

Country Name	Supporting Community Initiatives for Primary Education Development in the Southern Provinces Project for Supporting Community Initiative for Education Development (Phase 2)
Lao People's Democratic Republic	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>In rural Laos, many primary schools were managed with the financial support of the local communities due to insufficient educational administration capacity and budget. In response, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) established a Village Education and Development Committee (VEDC) in each village to promote school improvement with community involvement.</p> <p>Against this background, JICA implemented a technical cooperation project, aiming to improve primary education through community participation in school management (the Phase 1 project). The project provided technical support for introduction and implementation of a series of processes related to formulation and implementation of the School Development Plan (SDP) led by VEDC, and achieved a dramatic improvement in learning environment and educational indicators at the target schools. Furthermore, in cooperation with other Development Partners (DPs), JICA also assisted in formulating the Education Quality Standards (EQS) stipulated by the government of Laos.</p> <p>Under this circumstance, the second phase project (the Phase 2 project) was implemented to support and strengthen the management system and capacity of related organizations and stakeholders in order to roll-out the results of the Phase 1 project.</p>																						
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through developing modules for EQS training as well as SDP planning and implementation, enhancing capacities of the Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS) and the District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB) to support SDP planning and implementation and others, the project aimed at improving access and quality of primary education in the target districts and thereby provinces.</p> <p><Phase 1> 1. Project Purpose: Access and quality of primary education in the target schools are improved.</p> <p><Phase 2> 1. Project Purpose: Access and quality of primary education in the target districts are improved. 2. Overall Goal: Access and quality of primary education in the target provinces are improved.</p>																						
Activities of the Project	<p>1. Project site: <Phase 1> 6 districts in 3 provinces: Salavan, Laongam (Salavan Province), Lamam, Thateng (Sekong Province)) and Samakhixay, Sanamxay (Attapeu Province) <Phase 2> 10 districts in 4 provinces: Champasack, Soukhouma, Mounlapamok, Khong (Champasack Province), Artsaphangthong, Songkhone, Xaybouly (Savannakhet Province), Lakhonpheng, Khongxedon (Salavan Province) and Lamam (Sekong Province))</p> <p>2. Main activities: <Phase 1> (1) MOES conducts Training of Trainers (TOT) on SDP planning to PESS/DESB and PESS/DESB organizes workshops to VEDC. (2) Strengthening capacity of principals and teachers on school management. (3) Development of teaching learning materials. (4) MOES develops training modules for SDP planning and review. <Phase 2> (1) MOES reviews and revises modules for EQS training and its TOT, develops modules for School Block Grant (SBG) training and its TOT, and MOES conducts TOT. (2) MOES prepares a guideline/handbook for situation analysis and conducts on-the-job training (OJT) to PESS/DESB, and PESS/DESB conduct situation analysis and implement measures. (3) PESS/DESB support schools and VEDC for SDP planning and implementation.</p> <p>3. Inputs (to carry out above activities)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Lao Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><Phase 1></td> <td style="border: none;"><Phase 1></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">1) Experts: 1 person</td> <td style="border: none;">1) Staff allocated: 73persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">2) Trainees received: 6 persons</td> <td style="border: none;">2) Land and facilities: Office space</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">3) Equipment: printer, computers, motorbikes, vehicle</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">4) Operation cost: workshop expenses, contract with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><Phase 2></td> <td style="border: none;"><Phase 2></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">1) Experts: 7 persons</td> <td style="border: none;">1) Staff allocated: 57 persons (cumulative total at organizations at MoES) 43 persons (cumulative total at PESS/DESB)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">2) Trainees received: 14 persons</td> <td style="border: none;">2) Land and facilities: office space for the project</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">3) Equipment: vehicles, utility charges</td> <td style="border: none;">3) Operation cost: cost for training, monitoring, materials and equipment</td> </tr> </table>			Japanese Side	Lao Side	<Phase 1>	<Phase 1>	1) Experts: 1 person	1) Staff allocated: 73persons	2) Trainees received: 6 persons	2) Land and facilities: Office space	3) Equipment: printer, computers, motorbikes, vehicle		4) Operation cost: workshop expenses, contract with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)		<Phase 2>	<Phase 2>	1) Experts: 7 persons	1) Staff allocated: 57 persons (cumulative total at organizations at MoES) 43 persons (cumulative total at PESS/DESB)	2) Trainees received: 14 persons	2) Land and facilities: office space for the project	3) Equipment: vehicles, utility charges	3) Operation cost: cost for training, monitoring, materials and equipment
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Project Period	<Phase 1> December 2007-December 2011	Project Cost	<Phase 1> (ex-ante)276 million yen (actual) 213 million yen																				

	<Phase 2> September 2012– August 2016		<Phase 2> (ex-ante) 392 million yen (actual) 358 million yen
Implementing Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) - Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS) and District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB) of the target provinces and districts 		
Cooperation Agency in Japan	n.a.		

II. Result of the Evaluation

< Special Perspectives Considered in the Ex-Post Evaluation >

- As the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects share the common goal, the indicators for the Phase 2 project are verified to check the level of achievement of the Project Purpose and the Overall Goal.
- Continuation of the project effects was analyzed as factors to achieve the Overall Goal.

1 Relevance

<Consistency with the Development Policy of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation >

The project was consistent with the development policy of Laos. At the time of the Phase 1 project, the “National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy” and the “Sixth National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) (2006-2010)” aimed to promote human resource development in all areas to fundamentally solve poverty and support national development. The priority was to disseminate and improve basic education. In the “Education For All (EFA) National Plan of Action”, the main challenges for achieving EFA were improving access in remote rural areas. At the time of the Phase 2 project, the “Education Sub-sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2011-2015” prioritized three pillars of (1) expansion of equal access, (2) improvement of quality and relevance and (3) strengthening of planning and management.

<Consistency with the Development Needs of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation >

The project was consistent with the development needs for primary education of Laos. At the time of the Phase 1 project, the primary school Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in the target three provinces were 74.23% in Sekong Province, 67.79% in Attapeu Province and 81.9% in Salavan Province in 2006, lower than the national average of Laos 84.2% (2005). After the Phase 1 project was completed, the challenge was to ensure the sustainability of the results of the Phase 1 project and to expand its areas, however, for that purpose, it was necessary to strengthen the capacity of the local education administration. MOES also started a school subsidy grant (SBG) program in 2011, and it was essential that SBG and SDP operate together at the school level in order for SBG to contribute to school improvement. And support this capacity building was an urgent issue.

<Consistency with Japan’s ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

The project was consistent with Japan’s ODA policy to Laos. One of the three goals under the “Country Assistance Program for Lao PDR” (September 2006) was promoting the reduction of poverty from the standpoint of “human security.” It said Japan would support Laos in its steady steps towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). “Improving basic education” was one of the priority areas under this goal. In addition, the “Country Assistance Policy for the Lao People’s Democratic Republic” (April 2012) listed the development of the educational environment and human resource development as one of the priority areas.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The Project Purpose was achieved at the project completion. Although the target level of indicator 1 was not specifically set in the plan documents, NER, Net Intake Rate (NIR), promotion rate, drop out rate and survival rate improved in the target districts. The capability of MOES, provincial and district level officers, principals were raised by the project trainings, including more involvement from VEDCs to enhance the project effects to achieve project purpose.

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The effects of the project have partially continued. As mentioned above, the status of continuation of the project effects at the time of ex-post evaluation was verified as the part of the verifiable indicators of the Overall Goal and the factors affecting the achievement levels of the verifiable indicators of the Overall Goal.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal was partially achieved. The education indicators (Indicator 1) of NER and NIR mostly achieved the targets in the target provinces showing that most children have had access to primary education in those areas. However, due to economic and environmental factors, it is still difficult to improve the indicators related to the quality such as promotion rate, dropout rate, survival rate in some specific areas. All education indicators in Sekong and Attapeu did not achieve the targets in 2018/2019. One factor is that the provinces were affected by flooding in 2018 causing deterioration in education indicators and economic situation. Other factors are that many children live far from schools and some of them are from different ethnic tribes which use specific languages making it difficult to understand lessons taught in main language, according to MOES, PESSs and DESBs. The SDP submission rate (Indicator 2) has been partially achieved, as the rate varies depending on provinces.

The improvement in NER and NIR mentioned above resulted from capacity improvement of provincial and district level including school and village level raised through the project activities and with the assistance of many other DPs. Further to the capacity development under the project, MOES developed the training modules on School Based Management (SBM) after project completion. PESSs and DESBs have continued utilizing materials and lessons learnt from the project to provide support to VEDCs and school principals on SDP planning and school assessment.

Some schools in the target districts that were trained through SBM training are able to submit their SDP based on school self-assessment to DESB; however, there are still numbers of those that still have difficulty to submit SDP every year due to personnel turnover in school or VEDC which the new members do not understand the basic methodology of making SDP. DESBs also have insufficient understanding

on the methodology.

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

According to MOES, there have been no negative impacts on the natural environment caused by the project.

In 2014, 9th Poverty Reduction Support Operation ODA assistance, general budget) included targets to support the project activities of the Phase 2 project on the implementation of EQS and SBM in the target provinces. This has positively contributed to the effort of the government to improve and develop the school management in primary level in local areas via activities under the Phase 2 project. Some primary schools constructed under “The Project for the Improvement of School Environment in Champasack and Savannakhet Provinces”, a JICA grant aid project, were also included in target schools of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 project. This contributed to the schools to continue the school maintenance and improve the teaching-learning environment for the children through SDP.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is fair.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results																																																																																																												
(Project Purpose) Access and quality of primary education in the target districts are improved.	Indicator 1. Average figures of the following education indicators of the target districts are improved from the baseline - Net enrollment rate - Net intake rate - Survival rate - Dropout rate - Promotion rate	Status of the Achievement: achieved (Project Completion) Average of 10 districts (%) <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012/13</th> <th>2014/15</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NER</td> <td>97.84</td> <td>98.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NIR</td> <td>97.13</td> <td>99.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Survival Rate</td> <td>72.02</td> <td>78.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dropout Rate</td> <td>7.18</td> <td>4.73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Promotion Rate</td> <td>85.03</td> <td>90.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> (Ex-post evaluation) Refer to the Overall Goal.		2012/13	2014/15	NER	97.84	98.21	NIR	97.13	99.03	Survival Rate	72.02	78.62	Dropout Rate	7.18	4.73	Promotion Rate	85.03	90.8																																																																																										
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Source : MOES, PESSs and DESBs

3 Efficiency

Both the project cost and project period were within the plan (the ratio against the plan: 85%, 100%). The outputs were produced as

planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is high.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

There has been policy support for continuation of the project effects. In its “Education Vision to 2030 and Strategy to 2025” and the “ESDP 2016-2020”, MOES has stated clearly the intention to continuously provide support and effort in the improvement on access and quality of primary education.

<Institutional/Organizational Aspect>

MOES improved its organizational structure to improve the efficiency of its internal works and coordination. Along with the restructuring, staff turnover and retirement also cause staff insufficiency which affects to the continuation of project effect’s promotion and dissemination.

At the provincial and district level, the support and monitoring of the implementation of SDP development and school assessment provided to school principals and VEDCs have been mainly done by DESBs, and PESSs have been mainly responsible for providing training and receiving report on the implementation results from DESBs. With limited number of persons in charge in district level comparing to the number of schools, it is still difficult to achieve the target submission rate of SDP in the province.

<Technical Aspect>

Some of MOES staff at all levels have been able to carry out the training based on lessons learnt from the project from the new training modules developed by MOES and DPs following the project. However, in some target districts, it has been still difficult to sustain the project effects, since the new staff members do not understand well the project systems and some of them did not receive training as well as work transfer has not been effectively done in local level.

<Financial Aspect>

Although MOES has financial support by DPs as part to continue promoting the project effects, it has been still insufficient because of the large number of schools and amount of budget needed to implement school activities in order to achieve EQS.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, slight problems have been observed in terms of the institutional/organizational, technical, and financial aspects of the implementing agency. Therefore, the sustainability of the effectiveness through the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project achieved the Project Purpose at the project completion as the education indicators improved at the target districts. The Overall Goal was partially achieved, as the access improved in the target provinces, though the quality partially improved. As for the sustainability, slight problems have been observed in terms of the institutional/organizational, technical, and financial aspects; however, no problem has been observed in the policy aspect.

Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

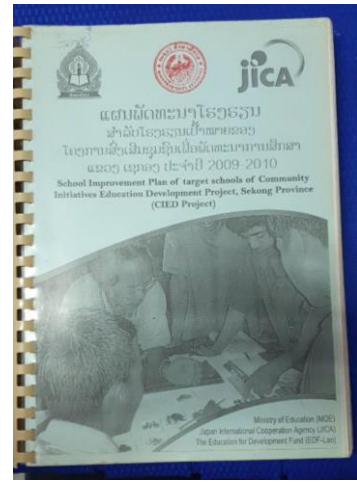
To ensure that the improvement in access and quality of primary education in district and provincial level is sustainably continuing, it is recommended that, the Department of General Education of the Ministry of Education and Sports should support PESS and DESB to fully utilize knowledge and skills in their education planning and monitoring for improving learning at school level as well as to manage and carry out project work and knowledge transfer at the time of personal turnover and retirement, especially in the area of supporting and monitoring works both in central and local level in order to continuously enhance the project purpose and impact nationwide towards achieving the project overall goal.

Lessons Learned for JICA:

Some contents in training materials such as EQS was considered difficult in terms of implementation at school level. The contents of training materials contained large volume of activities to follow when compare to the limited staffing capacity and insufficient budget condition at local level. Because of this, it has been difficult to sustain the project effects, since the new staff members do not understand well the project systems and some of them did not receive training as well as work transfer has not been effectively done along with the restructuring, staff turnover and retirement. For the future projects, JICA should develop the training materials in appropriate volume considering the actual capacity of school principals along with local education committees such as VEDCs and also take into account the geographical locations and characteristics of each target local areas which target schools are located (level of education indicators, school distance, economic situation, language use, communication style, culture, etc.) when creating project activities and training models/materials for easy understanding and continuous use as part of the continuation and promotion of the project effects.



Interview meeting with officials from Champasack PESS and DESBs (Champasack, Khong, Soukhouma, Mounlapamok) at Champasack PESS



School Improvement Plan of the Phase 1 project being used continuously as a basis to develop SDP in Maihuameuang Primary School in Lamam District, Sekong Province