**Highlighted achievements of PRF in 4 provinces**

**under Additional Fund from 2020-2024**

The Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) was established in May 2002 under the Prime Minister’s Decree 073/PM. PRF project is the Government of Lao PDR’s key initiative to eradicate mass poverty by 2020. The project development objective of the original PRF III is to “improve access to basic services for the Project’s targeted poor communities”. This project development objective remains relevant, however, to capture the increased emphasis on livelihood and nutritional outcomes, as the additional financial period (2020-204), its objective has been revised to, “improve access to prioritized basic services, as well as to support the production and consumption of nutritious foods in the Project’s targeted poor communities”.

By the end of 2019, the Government of Laos and the World Bank signed an agreement for US$22.5 million, which will be used to reduce poverty and child stunting in 12 priority districts within the four northern provinces of Phongsaly, Xienghkhuang, Huaphan, and Oudomxay. In 2020, the team focused on capacity building to staff as well as young graduates, and also SHG guidelines have been revised and piloted, the feedback has been incorporated, and translated to the Lao language, and provided to staff engaged in piloting SHGs.

Before extending the work of livelihood, and nutrition activities to other villages, 3 pilot villages have been implemented these activities in Houameung district of Houaphan Province since September 2019. In terms of livelihood work, 20 SHGs have been established which consists of 232 members which increased 5 members from 227 members in the last 6 month-report while 207 members are women (89.22%), there are 18 VSMC; women (83%), and all of them are from the ethnic group. In December 2020, the total of SHGs’ saving is 39,270,000 LAK which increased 14,930,000 LAK in the early 6 month-savings (24,340,000 LAK).

During November-December 2020, there are 937 SHGs have been established in 228 out of 231 villages in 12 districts under AF, while the other 3 villages are in progressing and will be done by the end of January 2021, there are 11,975 members and 10,855 are women (90.67%), the member has received technical training about livelihood activities before seed grant allocation.

In terms of Nutrition, there are three key activities under PRF's nutrition, including Farmer Nutrition Group (FNG), Home Nutrition Garden, and Multi-media Peer Learning or Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC). In addition, there is an additional pilot in buffalo diary raising. Several works had been implemented, particularly, the establishment of the Farmer nutrition groups (FNGs) in 231 villages of 12 districts, 4 provinces with a total of 248 FNGs (5,834 FNG members) become FNG members which comprised of 1,207 pregnant women, 1,453 lactating mothers, 1,483 Child aged 0-5 months and 3,174 of 6-23 months-child.

One buffalo pen has been built in Homephan village, there are 6 buffalo dairy raising members with 11 buffalos. 6 members have been trained on buffalo raising and milking in Luangprabang Buffalo Diary and grass for buffalos has been planted in the area. The pilot of milking expects to do in February 2021 and the pilot of buffalo dairy in Homephan village will be closed in late March 2021. The buffalo dairy pilot project is a very new activity to PRF, therefore, it has made little progress because farms have no experience about buffalo raising, such as how to care for it, there is no grassy land because the village is located in a mountainous area, etc., and it is not accepted by peoples, thus we should consider appropriate technic or activity that links to local knowledge and potential.

**The village planning** will be started after setting up the VSMC who will employ as VITs, and will work closely with YGs, the type of sub-project will be smaller compared with traditional PRF, and will apply the CFA approach which averages US$ 14,500 per sub-project, including weirs, ponds, canals, gates, spillways, livestock handling facilities, grain storage facilities, fencing, nursery construction, and other light structures like rural road improvement, and water support.

In 2021, PRF will focus on livelihood and nutrition which cover the following activities home plot gardens, fodder gardens, animal raising (poultry, pigs, fish, frogs) vaccine chain management, seedling nursery, cattle pens, horticulture crops, fruit trees, non-timber forest products, improved rice varieties, handicrafts..etc., to ensure the quality of work, PRF will cooperate with concerned sectors to provide training on animal raising techniques, crop-growing techniques, watershed management, natural resource management, use of biodiversity for pest management, vaccinations, processing, storage, identifying local and urban market links through agribusiness enterprises, increasing financial assets and access to finance. The goal of this work is to ensure that livelihood activity should be able to provide supplementary meals for six months to target groups and can reduce the number of stunted children in those targeted areas.