

The Contribution of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union to Social Development, Lao PDR*

Somchai Bouldam and Siwach Sripokangkul
College of Local Administration, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Corresponding Author, E-mail: p.numpol@hotmail.com

Abstract

This research of objective to: 1) to assess the contributions of the LPRYU to social development between 2016-2020 and 2) to analyze the problems and obstacles and to provide suggestions of the LPRYU. This research is based on qualitative methods and purposive sampling used, there are two groups of key informants a total of 11 people as: 1) four administrators from the LPRYU; and 2) seven representative staffs from the LPRYU. Research tools are a questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and observations.

The result found:

1. Identified eight contributions of the LPRYU: 1) Contributions to educational ideas for juvenile and youth; 2) Contributions for improving and building the organization of the LPRYU; 3) Contributions to the youth process; 4) Contributions to juvenile work 5) Contributions to youth vocational development; 6) Contributions to the construction of facilities for the development of youth; 7) Contributions to cooperation with foreign countries; 8) Contributions to the results of the inspection of LPRYU.

2. In regard to obstacles and challenges of the LPRYU, the following points were identified: 1) The education work has not been carried out widely and does not match the target group of youths; 2) The organization of villagers and young students abroad in some places has not been guided by the movement as it should have 3) The youth organization system has not been strongly improved; 4) Some youth groups still underestimate the implementation of the law on the LPRYU. The suggestions: 1) seek

*Received: July 26, 2021; Revised: August 10, 2021; Accepted: September 26, 2021



guidance from the Board regularly to guide the implementation; 2) upgrade the organizational capacity, and guide the work of the Youth Union; 3) Strengthen the existing potential of the people at each level, including self-reliance, self-empowerment; 4) determine plans, programs, projects, activities of the LPRYU to be in line with the objectives of the development; 5) Raise the spirit of unity in the LPRYU at each level related to the activities of various processes in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of the youth.

Keywords: Contribution; Social Development Work; the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LPRYU)

1. Introduction

The Lao government has been committed to socio-economic development to improve the quality of life of its people through a creative economy, sustainable economic growth, and, most importantly, social order. The 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020) calls for the protection and development of the nation. Therefore, the Lao PDR strives to ascend from the status of a lower middle-income country to an upper-middle-income country, with each phase of the planning outlining the objectives, goals, programs, projects, policies, and measures to be implemented (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2016). The socio-cultural development goals of the country focus on poverty eradication. The Lao PDR has found it challenging to protect and promote people to have a better quality of life. The

development efforts place a great emphasis on education and health, striving to increase the number of people participating in the labor forces as scientists, researchers, technicians, and skilled laborers (Open Development Laos, 2019). In terms of health development, the goal is to reduce maternal and child mortality rates, thus increasing the life expectancy of the population; the higher developed the social welfare sector is, the higher is the social capital. Efforts have been made to expand the social protection system, increase social justice, gender equality, and ethnic people. At present, Laos focuses on socio-economic and social development, which requires the participation of a wide range of public and private sector participants and government organizations (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2016). There are currently 18 ministries, three equivalent agencies, and the Lao People's



Revolutionary Youth Union, as the direct to the central government. Each sector has its role and function, and all of these combines to contribute to the development of society and the nation.

The youth groups of the Lao PDR have been divided into four generations. The 1 st generation (1930-1945), the 2nd generation (1946-1954), and the 3rd generation (1955-1975) all contributed to the Lao PDR ultimately gaining independence. The Lao Revolutionary Party made an important contribution to a youth organization in 1955. The organization became a gathering and education center for young people, following the motto, “to die is better than to lose independence” (Department of Youth Training, 2020). The 4th generation (1975-present), when the nation was liberated and established as the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the youth force continued to participate in the mission of preserving and building the nation, especially in improving the infrastructure, economy, culture, and society, which is expressed in compliance with the rights, duties, and roles discussed below.

The Lao People’s Revolutionary Youth Union (LPRYU) is a mass organization in the Lao PDR dedicated to mobilizing

young people to contribute to national development under the terms of reference of the LYU as the foundation for their activities (Party Central Committee Secretary, 2018). The LYU committees at all levels take great effort to educate and train the Lao multi-ethnic youth to aspire towards patriotism, revolutionary values, preserve and enhance cultural heritage, initiate youth movements to implement policies, formulate national socio-economic plans, and uphold the law. LYU also disseminates historical and informational documents and articles to its members. LYU has established and strengthened LYU committees that today cover 96 percent of all primary, secondary, and high schools in the country. It has also established rules and regulations on various platforms for youth members to protect their legitimate rights and benefits (Lao People’s Revolutionary Youth Union, 2017). LYU regularly organizes youth events, including arts and literature competitions, the celebration of World Children's Day, and other activities to provide opportunities for the youth to exchange knowledge, demonstrate talent, and engage in self-development. The Lao Youth Union (LYU) committee has the role of educating, raising awareness and



understanding, and encouraging unity and solidarity among the multi-ethnic youth in Laos. LYU is an organization with the ability to organize and lead youth-related activities and is the representative in protecting the legitimate rights and benefits of the Lao multi-ethnic youth.

The above tasks affect the processes and results of the country's development plans. The results will be helpful for improving the development plan of the LPRYU. The information will be an important part of contributing to the country's development plan and will help make it more relevant to the actual work of the stakeholders to achieve better results. Such work is necessary for operations related to the work, responsibilities, and activities at the National University of Laos. In the National University of Laos, Faculty of Social Sciences, many students are members of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LPRYU), making the study of the contributions of the LPRYU to social development an interesting topic. The study the contribution of the LPRYU to social development Lao PDR, the problems, obstacles, and suggestions of the LPRYU regarding social development work are of interest, as well as the question

of what are the main forces or agents to contribute to the development of a direction for the stakeholders to adapt their social realities.

2. Research Objectives

1. Assess the contributions of the LPRYU to social development between 2016-2020.
2. Analyze the problems and obstacles and provide suggestions for the future work of the LPRYU.

3. Research Methodology

This research uses qualitative methods in collecting data and analysis, including an explanation, describing the interviews, secondary data and concepts and theories. Non-probability sampling and purposive sampling was used to informants from the population in the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. There were two groups of key informants, a total of eleven people, including: 1) Four administrators from the LPRYU; and 2) Seven representative staffs from the LPRYU. Structured interviews: researchers have set of questions for the data collection technique (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Thematic analysis is used for the content analysis of the data and



field observation. This was done in three ways: The results were classified into statements, which then were summarized and grouped by similar and related contents. Finally, the findings were composed and written with a comparative analysis of related concepts and theories.

4. Research Result

1. The contributions of the LPRYU to social development between 2016-2020. There are eight contributions: 1) Contributions to educational ideas for juvenile and youth; 2) Contributions for improving and building the organization of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union; 3) Contributions to the youth process; 4) Contributions to juvenile work; 5) Contributions to youth vocational development; 6) Contributions to the construction of facilities for the development of youth; 7) Contributions to cooperation with foreign countries; 8) Contributions to the results of the inspection of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union.

2. The problems and obstacles and provide suggestions of the LPRYU. there are still many problems and obstacles in the implementation of the work, such as 1) The education work has not been

carried out widely and does not match the target group of youths; 2) The organization of villagers and young students abroad in the past in some places has not been guided to the movement as it should be; 3) The youth organization system has not been strongly improved; 4) Some youth groups still underestimate the implementation of the law on the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. All the problems mentioned are due to lack of knowledge, capacity of staff is limited, the number of staff is insufficient, the workplace space is limited, there is a lack of vehicles to travel, there is a shortage of equipment, the budget is still limited, and, finally, the legislation is not in line with the new term.

Therefore, it is necessary to create conditions conducive to solve problems and address challenges, such as 1) Seek guidance from the Board regularly to guide the implementation; 2) Upgrade the organizational capacity, and guide the work of the Youth Union; 3) Strengthen the existing potential of the People's Liberation Army at each level, including self-reliance and self-empowerment; 4) Determine the plans, programs, projects, activities of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union must be in line with the objectives of the



development of local forces and activities and in line with the interests of the youth; 5) Raise the spirit of unity in the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union at each level as related to the activities of various processes in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of the youth. Based on the opinions of the interviewees the following solutions were suggested: "Participation of many parties and providing opportunities for young people to create full employment, young people must strive to train themselves to become competent, ready to develop themselves, develop families, be a force in the development of society and the nation, follow the plans and strategies of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, and integrate with the National Socio-Economic Development Plan of Laos, liaise with various organizations, both domestic and foreign, to enhance the potential of Lao youth. In addition, the competition for external funding, improving the format of advertising methods, educating young people and youth through online media, focusing on the development of skills for young people to have the potential and acceptance of the labor market to avoid social disputes". However, the government has set the focus, the direction of the 8th

Lao Ethnic Youth Development Plan from 2021-2025, which includes nine main issues and the vision 2030 of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union for the period 2020-2030 as a basis for the implementation of youth work in the future.

5. Discussion

For the contribution of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union to social development in the period 2016-2020, the researcher analyzed and compared theoretical concepts in regard to eight contributions: 1) Contributions to the concept of education for juvenile and youth that related to the feature of social development "Education will contribute significantly to social development. Knowledge will help to raise the standard of living of the people, helping to maintain, correct, and transmit the culture from person to person" (Government of New Brunswick, 2009). This is in line with the law on the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, Article 4: The government's policy towards the LPRYU: The government encourages LPRYU members to receive education in science and technology, jobs, information, access to health services, participation in government, and socio-economic management (Lao



People's Revolutionary Youth Union, 2017). The most appropriate and suitable approach to educate the youth in this era is thus through social media, including websites, youth applications, and discussion groups to disseminate information (Sivilay, 2016). 2) Contributions for improving and building the organization of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. This is related to the Law of Lao People's Revolutionary Youth, Article 5: The activities of young people are based on the principles of direct and comprehensive leadership; respect and implementation of the Constitution, laws, and rules of Lao young people; operating principles central to democracy; exemplary leadership in the tasks of the National Committee of the young people's revolution and to join the movement of the masses; and ensure the movement does not conflict with the laws and customs the nation (Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, 2017). As the former president, Kaysone Phomvihane, said, "The masses are the force, the strength of our party. Which is related to the 4th Industrial Revolution Skills for Youth: The ASEAN youth, is indeed a strong force of the ASEAN population (Phomvihane, 1983). 3) Contributions to the youth

process related to the Lao Youth Union in the process of national development: young people need to focus on science and technology, build on the foundation of rural development, fight poverty, build on scientific progress, making the country more integrated into favorable opportunities and challenges in global issues (Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, 2014). 4) Contributions of youth work related to the role of the Lao Youth Union: lead, guide, and organize the activities of youth, Ngaowa son, (young generation in primary school), and A nu son (younger generation in kindergartens); Protecting the rights and interests of youth, Ngaowa son (young generation in primary school), and A nu son (younger generation in kindergarten); Enhance the nation's good heritage. It also takes young people on study tours to museums, monuments, historical sites and promotes research, reading, books, magazines and electronic devices, environmental activities, and cultural conservation activities. 5) Contributions to Youth Vocational Development related with 4th Industrial Revolution Skills for Youth. Focusing more on infrastructure investment; therefore, we should improve the quality of the system of vocational



training and skills-training schools. As Phaisone Sonesuphan, Phenpaseuth Vivanphaeng, Phitsaphai Sisomphou, and Vilakon Suliyavong said: Vocational training is the empowerment of young people without gender restrictions, ethnic minorities in remote areas, poor areas, but must be based on conditions such as young people aged 15-35 years, who do not have a job, volunteering for vocational training by following a set schedule and procedures. After the training, there will be a loan for many people to further their careers so that they can have a permanent job and reduce the problems of society, as well as to promote the development of youth and the development of society to be more progressive. This is related to social development assessment and strategy in Laos: The process has two primary components: first, to increase the opportunities for the rural poor to participate in economic growth; and second, to improve the human resource capacities of the rural poor to take advantage of those opportunities (World Bank, 1995). 6) Contributions to the construction of facilities for the development of youth; and 7) Contributions to relations and cooperation with foreign countries that relate to the Lao People's Revolutionary

Party's attitude toward the youth campaign: The Lao PDR has a wide range of international friends, with active contributions to the mission of peace, friendship, and development cooperation. 8) Contributions to inspections of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union that relate with the Law of Lao People's Revolutionary Youth, Article 4: The government's policy towards the LPRYU: The government supports the LPRYU by creating conditions that enable it to fulfill its role, rights, and duties to attract and strengthen young people in the implementation of national policies, policies, constitutions, laws, and the mission of preserving and developing the nation.

The study found that in recent years, there have been many problems and difficulties that affect socio-economic development, especially youth development work. The direction of the Juvenile and Youth Development Plan for the period 2016-2020 of the People's Revolutionary Youth Council at all levels has many problems and challenges, such as education and training activities have not been carried out widely and are not in line with the target groups of youths, village organizations and student youths in some places. The system of youth organization has not been



significantly improved, and some youth groups still underestimate the implementation of the law on the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. This is related to the thesis in “Youth movement development in new conditions” and there are also challenges to solve these issues such as the contents of movement activities that are suitable for the character, psychology, age groups, campaign tools, and equipment are not shaped enough. In addition, the social knowledge and ability among youth has caused trouble to their family organization, and the family’s economic development is not self-sufficient. Staff resources are also limited; in addition, the work is found which must be solved in the short and long terms. (Keophilavong, 2017). All the problems mentioned above are due to the limited knowledge and skills of the staff, the number of staff is insufficient, workplace space is limited, and lack of vehicles to travel, lack of equipment, the limited budget, and the legislation is not in line with the new term. How can the problems of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union be solved and the suggestions of the interviewees be included?

The researcher found that many factors play into the possible solutions,

challenges in the implementation of youth work, such as 1) Ask for guidance from the board regularly to guide the practice; 2) Upgrading the organizational capacity, leading the work of the Youth Union; 3) Enhancing the potential of the People's Liberation Army at each level, as well as self-reliance, self-empowerment; 4) Defining plans, programs, projects, activities of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union; 5) Raise the spirit of unity in the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Committee at each level related to the activities of various processes in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of the youth.

The above is also in line with the opinions and suggestions of all interviewees, which are all important and useful for the future, such as: the participation of many parties and the opportunity for young people to create their full potential, young people in Lao society must focus on training themselves to become competent, have a goal and be ready to develop themselves, develop families, be a force in the development of society and the nation, follow the plans and strategies of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union and integrate with the national socio-economic development plan of Laos. In addition, it is beneficial to



cooperate with various organizations, both domestic and foreign, to enhance the potential of Lao youth, as well as compete for external funding, improve the format of advertising methods, educating young people and youth through online media more widely, emphasis should be put on the development of skills for young people to have the potential and acceptance of the labor market to avoid the phenomenon of obstacles in society. It shows that solving problems in the implementation of youth work must start from the youth themselves, as well as cooperate with many stakeholders to have a clear plan and adequate budget.

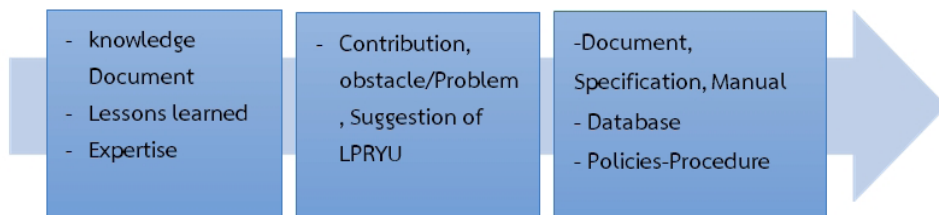
6. Suggestions

The researcher study in “the contribution of Lao People’s Revolutionary Youth Union to social development, Lao PDR”. Therefore, I would like to invite those who are interested in this study as the behavior of young people in the past and

present in the development process to understand the differences in ideas and attitudes of young people, which may be useful information in adjusting into the activities of youth development in the future.

7. Knowledge Assets

With this study topic found that there are many issues as knowledgeable to the researcher(s), whether it is a collection of documents there are relevant knowledges, lessons learned and thought processes. Especially, the contributions of the LPRYU in social development and analyze the problems and obstacles and to provide suggestions. These experiences will lead to the implementation of specialized documents and become a significant database which can be contributed to the formulation of policies for implementing into my work in the future. As the knowledge assets graphic below:





References

- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008). *Strategies for qualitative data analysis*. Retrieved from <https://methods.sagepub.com/book/basics-of-qualitative-research/n4.xml>
- Department of Youth Training. (2020). *The legacy of the growth and development of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union for 65 years under the banner of the party*. Vientiane Capital: Lao Youth Union.
- Government of New Brunswick Home. (2009). *The Social Development*. Retrieved from https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/overview/content/what_is_social_development.html
- Keophilavong, S. (2017). *Youth movement development in new conditions*. (Master of Social Sciences in Social Development). Vientiane Capital: National University of Laos.
- Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. (2014). *Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis*. Vientiane Capital: Lao Youth Union.
- Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union. (2017). *The Law of Lao Youth People's Revolutionary Union*. Vientiane Capital: Noumlao Printings.
- Ministry of Planning and Investment. (2016). *8th Five-year National Social-Economic Development plan (2016-2020)*. Chanthaburi: Vientiane capital.
- Open Development Laos. (2019). *SDG 4 Quality Education*. Retrieved from <https://laos.opendevdevelopmentmekong.net/topics/sdg-4-quality-education/>
- Party Central Committee Secretary. (2018). *Resolution of Party Central Committee Secretary on the Administrative and operational of the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union*. Vientiane Capital.
- Phomvihane, K. (1983). *1st National Youth Delegation General Meeting*. Vientiane Capital: Lao Youth Newspaper Agency.
- Sivilay, M. (2016). *Needs of Vientiane secondary school students toward the youth educational training in the era of information technology*. (Master of Social Sciences in Social Development). Vientiane Capital: National University of Laos.
- World Bank. (2012). *Laos-Social development assessment and strategy*. Retrieved from <https://agris.fao.org/agrissearch/search.do?recordID=US2012401640>

