

Expression Of Interest

Technical support to the *Safe Future* project with Plan International in Laos

Plan has been working in Laos since 2007, and is delivering programs in Bokeo, Oudomxay and Saravan Provinces. We support children to access their rights through our programming in Public Health (including water and sanitation), Education, and Gender Equality and Protection. Our work includes community based action, partner strengthening, and policy advocacy. Disaster risk reduction is integrated in all the work we do, and Plan is committed to providing disaster response support in case of humanitarian disaster.

Migration is crucial for Lao PDR's poverty reduction and socioeconomic development, especially in rural areas. Lao PDR is a country of origin, transit, and destination for migrants. Over the past two decades, the number of Lao people living abroad has significantly increased due to limited employment opportunities and underdeveloped education and training systems, combined with the demand for cheap labour and the need for better livelihoods.

In the migration experience adolescents and their parents are unaware of the high likelihood of trafficking and exploitation and may not easily be able to differentiate between dangerous and high risk offers compared to safe prospects, including migration for work. Without access to information of the hazards, risks, harsh conditions and sexual exploitation that is possible in offers made to them, it is difficult for adolescents and their parents to adequately weigh up the risks against the benefits before taking up offers, whether for employment, marriage or migration in general. Combined with high levels of poverty and low employment opportunities parents and adolescents are easily lured with promises of a better future.

While the Government of Laos has put anti-trafficking policies in place and prevention efforts have been made, these have not considered the lived realities of young people, nor have young people had any opportunities to lend their voices in developing these policies despite being the most affected.

The *Safe Future* project will seek to go beyond awareness raising to empower and encourage adolescents to think through the risks and advantages before taking up any offers related to migration, employment or marriage.

Project objective: To empower adolescents to make safer, informed decisions, thereby reducing their vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation and thus reducing the supply of young people into unsafe migration pathways.

The intervention: The *Safe Future* project aims to build on the foundation of existing interventions and tools by identifying gaps and enhancing them with youth-focused strategies and materials. We will leverage real stories and survivor experiences to drive mindset change and empower adolescents to make informed decisions related to their future whether it be in relation to marriage, safe migration pathways or other life decisions.

The *Safe Future* project is an add-on to the current *My Future 2* project and will work with the same target groups- adolescents between the ages of 11 to 14, their parents and teachers so as to provide them with information and strategies to avoid and/or deal with precarious, dangerous and exploitive offers and situations. Linking both projects allows for greater outcomes for adolescents in remote provinces in Laos.

For adolescents, their parents and teachers to understand the hazards of migration, and be in a more informed position to make decisions, suitable, engaging and factual information needs to be available in formats that are relevant and understandable to them. It is anticipated that all material produced by the Technical Adviser will challenge adolescents, teachers and parents to think through the risks, and arrive at decisions that are not harmful to child development in the long-term.

Project staff will conduct community-based sessions and distribute targeted Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on how to identify and mitigate risks for exploitation or trafficking and on safe migration practices. Where material is already available, and with permission, the content will be adjusted for a more youth friendly narrative. Real-life stories and survivor testimonials will be used to communicate the risks and consequences of irregular migration and trafficking. These stories will help adolescents and their parents understand the realities of what they might be signing up for, fostering a mindset change. Peer support networks will be established, encouraging young people to reach out for low threshold help when in doubt.

Additional materials will include case stories depicting how young people are targeted and entrapped by traffickers, both in person and via social media, and information on support services available for survivors and possible victims of trafficking. These sessions will be delivered through existing secondary school student clubs, out-of-school youth clubs, and parent groups established by the *My Future* project in target villages and schools, with a special focus on highland non-Lao Tai communities vulnerable to labor exploitation and human trafficking.

The target group will be adolescents within the existing “My Future 2” project in 45 villages in 3 districts (Pakhta, Pakbeng and Houn) in Bokeo and Oudomxay provinces.

Technical support is required to:

- Identify suitable, educational/informative resources on migration, child trafficking and early and forced marriage that exist in and outside of Laos, (but in South East Asia), resources that are suitable for use and/or adaption for 11 to 14 year-old students (male and female), their parents and teachers
- Provide advice to the teams on aspects of the implementation of the *Safe Future* activities
- Oversee, and where necessary, provide direct inputs into the documentation of the lived-experiences of survivors for (deidentified) testimonials for use in the production of materials (animations, audio stories, school plays etc)
- Seek out various sources of multi-media that cover migration, early and forced marriage and child trafficking for potential use
- Work with the Plan Communications team and external media to tailor the resources for the specific target groups (ethnic language and culture, age and role in target communities)
- Where gaps exist in information, directly contribute inputs to the development of resources, ensuring the materials are factual, relevant and tailored to the target groups.
- Establish working relationships with IOM, INGO's and CSO's working on migration, child trafficking and early and forced marriage as subject experts and holders of resources

- Access adolescent groups and establish a reference group for their review and feedback on material produced for the project target groups
- Draft session plans to accompany the use of the materials with target groups
- Engage the *My Future 2* and *Safe Future* project teams and implementing partners in all decisions regarding the suitability of resources for use in the project
- Establish a portfolio of resources for future use in adolescent and youth projects
- Support the Project Manager in the preparation of reports to the donor
- Train the *My Future 2* and *Safe Future* project team and implementing partners on how to best use the new resources, and provide an interactive methodology for engaging adolescents, parents and teachers in the sessions

Reporting:

The Technical Adviser will report to the Deputy Country Director-Programs and will work closely with the *My Future 2* Senior Project Officer and team, and the Project Manager of the *Safe Future* project

Qualifications, skills and experience required:

- Degree in social science, social work, journalism, community development or other relevant degree
- Demonstrated ability to write high quality reports in English
- Minimum of 10 years experience producing and/or tailoring educational material for young people or other age groups
- In- depth knowledge of the development issues and risks facing adolescents in Laos
- Experience and knowledge of diverse ethnic cultures in Laos and the ability to broaden understanding of their cultural norms and practices
- Highly motivated with the demonstrated skills to capture the lived-experiences of people and generate ideas in the design of engaging materials
- Demonstrated ability to draft and/or adapt meaningful stories for diverse audiences
- Knowledge and experience of interactive communication channels
- Ability to write to a professional standard in English and/or Lao language. Consideration will be given to language support to either Lao or English speaking candidates
- Demonstrated ability to work well with project teams
- Excellent verbal communication skills and ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with diverse age and cultural groups
- Competent user of the Microsoft package
- Experience as a “story teller” will be highly regarded

Timing of inputs:

Whilst the deliverables for technical support will be determined by the *My Future 2* project plan, technical support will be required for 4 days per month for 12 months. Flexibility around the timing of the technical inputs will be negotiated with the candidate in line with the sequencing of the *My Future 2* project activities.

Ideally the Advisor will be based in Vientiane. However, consideration will be given to a high performing candidate working remotely. This will be negotiated with the successful candidate.

The appointment will be by way of a Service Contract and will begin in early November 2024.

Application:

This opportunity is open to suitable individuals, INGO/NGO's and private companies.

Interested applicants are asked to explain clearly how they meet the skills and experience required, attach a current CV with 2 referees and fee structure.

The application should be submitted no later than 4 November 2024 to Laos.procurement@plan-international.org with CC to Maniphone.phoutphong@plan-international.org including all supporting documents with subject line "Technical Advisor *My Future* project"

Any questions regarding the details of the advertised role can be sent to Loretta Hoban, Deputy Country Director (Programs) at Loretta.Hoban@plan-international.org

We strongly encourage equally qualified female candidates to apply!

All applications received after the time of the deadline will not be accepted without exception and only shortlisted applicants will be contacted. Shortlisted applicants may be requested to participate in an in-person or online interview process.