

Representatives from UNESCO Bangkok, Kobe University, international organisations and development partners gather at

# Laos seeking sustainable funding for early childhood research

#### **Times Reporters**

The Ministry of Education and Sports will continue University and UNESCO Early Childhood Care framework. and Education (ECCE) funding increase.

Speaking at a workshop on exploring ECCE sustainable financing mechanisms yesterday, Japanese education expert from Kobe University, Mr Keichi Ogawa, praised the for the ECCE research framework.

countries.

Mr Ogawa advised Laos cooperating with Kobe to increase its education spending by 1 percent of Bangkok to explore its GDP annually year sustainable financing to ensure a financially

The research framework research following the is based on sustainable government's 5 percent ECCE financing mechanisms identified in literature reviews and framework studies on innovative ECCE financing in 2015 and the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results.

Lao government for its workshop, Director General Kobe University have recent increased funding of the Department of collaborated and conducted Planning of the Ministry research projects on of Education and Sports, education administration with Kobe University.

But this is still lower Dr Bounpanh Xaymountry, and finance, and teacher than in neighbouring said ECCE research was an important part of expanding in-depth understanding of policies and strategies for teacher development and the spending of official development assistance for mechanisms to ensure sustainable ECCE research education development in Laos and Asean countries.

Representatives from international organisations and development partners updated the meeting on the preliminary findings of Laos' country study on sustainable financing mechanisms for ECCE and 'Education for All'.

Since 2013, Speaking at the UNESCO Bangkok and

allocation with financial support from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Under these research projects, guidebooks with a focus on basic education in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam were developed and a regional synthesis report published.

As a follow-up to the series of research collaboration, UNESCO Bangkok will conduct a new research project on exploring sustainable financing mechanisms for ensuring ECCE for All in Asean countries under the umbrella of the 2017 MEXT/UNESCO project

## Ministry pushes for more students in science, agriculture

Times Reporters

The Ministry of Education and Sports is encouraging students wanting to study overseas to take courses in science and agriculture, so these areas can be strengthened in pursuit of social and economic development.

Director General of the Student Affairs Department, Prof. Dr Khamlusa Nouansavanh, told *Vientiane Times* that most students are interested in business management, administration and finance, and their numbers are expected to increase.

popular fields for Lao students, including those studying abroad. Meanwhile, relatively few students take courses in engineering, information and communications technology (ICT), and agriculture."

According to a report from the Student Affairs Department, the number of students and officials studying overseas has increased, with 5,186 taking courses in foreign countries in 2015, 5,042 in 2016, and 6,160 in 2017. The number of people taking courses abroad in the fields of business management, administration and finance increased from 1,134 in 2015, accounting for 30 percent of all students, to 1,185 people in 2016, representing 36 percent of all students.

Some 507 people took courses in engineering, construction and production in 2015, while 584 people registered for these subjects in 2016. However, the number of students enrolling in ICT

and agriculture courses has decreased in recent years. ICT students decreased from 381 in 2015 to 218 in 2016, while 104 students took courses in agriculture and veterinary studies in 2015 and 97 in 2016.

"Officials at the Student Affairs Department are collecting details of the number of Lao students who took courses in each of these fields in 2017, and will report the figures later," Prof. Dr Khamlusa said.

Lao students have taken courses in 29 countries, funded by government scholarships, exchange scholarships, personal "They are the most financing, and the state and private sectors.

Vietnam, China, Thailand, Japan and Korea are the top five most popular places for Lao students to take bachelor, master's and PhD degrees, as well as other higher education courses.

Over the five years from 2012-16. Lao students and officials took more academic courses in Vietnam than in any other country. Vietnam also provided more scholarships to Laos than any other country, followed by China and Thailand.

In response, the ministry is endeavouring to increase the number of students abroad enrolled in the areas of science, ICT and agriculture to build the workforce in those areas. The ministry will also encourage more people to enrol in vocational programmes across the country and plans to expand training opportunities for women and girls, ethnic groups, and people in rural areas, to meet the needs of the job market.

### Authorities mull ways to entice tourists during Visit Laos Year

#### **Times Reporters**

The Tourism Marketing Ministry of Information, matter. Culture and Tourism has held talks with the Ministry during Visit Laos Year.

Director General Mr during Visit Laos Year.

Soun Manivong told Vientiane Times recently the Ministry of Foreign not need a tourist visa to Department under the Affairs is looking into the enter Laos.

department had also met of Foreign Affairs, the 31, throughout Visit Laos of Foreign Affairs about the with representatives of the possibility of exempting hotel and tourism sectors more countries from as well as members of the tourist visa requirements Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry to The department's discuss price promotions

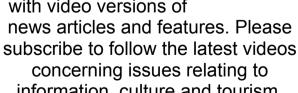
At present, the citizens of only four countries do

government has waived Year 2018. the visa requirement for ordinary passport holders from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden for the duration of 2018, hoping to boost tourist in 2017.

arrivals from the four Scandinavian countries.

The unilateral visa exemption will be effective According to a recent for just one year from Mr Soun said the report from the Ministry January 1 to December

The government hopes to attract at least 5 million foreign visitors this year, an increase from the 4.8 million tourists expected Scan the QR co de to get Vientiane Times on YouTube (https:// www.youtube.com/c/ The Vientiane Times) with video versions of



information, culture and tourism.

#### Lao Press in Foreign Languages

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