



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Ministry of Education and Sports
Department of Non-Formal Education

Prime Minister's Decree **On Lifelong Learning**

Department of Non-Formal Education
March 2020
Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR

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Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

The Government

No. 208/GOV
Vientiane Capital, Date 23.03.2020

Decree On Lifelong Learning

- Pursuant to the Law on the Government, No. 04/NA, dated 8 November 2016;
- Pursuant to the Law on Education, No. 62/NA, dated 16 July 2015;
- Pursuant to the letter of proposal, No. 253/MOES, dated 18 February 2020, of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The Government issues the Decree:

Chapter 1 General Provision

Article 1 Objective

This Decree determines the principles, regulations and measures regarding the supervision, monitoring, inspection and promotion of lifelong learning to ensure that the provision of teaching-learning, assessment, recognition, certification, equivalency and transfer of learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning is implemented uniformly and to a consistent and high standard. Its aim is to enable all Lao citizens to access learning opportunities to advance their level of education, knowledge, vocational and professional capabilities, to develop sound morals and ethics, and be ready to contribute to regional and international integration and national socio-economic development.

Article 2 Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning incorporates different forms of learning including formal, non-formal and informal learning with the aim to provide all people, both male and female, with access to learning opportunities throughout life, to create knowledge societies to fulfill the needs for the country's development.

Article 3 Definitions

Terms used in this Decree shall have the following meanings:

1. **Flexible learning** refers to a form and method of organizing teaching-learning that can be flexible in terms of teaching-learning, duration of learning, places of learning and the learners' context and readiness for learning.
2. **Assessment** refers to a process of evaluating learning outcomes achieved by learners with the aim to judge the level of learning outcomes achieved through appropriate methods such as inspection, testing, examination and other suitable methods.
3. **Full-time teacher** refers to an individual who performs the task of teaching, transferring knowledge to learners on a regular basis at lifelong learning institutions, both public and private, has qualifications, or is a distinguished practitioner or has honorary titles, is a qualified teacher, has rights, duties, obligations and is eligible to receive policy awards in accordance with laws and regulations.

4. **Invited teacher** refers to an individual who is invited from external institutions, both domestic and foreign, to perform the task of teaching, transferring knowledge to learners using learning approaches and methods that the lifelong learning institutions determine in their curriculum, has qualifications, or is a distinguished practitioner or has honorary titles, is a qualified, has rights, duties, obligations and is eligible to receive policy awards in accordance with laws and regulations.
5. **Learning outcomes** refers to knowledge, competencies, skills or levels of education acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Article 4 Government Policies on Lifelong Learning

The government recognizes lifelong learning as an important element in human resource development and encourages all Lao citizens including Lao citizens living abroad and those imprisoned, to take any opportunity to develop knowledge, competencies and skills through appropriate flexible learning methods and approaches based on the potential learners' circumstances and context.

The government promotes lifelong learning by recruiting personnel, allocating a budget, providing infrastructure and policy awards to teachers and personnel working in the field of lifelong learning in accordance with laws and regulations.

The government supports and encourages individuals, legal entities and organizations, both domestic and foreign, as well as military personnel and police officers to contribute their knowledge, understanding, experience in modern technological sciences, but also capital to lifelong learning in accordance with laws and regulations.

Article 5 Principles of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning shall be implemented in accordance with the following principles:

1. Lifelong learning shall be conducted in line with the Party's policies, laws, national socio-economic development plans and national strategies for human resource development.
2. Lifelong learning shall be embedded within a system that includes assessment, recognition, equivalency, accreditation and transfer of learning outcomes between formal, non-formal and informal learning approaches.
3. Lifelong learning shall be flexible, continuable, shall encompass various learning approaches and be relevant to the contexts in which the learning takes place.
4. Lifelong learning shall be implemented in line with the national education qualification framework and be compatible with regional and international standards.
5. The implementation of lifelong learning shall involve cooperation and participation of ministries, organizations, local authorities and other relevant sectors.
6. The implementation of other principles of lifelong learning shall proceed in compliance with the international conventions and treaties to which the Lao PDR is a party.

Article 6 Scope of Application of this Decree

This Decree applies to individuals, legal entities and organizations, both domestic and foreign, conducting lifelong learning in the Lao PDR.

Article 7 International Cooperation

The government promotes relations and cooperation with foreign countries, and regional and international cooperation to develop lifelong learning approaches through an exchange of expertise, information, research, technology, human resource development, and

other forms of cooperation as they may arise in accordance with the international conventions and treaties to which the Lao PDR is a party.

Chapter 2

Teaching-Learning in Lifelong Learning

Article 8 Teaching-Learning in Lifelong Learning

Teaching-learning in lifelong learning is the conduct of teaching-learning based on the national education system which is quality-assured, compliant with curriculums and the standards of equivalency of education and the regulations for the transfer of learning outcomes.

Teaching-learning in lifelong learning can take one of three forms: teaching-learning in formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

Article 9 Form of Teaching-Learning in Lifelong Learning in Formal Education

In formal education settings, teaching-learning in lifelong learning is regularly conducted in settings formally designated as schools with the time and duration of a course fixed, and the course content compliant with the national education standards.

Article 10 Forms of Teaching-Learning in Lifelong Learning in Non-Formal Education

Teaching-learning in lifelong learning in non-formal education is different from the teaching-learning in formal education in terms of the teaching methods, forms, time and places all of which are flexible based on the learners' context and readiness.

Teaching-learning in lifelong learning in non-formal education can take the following forms:

1. Center-based learning: teaching-learning is conducted in non-formal education centers including regional, provincial, district non-formal education centers, community learning centers (CLCs) and other appropriate places based on the facilities and conditions.
2. Mobile learning: teaching-learning is conducted by a teacher dispatched to conduct teaching-learning for learners in an appropriate place.
3. Distance learning: teaching-learning is conducted via appropriate facilities such as print materials and electronic media and does not require the physical presence of learners and teachers in the place of learning. .

Article 11 Forms of Teaching-Learning in Lifelong Learning in Informal Learning

Informal learning in lifelong learning is any learning that learners undertake voluntarily out of interest, and which they may or may not register with educational institutions, self-directed learning, learning from educational institutions or from individuals with particular expertise in a way that it is neither systematic nor continued, learning due to an interest in a particular topic, depending on context, circumstance and learners' readiness.

Teaching-learning in informal learning in lifelong learning can take the following forms:

1. Career-based self-directed learning is learning that learners undertake to improve existing professional knowledge and skills through appropriate methods such as by participation in training sessions, seminars and study visits.

2. Interest-based self-directed learning is learning that arises from the learners' interests when learners are keen to acquire particular knowledge and skills in order to gain the knowledge and skills to achieve particular interests.
3. Learning from experiences is learning when learners acquire knowledge and skills through circumstances such as work experience and everyday life events or incidents.

Article 12 Curriculums, Textbooks and Materials in Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning shall have curriculums, textbooks and materials to be used for teaching-learning in compliance with the Law on Education.

Informal learning typically does not have dedicated curriculums, textbooks and materials to be used in learning.

Article 13 Lifelong Learning Institutions

Lifelong learning institutions are educational institutions as identified by the Law on Education.

In informal learning, learning is not limited to taking place in educational institutions. Learners may undertake learning at any appropriate place based on the capabilities, needs, context, conditions and readiness of the individual learner.

Article 14 Teachers of Lifelong Learning

Teachers of lifelong learning are individuals who perform the task of teaching and transferring knowledge to learners at lifelong learning institutions, both in public and private lifelong learning institutions, as identified in this Decree and the Law on Education.

Teachers of lifelong learning may be full-time teachers and individuals invited to teach.

Informal learning typically does not have teachers, however, learning may be facilitated by instructors or facilitators.

Article 15 Personnel of Lifelong Learning

Personnel employed in lifelong learning are individuals who perform duties in and are responsible for the administration and management, inspection, supervision, assistance and facilitation of teaching-learning at both private and public educational institutions.

The standards and qualifications of lifelong learning personnel recruited to work at public educational institutions shall be based on the Law on Civil Servants. The standards for and qualifications of personnel employed by private education institutions shall follow the particular regulations determined by the relevant ministries, and agencies.

Lifelong learning personnel shall receive awards as per government policies for performing duties, upgrading academic skills, living conditions and social status in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations.

Chapter 3 Assessment, Recognition, Certification, Equivalence and Transfer

Article 16 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Assessment of learning outcomes means an ongoing measurement of a learner's level of knowledge, competencies, and skills documented by lifelong learning institutions in the form of formal grades and levels of education in accordance with national education system.

The practices of the assessments of learning outcomes shall follow the regulations determined by the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with the relevant ministries and agencies.

Article 17 Recognition of Learning Outcomes

Recognition of learning outcomes is a process of assessment of an individual learner's learning outcomes achieved at an educational institution or through informal learning. The results of such an assessment shall be used for accreditation, continuation, extension or certification of formal education levels.

The practices of recognition of learning outcomes shall follow the regulations determined by the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies.

Article 18 Certification of Learning Outcomes

Certification of learning outcomes means granting degrees or certificates specifying education level achieved by learners at lifelong learning institutions. The qualification is awarded by the institution in which the teaching-learning has been conducted as per rights and duties determined by the Law on Education.

For the certification of learning outcomes of informal learning for a learner s registered at an educational institution, the certification or award of degree shall, then, be granted by the institution. For non-registered informal learners, the non-formal educational institutions are authorized to and take responsibility for the conduct of assessment and granting of certificates or degrees.

Article 19 Establishing Equivalence and Transfer of Learning Outcomes

Establishing equivalence is a process of assessing knowledge, competencies, skills or any learning outcomes and the attribution of appropriate grades or qualification, with the aim to assign equal value to learning outcomes to all forms of learning irrespective of where the learning outcomes were acquired.

Transfer is a process of comparison of knowledge, competencies, skills or level of education regardless of learning source with the aim to match knowledge, competencies and skills acquired by a learner for a specific level of education to enable transfer of learning outcomes between formal, non-formal and informal learning in compliance with the Law on Education.

Chapter 4 Quality Assurance of Lifelong Learning

Article 20 Quality Assurance

All educational institutions that provide lifelong learning must develop internal quality assurance systems in order to monitor and inspect teaching-learning with the aim to ensure that all learning outcomes acquired through all forms of lifelong learning are of equal quality and comply with the standards of the national education qualification framework.

Article 21 Inspection of Quality

The Ministry of Education and Sports is a coordinating agency responsible for the coordination with relevant ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies and organizations which conduct quality assessment of teaching-learning at lifelong learning institutions, both at public and private institutions, at regular intervals in order to ensure that teaching-learning is implemented efficiently and effectively.

Chapter 5

Committee for Lifelong Learning

Article 22 Committee for Lifelong Learning

The National Commission for Human Resource Development will also undertake the function of the National Committee for Lifelong Learning. Its role is to supervise, encourage, promote, monitor, inspect and implement lifelong learning.

The provincial Committee for Human Resource Development will also undertake the function of the Committee for Lifelong Learning at the provincial level. The same principle applies to the Education Development Committee at district and village level.

Article 23 Secretariat of Lifelong Learning Committee

The Secretariat of Committee for Lifelong Learning is an organizational structure tasked with assisting the Committee of Lifelong Learning at each level. The Secretariat's role is to serve as the coordinating Secretariat of the Committee of Lifelong Learning at the committee level at which the coordinating secretary is appointed. The role of Secretariat for the Committee for Lifelong Learning comprises of the following levels:

1. The Secretariat of the National Commission for Lifelong Learning is the Department of Non-Formal Education and representatives from relevant departments of the Ministry of Education and Sports.
2. The Secretariat of the Committee at ministries and ministry-equivalent agencies are the relevant department of the ministries, and/or agencies.
3. The Secretariat of the Committee at the provincial level is the Provincial Education and Sports Service.
4. The Secretariat of the Committee at the district, municipality, and city level are the District Education Bureaus, municipalities, and cities.

Chapter 6

Management and Inspection of Lifelong Learning

Article 24 Agencies for Management and Inspection

Government is solely responsible for management and monitoring of lifelong learning to ensure a centrally managed and nationally consistent approach. To this end the Ministry of Education and Sports has been authorized to be the lead agency in the implementation of the lifelong learning policy. The Ministry works in collaboration and coordination with other relevant ministries, agencies and relevant local authorities to implement lifelong learning through assigned roles and functions.

The agencies for management and monitoring encompass the following agencies:

1. Ministry of Education and Sports;
2. Provincial, and Vientiane Capital Education and Sports Services;
3. District, municipality, and city Education Bureaus.

Article 25 Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Education and Sports

The Ministry of Education and Sports has the following rights and duties in the administration and management of lifelong learning:

1. Based on best available evidence, develop policies, strategies, and plans related to lifelong learning at the national level based on the national strategies of human resource development.

2. Based on best available evidence, develop standards, criteria, regulations and guidelines related to lifelong learning to be used as legislative reference materials by party-state organizations, mass organizations at national level and local administrative authorities to expand and implement lifelong learning.
3. Advocate for and disseminate policies, strategies, plans and regulations related to lifelong learning.
4. Based on best available evidence, develop and improve existing mechanisms to expand lifelong learning opportunities in order to enable all individuals to access learning opportunities throughout life.
5. Based on best available evidence, develop, improve and approve teaching-learning curriculums that meet the various needs of and are relevant to learning forms of lifelong learning.
6. Liaise with ministries, and agencies responsible for lifelong learning, development of regulations for assessment, recognition, equivalence, certification and transfer of learning outcomes obtained through formal, non-formal or informal learning in order to integrate these regulation into national education system with the aim of improving the quality to regional and international integration.
7. Develop and improve policies to promote contribution to lifelong learning, and policies related to rewarding teachers and personnel working for lifelong learning as identified in the relevant Laws.
8. Develop annual budgets for promotion and implementation of lifelong learning within the assigned roles and responsibilities.
9. Develop capacity building plans for academic aspects of lifelong learning for personnel and development partners both at national and local level engaged in the provision of lifelong learning.
10. Develop an appropriate mechanism for implementation, assessment, recognition, certification, equivalence and transfer of learning outcomes of lifelong learning.
11. Approve the establishment of lifelong learning institutions, withdraw and cancel licenses of institutions found to have contravened the relevant laws and regulations.
12. Invite relevant ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies and authorities to promote self-directed learning by developing and revising regulations to enable Lao people to access education, continuously extend their knowledge and competencies at all grades, all levels of education, and to access various sources of information and knowledge such as electronic media, online internet, and libraries.
13. Liaise with relevant ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies and other relevant organizations to encourage, promote, monitor, inspect and assess the implementation of lifelong learning periodically in order to ensure that lifelong learning is developing as required.
14. Regularly review and report on the implementation of lifelong learning to the government.
15. Exercise other rights and perform other functions as appropriate and determined by Laws and regulations.

Article 26 Rights and Duties of Provincial Education and Sports Service

The Provincial, and Vientiane Capital Education and Sports Services have the following rights and functions in the management of lifelong learning:

1. Expand the national policies, strategies and plans to provincial, capital-level programs, projects and activities.
2. Campaign for and disseminate policies, strategies, plans and regulations about lifelong learning.
3. Supervise those educational institutions under the jurisdiction of provincial, and Vientiane Capital Education and Sports Service to ensure that the implementation

and assessment of lifelong learning is compliant with the principles of lifelong learning, and is carried out in accordance with the principles of quality, transparency and justice;

4. Encourage, promote and approve the establishment of lifelong learning institutions.
5. Approve the withdrawal and cancellation of licenses of educational institutions that implement lifelong learning in contravention with laws and regulations.
6. Develop annual budgets to promote and implement lifelong learning.
7. Coordinate activities with relevant provincial departments, state provincial equivalent authorities and relevant organizations within the province, Vientiane capital to support, manage, monitor, inspect and assess the implementation of lifelong learning for periodically to ensure that lifelong learning is developing as required.
8. Regularly review and report on the implementation of lifelong learning to the Ministry of Education and Sports and relevant provincial, and Vientiane capital authorities.
9. Exercise other rights and perform other functions as appropriate and determined by Laws and regulations.

Article 27 Rights and Duties of District, City Education and Sports Bureaus

The District, City Education and Sports Bureaus have the following rights and duties in the management of lifelong learning:

1. Expand policies, strategies, plans for lifelong learning into micro programs, projects and activities at district, municipality, and city level.
2. Campaign for and disseminate policies, strategies, plans and regulations for lifelong learning.
3. Advise education institutions under the jurisdiction of districts, municipalities, cities on matters of implementation, assessment and certification of learning outcomes in an appropriate manner and compliant with principles of lifelong learning and is carried out in accordance with the principles of quality, transparency and justice.
4. Manage, monitor and inspect educational institutions that operate lifelong learning programs to ensure that teaching-learning is implemented in accordance with the principles and regulations of lifelong learning.
5. Mobilize and support educational institutions within the jurisdiction of relevant districts, municipalities, and cities in the implementation of lifelong learning programs with the aim of developing those educational institutions become lifelong learning institutions.
6. Develop annual budgets for promotion and implementation of lifelong learning.
7. Liaise with relevant public organizations, district-equivalent authorities and relevant organizations within districts, municipalities, and cities to encourage, manage, monitor, inspect and assess the implementation of lifelong learning in order to ensure that it is developing in accordance with relevant guidelines, regulations, policies and laws.
8. Regularly review and report on the implementation of lifelong learning to Provincial, Vientiane Capital Education and Sports Services, and relevant district, municipality, and city authorities.
9. Exercise other rights and perform other functions as appropriate and determined by Laws and regulations.

Article 28 Rights and Duties of Concerned Ministries, Ministry Equivalent-Agencies, Other Relevant Sectors and Local Authorities

Ministries, state ministry-equivalent agencies, other relevant sectors and local authorities have the following roles and duties:

1. Coordinate the implementation of management, promotion, accessibility, dissemination and inspection of information about lifelong learning with the Ministry of Education and Sports, relevant ministries, state ministry-equivalent agencies, relevant sectors and other organizations.
2. Coordinate the implementation of regulations regarding assessment, recognition, equivalence, certification and transfer of learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning with the Ministry of Education and Sports, relevant ministries, state ministry-equivalent agencies, relevant sectors and other organizations.
3. Campaign on and disseminate policies, laws, and regulations regarding lifelong learning as well as raising awareness and promotion of lifelong learning.
4. Expand lifelong learning at the local level by encouraging the people to understand the importance of education and become proactive in lifelong learning.
5. Coordinate activities with relevant authorities to advise, manage, encourage, monitor and inspect educational institutions that operate teaching-learning, assessment and certification of learning outcomes in order to ensure that these activities are undertaken in compliance with the principles of lifelong learning and is carried out in accordance with the principles of quality, transparency and justice.
6. Develop annual budgets for promoting and implementing lifelong learning projects within the remit of assigned roles and responsibilities.
7. Regularly review and report on the implementation of lifelong learning to higher authorities.
8. Exercise other rights and perform other functions as appropriate and determined by Laws and regulations.

Article 29 Objects of Inspection

The inspection of lifelong learning shall apply to the following objects:

1. Implementation of regulations regarding lifelong learning.
2. Conduct of officials and persons whose work is associated with the implementation of lifelong learning.
3. Implementation of operational plans, programs and projects of lifelong learning.
4. Assessment and certification of learning outcomes.

Article 30 Methods of Inspection

Inspections may be carried out in of three ways:

1. Regular inspection: an inspection carried out regularly and based on a predetermined schedule.
2. Inspection by advance notice: an inspection carried out when necessary, informing the targeted institution at least 24 hours in advance.
3. Immediate inspection: an urgent inspection without advance notice to the targeted institution.

Chapter 7

Policies on Outstanding Performance and Violations

Article 31 Outstanding Performance Awards

Outstanding performance by individuals, legal entities and organizations in the implementation of this Decree, such as effective and efficient management and implementation of lifelong learning in compliance with the objectives and goals of human resource development will receive policy awards or other rewards as determined in relevant government evaluations.

Article 32 Violations

Any individuals, legal entities or organizations violating this Decree shall be warned and educated and have administrative or civil measures or sanctions imposed depending on the seriousness of the case.

Chapter 8 Funding of Lifelong Learning

Article 33 Budgeting

The Ministry of Education and Sports, other relevant ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies, mass organisation at national level, provincial educational and sports departments, other relevant provincial departments, prefectures, department-equivalent authorities, district educational and sports bureaus, municipalities, cities, and district-equivalent bureaus and educational institutions have the duty and responsibility to develop annual short-term and long-term budget plans for the implementation of activities based on lifelong learning development plans and to submit these to higher authorities for consideration and approval.

Article 34 Source of Budget

The budget for lifelong learning may be derived from the following sources:

1. Government subsidy.
2. Grant money or loans from foreign countries and international organizations.
3. Grant money or exchange funding of local administrative authorities or educational institutions, both from domestic and foreign countries.
4. Contributions from individuals, legal entities, and relevant organizations.

Chapter 9 Final Provision

Article 35: Implementation

The Ministry of Education and Sports shall be proactive in coordinating with ministries, state ministry-equivalent agencies and other concerned sectors the implementation of this Decree in an effective and efficient manner.

Article 36: Entry into Force

This Decree becomes effective from the date of signature and fifteen days after posting in the Lao official gazette.

Any regulations, and provisions that conflict with this Decree shall be annulled/cancelled.

The Government of the Lao PDR
The Prime Minister

Signature and seal
Thongloun SISOULITH