

## Pilot 2019: Start-up financing Global South - Project report

### How do we deal with food and consumption choices in our everyday lives? Sustainable consumption in everyday food cultures in Laos and Germany

- **Field of study at the TU Berlin:** [Didactics of Work Education](#)
- **Partner country:** Laos
- **Partner institution:** Savannakhet University (SKULAO)
- **Priority Addressed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**



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**SDG 4:** Quality education

**SDG 12:** Sustainable consumption and production

The design and management of our daily eating routine is complex and raises many questions related to global challenges, for example: How is our food produced and how hygienic and healthy is it provided? What competencies do consumers need in order to be able to make reflective consumption decisions? In order to approach these questions, Prof. Dr. Silke Bartsch and Heike Müller from Faculty I of the TU Berlin, Department of Didactics of Work, would like to deepen and expand the existing collaboration with scientists from Savannakhet University (SKULAO) in Laos on sustainable consumption patterns in everyday life. For this purpose, they were funded in 2019 with start-up funding from the TU Berlin for collaborations with partners in the Global South.

Laos and Germany are connected through global trade, including food (e.g. coffee, vegetables, herbs) and textiles, although there are about 11,000 kilometers between the countries and their inhabitants may never have heard of each other.

The aim of the research group is to provide consumers with options for action that enable them to take responsibility for themselves, for others and for the environment. This is related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 12 Sustainable Consumption and Production.

While the research interest of SKULAO's Faculty of Nutritional Sciences focuses on current food consumption patterns, the project also explores digital education formats for global collaboration and reflection on one's own everyday actions from a sustainability perspective. This offers the opportunity to motivate student teachers at TU Berlin to engage with global challenges in an international and cooperative way, to break down existing barriers with regard to digital education and to open up options for action for sustainable consumption patterns in everyday life.

Together with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sitha Khemmarath (Vice President for Research and Young Academics), Chandokkham Youyabouth (Acting Vice Dean of the Faculty of Food Sciences) and Maninout Phothirat (Agribusiness Marketing) of SKULAO, Prof. Dr. Silke Bartsch, Heike Müller and the Berlin research group will conduct virtual exchanges and digital educational formats between students of TU Berlin and SKULAO to strengthen them in their consumer, sustainability and digital competencies and to explore suitable didactic concepts for the subject of work-based education. A corresponding application for third-party funding is in preparation.

The respective situation in the two countries holds great potential for making the initiated cooperation successful: In Germany, a large part of society has ample access to food and a large amount of food is wasted on a daily basis. The availability of food in cities is high due to the characteristics of a consumer society with corresponding logistics. At the same time, German consumers are often alienated from the origin of their food. Younger generations in particular have little connection to food production, even though it forms the irreplaceable basis for their lives. In Laos, food supply has increased in recent years, but food insecurity remains significant - in particular, it remains a challenge to provide urban populations with food produced outside the city. Preservation methods and food packaging play an important role in improving this situation. Prof. Dr. Silke Bartsch, head of the Department of Occupational Education at TU Berlin, is convinced that "a paradigm shift in food consumption for a more sustainable future can best succeed if consumers help shape the vision and become active. Education is a key factor in this."