several tourism projects in Champasak province so the land can be used to create the Maha Nathi Sithandone special economic zone.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2USMXTp>



Chinese environmental organizations win a court case against hydro-power construction to protect the endangered green peafowls in Yunnan

The lawsuit has attracted public attention because it was the country's first environmental public interest case aimed at preventing the loss of the only native peafowl in China, and because of how it highlights the conflicting agendas of humans and wildlife.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/39Fe1Lz>



Story's videos on our Youtube:

‘The River Of’ activity: Ethnic youths lead activities at their villages

The first activity of the project on ‘Dissemination of tools and methods on how to preserve land and natural resources’ is the ‘River of’ activity. This activity is a learning tool that can be used for discussion about the changes in natural resource availability & use.

Watch this video at: <https://bit.ly/2R3Bf7B> or watch on Facebook [here](#)



Some highlights from LIFE project for CoP 2019



This video was developed in the framework of the Community of Practice Meeting of the LIFE project in November 2019. The video shows some insights into coaching methodology and the reflections from some of LIFE's coaching participants.

Watch video at: <https://youtu.be/2WbbFwqeplY>



LIWG Legal Calendar is online!

LIWG members have collaborated to design Legal calendars containing land-related laws and policies accompanied by drawings, distributing them to rural communities throughout the country with the objective of raising awareness of the legal protections available to citizens under the laws and regulations of the Lao PDR.

Legal calendar has been developed since 2010. For the legal calendar 2020, can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3bMYvuh>

Each month we share the topic from the legal calendar on the facebook page. Read them all [here](#).

Upcoming activities (April – June 2020)

- Calendar training with members in provinces
- Legal Calendar 2021 development
- LIFE Coaching
- Comparative analysis on the Land Law and Forestry Law
- Finalization of the Women Land Rights Study report in English and Lao
- Workshop to present the findings of the Women Land Rights study

Announcement: Due to the COVID-19 situation, the LIWG secretariat office is closed and we are working from home. We will come to work at the office again when the situation improves.

Some activities during April - June 2020 may be postponed depending on what is possible in the changing context..

Nonetheless, the secretariat will continue to function as they are able within the current limitations.. All the staff can be reached by email and phone. Also, Our media channel will active as always, so please follow us to get update about land information.

Stay safe and be well!

Contact us:

Tel: +85630 9815657

Email: co@laolandinfo.org

Website: www.laolandinfo.org

Facebook : Land Information Working Group

