



GENDER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION



*“Ethnic women have always been on the frontlines of climate adaptation. They now belong on the frontlines of policy making.”*

Elizabeth Thippawong

## Gender assessment centers women’s traditional knowledge in Lao PDR’s climate action

Project start: 2017, Award year: 2017

GDA bridged women’s traditional harvesting practices with sustainable livelihood initiatives in marginalized ethnic groups of Laos’ northern uplands, a high risk landslides area. Based on an initial gender assessment, key policies for rehabilitating women’s ancestral knowledge on foraging Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) to preserve biodiversity and improve food security were identified. Using a rights-based framework, the association built women’s capacities to develop income generation activities, enhance their financial independence and become leaders. This strengthened women’s inclusion in community decisions, as well as their influence in national climate policy.



### UNIQUE VALUE

#### What’s special about this project

- ▶ By supporting alternative economies and sustainable forest livelihoods in ecosystems degraded by excessive logging, GDA contributes to mitigating the risk of natural disaster.
- ▶ They empower ethnic women to preserve natural resources through advocacy for policy reform on unsustainable harvesting practices like electric fishing. The activities have contributed to conflict resolution among Hmong and Khmu ethnic groups, facing internal displacement due to the activities of extractive and logging industries.



### AWARD IMPACTS

- ▶ GDA invested in a field study that brought village women leaders to share their knowledge about NTFPs with youth, valuing this oral transmission as important cultural wisdom and a source of food security.
- ▶ Due to the international recognition at COP23, GDA accessed additional funding by developing new partnerships with international NGOs for follow-up activities in the region.

### TRANSFORMATIVE OUTCOMES



**50 women benefit from ToT programme and contribute to improved livelihoods for 4,500 people**



**Rising contribution of women to governance structures**



**Contribution to the decree on equal opportunities for ethnic groups**



**Food and income security through sustainable NTFPs**



**Mitigating the risk of natural disasters and preserving natural resources**

### CONTACT



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Financially supported by:



Helvetas, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Views from the Frontline (VFL).



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