

Lao PDR

Education

Thematic Report (SC149905)

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Table of Contents

1.	Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
2.	Strategic Context of 2018	4
3.	UNICEF Education Programme in Lao PDR	4
4.	Results in the Outcome Area	5
5.	Financial Analysis	9
6.	Future Work Plan	10
7.	Expression of Thanks	11
8.	Annexes	11

1. Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBSR	Community-Based School Readiness (Programme)
CP	Country Programme
CS	Complementary Support (Programme)
DESBs	District Education and Sports Bureaus
DFAT	(Australian) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPs	Development Partners
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAPRO	(UNICEF) East-Asia and Pacific Regional Office
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESMIS	Education and Sports Management Information System
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
EU	European Union
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IFEAD	Institute for Education Administration Development
LDC	Least Developed Country
LSIS	Lao Social Indicators Survey
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSEDP	National Social Economic Development Plan
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
OR	Other Resources
PAs	Pedagogical Advisors
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Services
RR	Regular Resources
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation
SEA-PLM	South East Asia Primary Learning Metrics
SRCs	School Readiness Competencies
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNPF	United Nations Partnership Framework
VEDCs	Village Education Development Committees
VNR	Voluntary National Review

2. Strategic Context of 2018

In 2018 Lao PDR was due to undertake a mid-term review (MTR) of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2016-2020. Despite good progress made in 2018, the large-scale disasters caused by floods nation-wide in the year had a negative impact on the country's investment in the social sector, including particularly education and skills development of children and youth. The overall national budget envelope was revised downwards in 2018. As a result, the education sector did not receive as the amount planned in the 8th Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2016-2020 in nominal terms, despite getting about 17% of the domestic primary budget in 2018.

Based on the MTR report of the 8th NSED, more people have benefited from an increased number of schools in rural areas at all levels starting from early childhood education (ECE), primary, secondary, and tertiary education and vocational studies. However, education quality and efficiency remain as critical concerns, leading to poor learning outcomes and low skills acquisition of learners, especially among the most vulnerable groups of the population. Lao PDR remained dependent on international public resources compared with other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, particularly in certain social sector areas, including education.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) carried out the MTR of the 8th Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2016-2020, which has informed the MTR of the 8th NSED. Coordinated support was provided to the MTR through the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), demonstrating a good example of sector governance. Different updated data sources were used including the Lao Social Indicators Survey (LSIS)-II/Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey (MICS) and Labour Force Survey to inform the policy decision making process and prioritization. The MTR concluded that in the context of the ongoing education reform led by the MoES and supported by development partners, good progress had been made overall against the national sector targets, including the increased ECE coverage, survival rate in primary education, as well as youth employment which benefited from improved vocational training and education.

Nevertheless, significant disparities remain at all education levels and training in terms of access, participation, learning and skills acquisition. The MTR of the ESDP also indicates that there is limited fiscal space available for necessary capacity development, and efficient allocation of resources and equity in the sector need further improvement to enable a more result-based, equity-focused sector financing and interventions. Better linkages between planning and budgeting, as well as the need for strengthening sub-national level capacity building was also highlighted. The sector will continue working for the implementation of key recommendations in 2019.

The education sector through MoES also contributed to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for education. This was another good opportunity for the sector to review progress and contribute to further mainstreaming SDG 4 into the Lao context in alignment with the sector plans. UN agencies played a key role in supporting the MoES.

For the flood emergency response and recovery in the education sector, coordinated support was provided through the Education Cluster. UN agencies along with other development partners (DPs) have jointly played a vital role in supporting the MoES in this critical effort. The "Back to School" initiative, which was a Government's top priority, was advanced to help ensure all flood affected children and youth enroll and continue their learning. This emergency experience has revealed pressing needs for increased resilience in the sector at all levels, including risk-informed sector planning and integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the sector strategies and plans, as well as related capacity building of sector's key stakeholders. Based on the results from the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), continued efforts will be made in 2019 for effective transition from emergency response to recovery, and more long-term development support.

3. UNICEF Education Programme in Lao PDR

As per the UNICEF-Lao PDR CP 2017-2021, in line with the relevant National Plans and Strategies as well as the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPF) and UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the Education Programme of UNICEF Lao PDR 2017-2021 aims to achieve the below Programme Outcome:

Outcome: By 2021, children, especially most disadvantaged and in hard-to-reach areas, have access to quality early childhood and basic education services, and complete the basic education cycle with improved learning outcomes.

The above Programme Outcome will be achieved by accomplishing the following two expected Outputs:

Output 1: Early Childhood Education - By 2021, national and sub-national Government Ministries and other key stakeholders have improved capacity to implement and monitor inclusive, equitable and quality ECE services; and

Output 2: Basic Education - By 2021, national and sub-national Government Ministries and other key stakeholders have improved capacity to implement and monitor inclusive, equitable and quality basic education services, focusing on early grades.

The Programme provides support both at the national level for policy and strategic work as well as sub-national level for specific interventions, including provincial, district, school and community level. The Programme takes a holistic approach to support children's learning, development and participation by ensuring linkage of upstream and downstream work.

During 2018, UNICEF continued to serve as the Co-Chair of the Basic Education Focal Group together with Save the Children under the MoES-led ESWG, which is co-chaired by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the EU. UNICEF was also appointed by MoES to be co-Chair of the ECE Technical Working Group (ECETWG). UNICEF also continued to serve as the Co-ordinating Agency for GPE, as well as the Chair of the UNPF Result Group 4 (Education).

4. Results in the Outcome Area

Outcome Level Results

Every Child Learns

As mentioned above, in 2018, UNICEF together with key DPs supported the MTR of the 8th ESDP, led by the MoES. The ESDP MTR was informed by the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and LSIS-II, also supported by UNICEF. This evidence-informed advocacy which was materialised through the MTR facilitated the mainstreaming of SDG 4 into the sector plan and contributed towards the MTR of the 8th NSEDP as well as the SDG VNR coordinated by the UN.

The ESDP MTR concluded that the education sector made significant achievements, including improved rates between 2015 to 2017 (EMIS data) of ECE enrolment (age 3-5) from 43.2 per cent to 52.7 per cent (boys 43.4; girls 43.2), primary repetition from 5.8 per cent to 4.1 per cent (boys 4.1; girls 3.4), and primary drop-out from 5.2 per cent to 4.4 per cent (boys 4.7; girls 4.1). Consequently, there has been a constant rise in primary survival rate at 81.1 per cent (boys 79.7; girls 82.6), contributing to an increased lower-secondary gross enrolment rate at 82.9 per cent (boys 85.1; girls 80.5) in 2017.

Nevertheless, the ESDP MTR also highlighted that critical disparities remained at all levels in education. Children from poor families, non-Lao-Tai groups, and mothers with low education are lagging behind. Girls are particularly disadvantaged at secondary level. Poor learning outcomes and skills acquisition presented quality and efficiency constraints, where merely 25.2 per cent of children

aged 3-4 years were found on track in literacy-numeracy development domain (LSIS-II). The low rate of children attending the first grade with ECE experience (51.1 per cent) and lack of school readiness, explained the high rates in grade 1 repetition (9.2 per cent) and drop-out (6.9 per cent). Addressing those inequities in access, participation and quality is essential for improved learning outcomes and skills development, backed by human and financial resources in a more efficient and equitable manner.

To address the above-mentioned key challenges and inequities, in 2018 UNICEF continued to support the ongoing education reform for equitable access and learning and skills acquisition in ECE and basic education, combined with improved sector planning, and system and capacity strengthening at national and sub-national levels. Despite some adjustments of focus needed to better respond to emergency situations throughout the year, the equity-focused Programme efforts successfully achieved key milestones and tangible results against the five-year CP targets in line with the sector's priorities. As a result, UNICEF's support significantly contributed to increased equitable access, participation and quality of early childhood education (ECE), and basic education leading to improved learning outcomes and skills development. UNICEF's pivotal role taken as the Education Cluster Lead in the emergency in Attapeu province also contributed to ensuring continuous care and learning of the flood-affected children in safe and secure environments, benefiting around 9,600 school-aged children.

An important new partnership between the Government, the European Union (EU) and UNICEF was officially launched in late 2018 under the EU-supported Education Budget Support 2018-2021, where UNICEF is the implementing partner for the Complementary Support Programme to help achieve the ESDP national targets. This was the result of more than a year work with intensive consultations in 2017-2018 with line Departments of MoES, other related Ministries and key DPs. This effective partnership will further enhance the focused efforts in equity-focused system strengthening, with special emphasis on sub-national level capacity development.

Output Level Results

1. Equitable Access to Quality Education

UNICEF's continued focused efforts in addressing disparities in ECE access contributed to reaching out more children in remote and disadvantaged communities. 60 Community-Based School Readiness (CBSR) centres were supported in hard-to-reach and under-served communities in six districts of three provinces, where there were no other ECE services available. This has benefited 1,156 (577 girls) children, which represents 0.8 per cent of the total 5-year-old population. Nine CBSR centres supported by UNICEF in the previous years were taken over by MoES as government pre-primary schools, which demonstrated government's ownership and sustainability. The CBSR programme promoted greater demand creation, where Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs), trained with UNICEF's support, played a critical role in community and parents/care-givers' mobilization. This has contributed to enhance community ownership and mutual accountability. A formative evaluation of the CBSR programme is scheduled in early 2019 to inform its scaling-up and institutionalisation.

Evidence-informed sector planning was further reinforced through promoting generation, quality improvement and utilization of essential data, that in turn has facilitated more equitable resource allocation and interventions. Based on the Education and Sports Management Information System (ESMIS) Strategic Development Plan 2018-2022 that UNICEF supported, ESMIS standards were developed and approved by MoES, leading to greater data coherence and quality. Out-of-School Children (OOSC) study was validated through a national workshop, made it ready for MoES' final approval. LSIS-II in-depth analysis on education was initiated and informed the ESDP MTR, emphasising disparity analyses for policy recommendations.

UNICEF's pivotal role taken as the Education Cluster Lead in the emergency in Attapeu province contributed to ensuring continuous care and learning of the flood-affected children in safe and secure environments. Through MoES' "Back to School" initiative, 9,600 children (ECE to upper-secondary) were supported through UNICEF for timely enrolment and continued schooling, including 25 temporary learning spaces. Moreover, in partnership with international NGOs (Save the Children, Plan

International and ChildFund), on average 270 children per day (age 3-18) participated in six Child Friendly Spaces, which helped them to regain normalcy. The Education Cluster demonstrated a good example of delivering harmonised emergency assistance, and UNICEF's active work led to mobilising additional resources to responding to the education sector's humanitarian needs through UNICEF, including from the Australian Government and Irish Aid. UNICEF as the Education Cluster Lead also assisted the Government to undertake PDNA, which helped assess the impact of the floods by sector in a systematic manner to inform the national recovery framework.

2. Learning Outcomes

UNICEF continued to provide extensive support to the MoES' ongoing equity-focused education quality reform leading to improved students' learning outcomes. UNICEF's support led to progressive improvement of national and sub-national level capacity in implementing quality basic education, through advancing critical system enhancement and narrowing the operational capacity gaps across districts and provinces to lift the overall national ability standards.

In 2018, the ECE system was further strengthened through development of the ECE Quality Standards (kindergarten; pre-primary; community-based ECE). The draft Quality Standards were piloted in 78 ECE centres, setting a critical cornerstone towards standardisation of ECE services and quality assurance under a common national framework. The pilot results will be used for finalisation in 2019 for nation-wide roll-out.

As evidenced in the continuous monitoring results, UNICEF's intensive efforts for sub-national-level capacity building led to improved pre-primary teaching and classroom management in three disadvantaged provinces, supported by teachers, school principals, PAs and provincial and district education staff who were provided continuous professional development support through UNICEF. This has benefited 2,563 pre-primary students in 117 pre-primary schools (5.1 per cent of the government pre-primary schools).

Based on the key recommendations from the comprehensive reviews of the primary student learning outcomes (2016) and the student assessment system (2017) supported by UNICEF, in 2018 a national assessment policy framework for general education was developed with UNICEF's assistance and approved by MoES. This demonstrated a successful example of evidence-based policy decision-making. The policy framework will lead to improved system effectiveness and coherence, and teaching-learning practices, by ensuring the necessary alignment of relevant policies, learning standards, curriculum and materials, teacher education, classroom practices and quality assurance.

Based on the UNICEF-supported review of the pedagogical supervision system in primary education (2016), efforts for a more systematic approach to continuous professional development for Pedagogical Advisors were initiated with MoES in 2018, in which UNICEF in partnership with EU started its support for developing a national PA upgrading programme. The programme design accompanied by hands-on training modules was developed and piloted in 2018 and is to be finalised in 2019 for a nation-wide roll-out covering all the existing some 600 PAs to boost the national PAs competency standards. Combined with the UNICEF's support started in 2018 to modelling PA centres in six targeted districts (Saravan, Taoi, Phin, Sepon, Samphanh, Mai), UNICEF's strategic support to institutional capacity development in the PA systems marked a critical milestone in the year.

In partnership with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), national capacity building for the main survey of the South-East Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) was undertaken, making the country ready for data collection in early 2019.

UNICEF's focused assistance to sub-national level capacity building led to improved operational standards exercised in the six targeted disadvantaged mentioned above. With UNICEF's support, 1,689 teachers (979 females) in all 578 primary schools in the six districts (6.7 per cent of the total government primary schools) received pedagogical support visits at least once a semester by provincial and district staff and PAs, who were trained on effective pedagogical supervision and outreach planning through

UNICEF's assistance. 45,791 (21,356 girls) primary students benefited from better teaching-learning as a result.

3. Skills Development

Based on the updated School Readiness Competencies (SRCs) and the curriculum content framework which were revised with UNICEF's assistance in 2017, the pre-primary teacher's guidebooks (unit 1-3) were revised in 2018 and piloted in 138 pre-primary schools in five provinces. The revised curriculum framework and associated teachers' guidebooks better integrated cognitive and non-cognitive skills development in a balanced manner, including communication skills, problem-solving skills, analytical skills and creativity skills. Moreover, based on its wealth experience at the primary education level, UNICEF demonstrated solid technical leadership in ensuring the alignment with the primary curriculum and standards, enabling effective continuum and coherence between ECE and primary education. As a result, this revision has enhanced quality, relevance, age-appropriateness and has ensured continuum to primary level. The pilot phase was completed in 2018 and its results will be used for finalisation in 2019 for nation-wide roll-out.

Holistic ECD has been promoted through a cross-sectoral Parenting Education package, which is under development led by Lao Women's Union (LWU) with engagement of line Ministries, including MoES. The package will be field-tested in early 2019, to be then finalised in mid-2019 for implementation in selected disadvantaged provinces. This Parenting package will facilitate skills development of parents and care-takers that will translate into development of young children's essential skills for their lives.



Play-based activities using local materials are promoted in pre-primary schools for effective learning by young children.



Pre-primary children learning in group work using items from ECD toolkit.



Primary children learning in a more participatory class



Primary children studying math in a pair



Pre-primary teachers actively participated in the training to enhance their teaching-learning skills.



Primary Pedagogical Advisors assessing current teaching and learning needs during a PA capacity building workshop.



Temporary Learning Space in flood-affected Attapeu province



Primary students in the flood affected district received UNICEF back packs

5. Financial Analysis

5.1. Expense by Results Area in Thematic Sector

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts	
Year	2018	
Business Area	Lao People's Dem Rep. - 2460	
Prorated Goal Area	22 Learn	

Expense	Column Labels		
Row Labels	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources Grand Total
22-02 Learning outcomes	101,332	1,485,968	585,257 2,172,557
Grand Total	101,332	1,485,968	585,257 2,172,557

**All expense amounts are provincial and subject to change.*

5.2. Thematic expense by Result Area

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts
Year	2018
Business Area	Lao People's Dem Rep. - 2460
Prorated Goal Area	22 Learn

Donor Class Level2	Thematic
Row Labels	Expense
Other Resources - Emergency	555
22-02 Learning outcomes	555
Other Resources - Regular	997,915
22-02 Learning outcomes	997,915
Grand Total	998,471

**All expense amounts are provincial and subject to change.*

5.3. Expenses by specific intervention codes

Fund Category	All Programme Accounts	
Year	2018	
Business Area	Lao People's Dem Rep. - 2460	
Prorated Goal Area	22 Learn	
Fund Sub-Category	(Multiple Items)	
Row Labels	Expense	
22-02-01 Provision or procurement of early learning / pre-primary education learning materials	41,693	
22-02-02 Provision or procurement of primary education learning materials	56,989	
22-02-07 Provision of early learning / pre-primary education teachertraining	109,220	
22-02-08 Provision of primary education teacher training	85,421	
22-02-14 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary policy, leadership, and budget	12,005	
22-02-15 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary standards and governance	65,914	
22-02-16 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary teaching and learning environment (including curriculum and material d	113,224	
22-02-18 System strengthening - learning assessment systems	45,571	
22-02-20 System strengthening - teacher development, management, and support	81,971	
22-02-21 System strengthening - community participation and social accountability, e.g. school management committees	149,374	
22-02-23 Education analyses including OOSCI, Education Sector Analyses, etc.	67,373	
22-02-25 Education Management Information System (EMIS) (excluding learning assessment systems)	39,996	
22-02-26 Education sector planning including coordinating role, SDG 4, etc.	279,993	
22-02-99 Technical assistance - Learning outcomes	533,177	
26-01-02 Programme reviews (Annual, UNDAF, MTR, etc.)	2,435	
26-02-02 MICS - General	121,206	
26-02-04 Stimulating demand for and capacity to use data	159	
26-02-05 Administrative data, registers and non-MICS household surveys and censuses	7,142	
26-02-08 Programme monitoring	10,019	
26-03-02 Capacity and skills development for social behaviour change	3,375	
26-03-03 Children, adolescent and youth engagement and participation	13,050	
26-03-99 Technical assistance - Cross - sectoral communication for development	19,615	
26-04-01 CO/RO Supply - technical assistance and collaboration in supply chain, procurement of goods and services, and logistics	796	
26-05-05 Evaluation innovation learning, uptake and partnerships forevaluation	21,996	
26-06-01 Parliamentary engagement for policy advocacy	1,843	
26-06-04 Leading advocate	18,680	
26-06-07 Leading brand	6,698	
26-06-09 CRC, CEDAW or CRPD - reporting	18,701	
26-06-12 Learning	1,533	
26-07-01 Operations support to programme delivery	231,975	
27-01-06 HQ and RO technical support to multiple Goal Areas	430	
28-07-04 Management and Operations support at CO	10,981	
Grand Total	2,172,557	

**All expense amounts are provincial and subject to change.*

6. Future Work Plan

2018 was the second year of the Country Programme 2017-2021 and made a solid progress of the programme implementation, contributing to achieve key immediate milestones. In 2019, UNICEF will continue to ensure that children, especially the most disadvantaged and in hard-to-reach areas, have access to quality early childhood and basic education services, and complete the basic education cycle with improved learning outcomes.

The Programme will continue to support the development and implementation of national policies, plans and standards for enhancing enabling environments of the education sector in a more equitable manner. The Programme will also assist in expanding equitable access to quality ECE and primary services, especially in remote and disadvantaged communities, coupled with capacity building of parents and communities for creating their greater demands for and engagement in quality education. In addition, there will be a focus on quality improvement of ECE and primary education to achieve students' better learning outcomes and skills development. Capacity building at sub-national level (province and district) will be further strengthened to effectively support the implementation and monitoring of national policies and standards at school level.

UNICEF will further strengthen its support to policy dialogue with the aim of ensuring a county-led, country-owned sector planning and management, to make it evidence-based and result-oriented. This will be ensured in linkage with the global, regional and national-level SDGs dialogue.

7. Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Lao PDR would like to thank the contributing partner governments and UNICEF national committees for their valuable support through this funding. The contributed funds have allowed UNICEF Lao PDR to deliver results for children in Lao PDR, especially for those most disadvantaged. Keeping in mind that enhancing both access and quality of ECE and primary education is an utmost priority of the country, the contribution from the partners will make a solid and lasting difference.

The flexible funds through the Education Thematic Funds contributed by the partners enabled the UNICEF Lao PDR Country Office to plan and implement the programme activities and successfully address key bottlenecks in a timely manner in 2018. The flexible, multi-year funds have enabled the Country Office to plan and manage its costed rolling 2-year work plan with the Government effectively. Furthermore, the thematic funds modality enabled the UNICEF Lao PDR to immediately respond to the priority needs of flood-affected children in the humanitarian situation. Considering the country's fast-changing environment in development work, the flexibility of Thematic Funds played a significant part in our ability to deliver results. It would be therefore highly appreciated if the partnership through the Education Thematic Funds could be further expanded in the future.

8. Annexes

- 1) Human Interest Stories
- 2) Donor Feedback Form

Human Interest Stories

1. Ahead of the curve: how pre-primary gives kids an edge



Photo caption: Grade 1 class at Phonkeo Primary School

“What is the answer to six plus seven?” Ms. Khamanivong asks her grade one class. Titavanh enthusiastically jumps from her desk and runs to the front of the room to answer the question. She picks up a piece of chalk and confidently writes the answer on the blackboard. Math is her favorite subject in school, and she loves solving operational problems. Titavanh is at the top of her class at Phonkeo Primary School in Saravane province, southern Laos.

Ms. Khamanivong continues with the next activity to keep the class engaged and continuously learning. She has the class working together in small groups to solve a series of math problems. They all discuss them and use their fingers to come up with the solution and check their answers. Titavanh takes the lead in her group math activity and confidently writes her team’s answers on the board. Once all four groups have finished, Ms. Khamanivong goes through the answers on the board. Titavanh’s group is the only one to get all the correct answers.



Photo caption: Titavanh's group is the only one to get all the correct answers at Phonkeo Primary School in Saravane province, southern Laos.

Titavanh along with most of her classmates attended a UNICEF supported pre-primary education programme. Ms. Khamanivong who has been teaching for over 20 years notices that children who participate in pre-primary education are ready for the grade one curriculum and learn much faster than their peers who do not attend. “Children who attend pre-primary are much easier to teach,” she says, “children who do not attend pre-primary need extra attention to catch-up, for things like holding a pencil and comprehension.”

The pre-primary programme has been developed by the Ministry of Education and Sports with support from UNICEF to advance the holistic development of a child and get them ready for school, especially in areas where there are no kindergartens or places without the provisions to build kindergartens. UNICEF provides this support to the government through assistance with teacher training, supply provision and continuous monitoring and mentoring support to pre-primary schools. The curriculum, developed for learning and character development, focuses on physical development, hygiene and safety, language, cognitive and general knowledge, emotional and social behaviours.

Focus and attention to pre-primary education following the national curriculum and competency standards for five-year-old children support their ongoing development in primary learning and beyond. There are immediate positive effects on multi-dimensional child development, such as language, cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skills that can create positive impact on a child's early school experience. Expanding quality Early Childhood Education in Lao PDR, particularly in rural and marginalised groups, and helping their smooth transition and continuous learning in primary and higher education level, will hence not only improve children's performance in school and the financial efficiency in the sector, but will also provide long-term benefits to children, communities and society at large.



Photo caption: Titavanh is at the top of her class in all subjects, especially math

According to the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) most children in Laos are deprived from ECE with Saravane showing the highest numbers of deprivation in children under 5 in the country. In this province, 96 per cent of children are deprived of learning materials in the home, putting their development behind in literacy numeracy, also the highest number of deprivation in children under 5 in the country.

With so many children deprived in early childhood development, pre-primary education plays an essential role in building children's critical skills and in fostering normal development. Ms. Khamanivong says Titavanh is excelling across all subjects. She not only does extra class work but also helps in the classroom. The bell rings, and Ms. Khamanivong dismisses the class. They all run outside ready to go home for the day. Titavanh's mother Phaivonh meets her by the gate and takes her home on the motorbike.



Photo caption: Titavanh and her mother heading home after school

Phaivonh noticed a significant change in her daughter as she was attending her pre-primary classes. "Titavanh learned to read, write, sing and draw." Phaivonh says, "These were activities she had never done before. She was always enthusiastic and liked learning, but pre-primary really helped her excel." After school and a few chores around the house,

she helps Titavanh with her homework. Phaivonh is a nurse and wants to support her daughter's dreams and to help her do whatever she wants in the future. When Titavanh is asked if she wants to be a nurse like her mother she shakes her head and grins. "I want to be a teacher when I grow up." says Titavanh, "I

like helping other kids. But I love my mom this much!” she stretches out her arms as far as they can go then wraps them around her mom to give her a big hug.



Photo caption: Titavanh kissing her mother Paivonh

<https://www.unicef.org/laos/stories/ahead-curve>

2. From the ground up – building a strong education system by supporting teachers



Photo caption: Students at Phonkeo Primary School are encouraged by their teachers to do a variety of learning activities such as group work.

Bounheng Phommavongsy has been an educator for over 13 years. He is the principal of Phonkeo Primary School in Saravane province, Laos and when he is not teaching, he oversees satellite schools and the education cluster in the area. In the last few years, Bounheng has noticed a change in the teachers of Phonkeo Primary, they are happier, more motivated and take less time off work. He attributes this change to the increased support the school has been receiving from the pedagogical advisors from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). “I have been monitoring classes,” said Bounheng and since our teachers have been participating in the new cluster meetings and receiving more insight from pedagogical advisors the quality of teaching is getting much better.”

The pedagogical advisor system has been established since 1993 by MoES and designed to aid schools in the form of specific trainings and continuous on-the-job advisory support for principals and teachers in classroom management, teaching skills and techniques, relationship building, lesson planning, monitoring and student assessment. UNICEF started intensive support to strengthen the system in 2012 and is ensuring continued training for pedagogical advisors, so they can receive consistent capacity building opportunities to update their knowledge and skills. The skills that pedagogical advisors acquire have in turn helped teachers to adapt their lesson plans, build up confidence in teaching and develop healthier relationships with students.



Photo caption: teachers have been taught new methods to engage with their students like identifying those who are struggling and giving them a bit of extra attention.

UNICEF has considerably contributed to strengthen the in-service teacher professional support system by building the capacity of MoES staff, especially of the pedagogical advisors which adds to the overall strengthening of the education system. The overall goal in strengthening the education system is to improve equity and quality of education, so children can complete the full cycle of basic education and meet numeracy and literacy standards.

Soukvongsack Bouasala, the pedagogical advisor for the area, participated in an initial training in 2013 with additional training in 2018 and said after the most recent UNICEF supported training he felt more confident and was much clearer on how he could help schools and increase student performance. He observes classes, assesses student performance and then works with teachers and principals to identify ways to improve and develop more effective techniques. His new way of working helps to establish a two-way relationship of mutual trust which is helping teachers and students excel. To help teachers succeed he observe classes to understand the structure of the lessons and sits with teachers to discuss how they are doing and demonstrates new techniques. “I don’t tell them what to do,” he said, “I demonstrate and show them new ideas, use a lot of positive reinforcement and let them have a lot of input.”



Photo caption: Students are feeling more comfortable and encouraged by their teachers which is resulting in improved test scores.

Teachers and pedagogical advisors learned from past mistakes. Previously, they focused on student and teacher weaknesses, and rigid teaching rules. They now work together to focus on student learning, using activities, including group work, providing more materials and having students help each other. UNICEF provided monitoring and mentoring support by the pedagogical advisor team which showed improved learning outcomes of students.

This group work approach through the school cluster system has also improved teacher’s performance. Around 12 schools participate in education cluster meetings to discuss techniques, strategies and to learn from each other. Vienchanh Inthavongsa teaches grade 2 and is getting a lot of help from the cluster approach. She has seen a change in her students’ performance and noticed a difference in their relationship with her as well. They feel more comfortable talking with her and this has changed the classroom dynamic. The learning performance of her students varies, but those who are struggling are showing improvement. “I feel a lot happier with my job now,” she says, while adding: “all of the teachers are reporting increased job satisfaction.” Soukvongsack notices this change in students and in the teachers too. “It takes time for teachers to change old behaviours, but things have improved a lot and I think it will continue to improve with support from MoES and UNICEF.”



Photo caption: Using visual aids has been helping students with different learning styles understand mathematical concepts.

<https://www.unicef.org/laos/stories/ground>

Donor Report Feedback Form

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback. Kindly answer the questions below for the above-mentioned report. Thank you!

Please return the completed form back to UNICEF by email to:

Name: Myo-Zin Nyunt

Email: mnyunt@unicef.org

SCORING: 5 indicates “highest level of satisfaction” while
0 indicates “complete dissatisfaction”

1.To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations? (For example, the overall analysis and identification of challenges and solutions)

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

2. To what extent did the fund utilization part of the report meet your reporting expectations?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

SCORING: 5 indicates “highest level of satisfaction” while
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3. To what extent does the report meet your expectations in regard to the analysis provided, including identification of difficulties and shortcomings as well as remedies to these?

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4. To what extent does the report meet your expectations with regard to reporting on results?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

5. Please provide us with your suggestions on how this report could be improved to meet your expectations.

6. Are there any other comments that you would like to share with us?

Thank you for filling this form!