

Summary of Terminal Evaluation

1. Outline of the Project	
Country : Lao People's Democratic Republic	Project Title : Supporting Community Initiatives for Primary Education Development in the Southern Provinces (CIED)
Issue/Sector : Basic Education	Cooperation Scheme : Technical Cooperation Project
Division in Charge : JICA Laos Office	Total Cost (At the time of evaluation) : 213 Million Yen
Period of Cooperation (4 years)	(R/D): 10 Dec. 2007
	21 Dec. 2007- 20 Dec.2011
	Partner Country's Implementing Organization : Department of Primary and Pre-school Education(DPPE) of Ministry of Education (MOE), Provincial Education Service (PES) in Saravane, Sekong and Attapeu, District Education Bureau (DEB) in the target districts
	Supporting Organization in Japan : NA
	Related Cooperation : The Project for Improvement of School Environments in the Three Southern Provinces (Japan's Grant Aid for Community Empowerment)
1-1 Background of the Project	
<p>The long-term overarching goal of Government of Lao PDR is to exit the group of Least Developed Countries by 2020. The improvement of education is considered as the prioritized issues for eradicating poverty. The basic education circumstances have been improved gradually in recent years and the net enrollment rate of primary education has been improved from 77.3% in 2000 to 89.2% in 2007. However, there are still many challenges to overcome for the principle of compulsory primary education and the development of education especially in rural and ethnic group areas. Government of Lao PDR pays particular attention to the importance of the community participation to the school management in order to improve education circumstances in those areas.</p> <p>In November 2004, Prime Minister's Conference among Japan, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam was held in Lao PDR on the occasion of ASEAN Summit. At that time, Japanese Government showed its interest in providing support to develop those border areas, i.e. CLV Development Triangle. In Lao PDR, rural remote areas located in mountainous areas have particular difficulties for the education development. In Sekong, Attapeu and Saravane Province located near Cambodian and Vietnamese border, the populations are mainly ethnic groups and their living standards are lower than other areas. The net enrollment ratio of primary education in Sekong, Attapeu and Saravane Province is 74.23%, 67.79%, and 82.1% in 2006-2007 respectively.</p> <p>Under these circumstances, the Project was proposed by Government of Lao PDR for the purpose of the improvement of primary education in those three southern provinces.</p>	
1-2 Project Overview	
(1) Overall Goal	
Access to and quality of primary education in the target districts shall be improved.	
(2) Project Purpose	
Access to and quality of primary education in the target schools are improved.	
(3) Output	
Output 1: Community initiatives are enhanced for improving access to and quality of primary education through capacity development of Village Education Development Committee (VEDC).	
Output 2: Capacity of principals and teachers is strengthened to manage school and classes effectively.	
Output 3: Teaching learning materials utilizing local resources are developed by teachers to enhance quality of learning.	
Output 4: Capacity of C/P (MOE/PES/DEB) is strengthened to conduct necessary activities for facilitating school improvement with community initiatives.	
(4) Inputs (At the time of evaluation)	
【Japanese Side】	
Long-term expert: 1 person for 43M/M (Project Management/Basic Education)	
Training in Japan: 6 participants (Group Training in Japan)	
Equipment: A total of US\$47,284 for the Project and US\$14,530 for the Expert	

<p>Local activity cost: A total of US\$211,437 NGO contracts: US\$1,191,434 (JFY2008-2010) and US\$292,807 (proposed for JFY2011) 【Lao Side】 Counterparts (C/P): A total of 73 persons (MOE-14, Saravane-18, Sekong-24, Attapeu-17) Provision of office space for the Project and utilities</p>		
2. Evaluation Team		
Member	<p>Ms. Keiko MIZUNO, Team Leader, Senior Advisor of Education, JICA Mr. Koichi TOYA, Cooperation Planning 1, Asst. Resident Representative, JICA Laos Office Ms. Kanako MAENO, Cooperation Planning 2, Asst. Director, Southeast Asia and Pacific Dept., JICA Ms. Yuko OGINO, Evaluation Analysis, KRI International Corp. Inc.</p>	
Period of Evaluation	24 July – 10 Aug. 2011	Type of Evaluation: Terminal Evaluation
3. Results of Evaluation		
3-1 Achievement of the Project		
(1) Outputs		
<p><u>Output 1</u> : Output 1 is mostly achieved in light of 2 PDM indicators. 1) Number of meetings of VEDC for SIP (6 time/years): Two provinces of Saravane (8.3) and Sekong (9.17) achieved the target in 2010/11. Attapeu (5.5) did not achieve, but most probably due to the absence of recording meetings. 2) SIP implementation rates (80%) : Two provinces of Sekong (83.03%) and Attapeu (80.85%) achieved the target in 2010/11. Saravane (79.29%) is slightly lower. Above situation indicates that SIP was planned, implemented and reviewed by VEDC on regular basis. The significant VEDC's involvement and contribution to school management through SIP is evidenced by the achievement of Output 1.</p> <p><u>Output 2:</u> Overall achievement of Output 2 is mostly good in light of 3 PDM indicators. 1) Implementation rate of internal supervision (80%): Overall, 54 schools (60%) out of the total 90 schools achieved the target in 2010/11. 2) Preparation of lesson plans for 3 major subjects (80%): Overall average of 90 schools is 53.54% in 2010/11. In view of the requirements of preparing lesson plans for all the units of the 3 subjects and the high target of the PDM indicator, the performance of the project is well appreciated. 3) Recording of students' learning achievement (80%): Using high benchmark of both recording achievement and providing remedial support, 78 schools out of 90 schools achieved 100% implementation rates in 2010/11. As above, although there are some cases not achieving the target, the overall performance of Output 2 based on such quality related indicators is mostly good.</p> <p><u>Output 3:</u> Output 3 is achieved in producing education materials for three main subjects continuously as set out in the PDM indicator. Although PDM does not set out the target, all the 90 schools have produced education materials in 2010/11, out of which there are 67 schools (74.44%) that produced 30 sets or more for each subject. Activities leading to Output 3 started from 2009, and the results show the good achievement in such short time.</p> <p><u>Outputs 4:</u> Output 4 is achieved in light of all the 4 PDM indicators. 1) Preparation of training modules for SIP by VEDC: MOE completed preparation of training modules and has used them for training. 2) Modification of training modules for dissemination: MOE has developed training modules for School of Quality (SOQ) as national standards and as a MOE's integrated training package in which the same contents of CIED modules are mostly covered. They will continue to be used for wider dissemination of CIED elements. 3) SIP approval meeting held on time: In the 3rd year, all the 3 provinces prepared SIP and they were approved on time for the new school calendar year. In the 4th year, meetings are planned to be held by the end of September as well. 4) PES/DEB organizing activities to address common education needs in their areas: All the 3 provinces implemented teacher training workshops to address the common education needs. As above, all the 4 indicators were achieved. Output 4, which was added in response to recommendation from Mid Term Review Team in view of future sustainability as well as dissemination of CIED elements, has demonstrated good achievements.</p>		

(2) Project Purpose

Achievement of Project Purpose is satisfactorily high in light of the PDM indicators as below table shows. While the access related indicators such as NER and NIR demonstrate significant improvements and are assessed as nearly achieved, quality related indicators of drop-out and repetition rates still need further efforts. However, in consideration to the high targets set out in the PDM, achievements are considered to be satisfactorily high. The number of SOQ items fulfilled to evaluate the school quality shows a good achievement as well.

PDM indicators		Result	Saravane	Sekong	Attapeu
1	Increase in NER (98%)	Nearly achieved	99.60%	99.10%	96.30%
2	Increase in NIR (98% in Saravane and Sekong, 93% in Attapeu)	Nearly achieved	99.40%	99.10%	92.70%
3	Number of items of School of Quality fulfilled (out of 23 items)	Good performance observed	18.2	18.4	17.3
4	Decrease in drop-out during school year (1%)	Achieved moderately	0.57%	1.42%	2.04%
5	Decrease in repetition during school year (10%)	Nearly achieved/more efforts needed in Attapeu	5.81%	7.35%	16.57%

Note: Colored columns show "achieved the target". No.3 PDM indicator does not set out the target.

(3) Overall Goal

Prospect for achieving overall goal in about 3-year time is mixed at present. As for PDM indicator 1) NER (98%), NERs are already in good progress as three districts have already achieved the target. For 2) Drop-out (1%) and 3) Repetition rates (10%), the actual figures are still quite high in all the 6 districts. While the access related indicator demonstrates a significant achievement, quality related indicators still need further efforts. Regarding 4) PES/DEB organizing training for non-target VEDCs, dissemination to non-target VEDCs has gradually become concrete, but the viable plans with budget allocations are not yet in place.

In such situation, however, CIED is placed in the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP:2011-2015) and has been actually contributing to the SOQ and VEDC policies. Since there have also been and are likely to be synergy effects with other programs including quality improvements, the prospect of achieving Overall Goal is considered to be potentially high.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance: [Very High]

CIED has been firmly consistent with the national and educational policies in Laos as well as with the Japanese ODA policy and plans for Laos where basic education is placed as a priority area for achieving MDGs. CIED is placed in the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP:2011-2015) and has been actually contributing to the SOQ and VEDC policies, targeting 3 southern provinces with high educational development needs. The CIED approach (improvement of school management through VEDC) is overall appropriate and effective as confirmed in the Achievements of the Project. There have been synergy effects with other programs, assistances by other donors and other Japanese assistances as well. Relevance therefore is evaluated as Very High.

(2) Effectiveness: [Satisfactorily High]

Achievements of 4 educational statistics (NER, NIR, Drop-out rate, Repetition-rate) and SOQ items fulfilled show that while access related indicators demonstrate significant improvements, quality related indicators require further efforts. However, CIED approach of improving school management through VEDC has been effective as a result of project interventions in the target schools. In consideration to high targets as well, effectiveness is evaluated as Satisfactorily High.

(3) Efficiency: [High]

Overall achievements of 4 Outputs demonstrate good performance and most of the inputs from both Japan and Laos have been efficiently utilized. Issues of by-passing the existing systems and using external ones such as NGO contracts and Direct School Support (DSS) have posed questions in sustainability. However, overall efficiency is evaluated as High.

(4) Impact: [Potentially High]

Prospect of achieving Overall Goal of educational improvement in target districts is mixed at present. Although access related indicator demonstrates a significant achievement, quality related indicators still need further efforts. However, CIED is placed in the Education Sector Development Plan

(ESDP:2011-2015) and has been actually contributing to the SOQ and VEDC policies. There is likely to have synergy effects with other programs including quality improvements. In addition, notable ripple effects such as developing SOQ training modules as national standards and so forth are confirmed. Therefore, the prospect of achieving Overall Goal is considered to be Potentially High.

(5) Sustainability: 【VEDC/School level: Very High】 【Government level: Potentially High】

In light of institutional/policy, financial and technical aspects, sustainability is Very High at VEDC/School level. VEDCs are established based on the existing village governance systems and mass organizations. Establishing and utilizing VEDCs for school management is a government policy and will continue. Financially, various activities financed by community contributions have already been confirmed. There are also fund mobilization schemes already started or planned in view of the post project implementation. Capacity of most of the VEDCs/schools has been developed to be able to independently implement the SIP cycle (planning, implementation, review, etc.). The overall target VEDC/School are likely to continue to be active in school management through implementation of SIP cycle.

At Government Level (MOE/PES/DEB), sustainability is Potentially High. SOQ training will serve as a mechanism of continuing and dissemination of CIED elements. Existing systems at PES/DEB levels such as regular principal meetings and school visits by pedagogical advisors are also expected to be further utilized. Financial sustainability is an issue. In addition to FTI program which has started full-fledgedly, there is a possibility of national block grant by the government own revenue (still at early stage), and provincial budgets as well. Capacity of the C/Ps have been developed enough to be able to conduct CIED trainings as trainers. However, it is expected that capacity development as core trainer at central level is further developed. Technical expertise that C/Ps have acquired are to be fully shared within the organizations at local level as well. In addition, the role of NGOs needs to be reexamined from the viewpoint of sustainability.

3-3 Contributing Factors

- 1) VEDCs have been organized based on the existing village governance systems and mass organizations such as youth unions, women's unions and others. This has made VEDC function organizationally once the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and how to do is well informed.
- 2) Classroom expansion made by Japan's Grant Aid for Community Empowerment contributed to decreasing drop-out rate by expanding grades so that incomplete schools become complete schools. School construction contributed not only to expanding physical space but also increasing attractiveness for school education as well. Out of 90 target schools, 74 schools were covered by the scheme.
- 3) School feeding program may have contributed to increasing incentives to children to go to school.

3-4 Hampering Factors

- 1) Classroom expansion made by Japan's Grant Aid for Community Empowerment can be an opposite factor to deteriorate the quality of education. Drastic increase in NER and NIR attributed by school construction exceeds the accommodation capacity and led to more increased teacher-pupil ratio, multi-grades and so forth.
- 2) In the first year, NGO's low performance in Attapeu Province caused delay in SIP planning. This might be one of the reasons for relatively lower performance of Attapeu in terms of PDM indicators. The contract was changed to another NGO in the second year.
- 3) The absolute shortage of teachers is another factor. The government has taken measures such as to increase budgets and quota, but there are not enough applicants for teaching in remote areas.

3-5 Conclusions

The Team concludes that the Project has been satisfactorily making progress towards its objective. It was also confirmed that substantial efforts had been made by the Project to address the issues raised by the Mid-term Review Team, and that considerable progress had been realized in each item although the degree of achievement had varied depending on the issue. As for achievements, the following are worth emphasizing.

Firstly, the Project had effectively demonstrated with improved school based statistics over the cooperation period that VEDC can play an important role in improving access to and quality of primary education. Clarity of roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the SIP process has made it easier to promote active participation and involvement of VEDC in school management. Although some schools have not achieved the target indicators, it is highly commendable that basic education indicators are now being collected and managed at each target school and VEDC, and utilized as the base for problem analysis, objective setting, planning of activities, and monitoring and reviewing of the

progress. In addition, it is worth mentioning that some VEDCs have already established Village Education Funds for strengthening their self-sustaining efforts after the cooperation period.

Secondly, the Project has successfully presented concrete approaches and tools for promoting community participatory school management based on the practice. Targeted VEDC have gained managerial capacity according to their roles and responsibilities by actually practicing school planning and implementation accompanied with training and the on the ground follow-ups. Particularly, the Project has contributed to the operationalization of SIP for strengthening community initiative in school management for achieving EFA goals. Various tools and checklists to facilitate SIP process have also been developed through practice and its reflection.

Thirdly, the Project has placed the performance indicators in line with the national education objectives specified in Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF), and carefully monitored these indicators as common goals at provincial, district and school levels in a coherent manner. The consistency in and clarity of the indicators to be achieved at different administrative levels are key factors in strengthening synergy and interconnectedness of education policy and actions on the ground. Nationally targeted goals shall be achieved as an accumulation of efforts of each school on the ground, thus sharing the same vision with clearly defined targets among different administrative levels starting from school is a first step towards achieving national goals. The Project has also contributed to policy making and setting quality assurance standard by reflecting hands-on experiences in the development of School of Quality and its hand books. Such process might have promoted to lay foundation for promoting strategic partnership and collaboration between different sections and departments of MOE and key donors and agencies.

Fourthly, the Project has successfully creating synergy between policy, data, resources, and capacity/motivation for achieving national education goals by effectively facilitating bottom-up approach supported by policy orientation. The emphasis on the importance of VEDC's roles and responsibilities in education policy has motivated the grass-roots stakeholders to be involved in school management. The technical cooperation provided by the Project has contributed to the fulfillment of the information gap among multi-layered stakeholders and capacity needs for strengthening reporting and feed-back system for the better functioning of VEDC.

3-6 Recommendations

(1) Further efforts needed by MOE/Project

- 1) Reflecting practical and hands-on tips of CIED implementation in TOT training
- 2) Improving the effectiveness of SoQ Trainings
- 3) Institutionalizing tools and formats developed by the Project
- 4) Contributing further to the quality improvement
- 5) Disseminating CIED approaches and experiences among different stakeholders
- 6) Developing materials including audio-visual tools for effective dissemination

(2) Further efforts needed by PES/DEB/Project

- 1) Enhancing institutional sustainability
- 2) Enhancing technical sustainability
- 3) Enhancing financial sustainability

(3) Reexamination of NGO role in CIED implementation

(4) Participation in preparatory work for School block grant program

- 1) Participating in the finalization of operational guidelines and manuals
- 2) Developing feasible expansion strategies to ensure the impact of direct financial support to school level
- 3) Ensuring effective communication and coordination with FTI

3-7 Lessons-learned

(1) Direct contributions for achieving MDGs

(2) Strengthening Ownerships of C/Ps

(3) Correlative relationship between quantitative increase of children and quality of school