Lao PDR Country Report

11th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators
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While progress has been made, on current trends, Lao PDR will not meet its MDG targets for education. While primary enrolments have risen to around 93 per cent, high repetition and dropout rates mean only 71 per cent of students complete the full 5 years of primary schooling.

Source: Millennium Development Goals Progress Report, Lao PDR 2008
Factors hindering EFA achievement

- About half of primary schools are ‘incomplete’, meaning they have only one or two classrooms and offer only two or three grades of primary schooling.
- A characteristic feature of rural regions in Lao PDR is food insecurity - malnutrition affects over 40% of children in these areas.
- Ethnic groups, who make up about 39 per cent of the population in Laos, often live in remote scattered communities and do not speak Lao as a first language.
**Table 1: Status of EFA Goals,**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1</th>
<th>Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) – Percent of new entrants to Primary Grade 1 who have attended some form of organized ECCE program – 27%.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>Universal Basic Education – Net Enrolment Rate for 6-10 year olds 92.7% and Survival Rate to Grade 5 – 71.1%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Life skills and Lifelong Learning – Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary – 81%.</td>
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<td>Goal 4</td>
<td>Literacy- Adult Literacy Rate (15 years old and above) - 72.7%.</td>
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<td>Goal 5</td>
<td>Gender Equality - Gender Parity Index for Primary Net Enrolment - 98%.</td>
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<td>Goal 6</td>
<td>Quality of Education - Percentage of Children reaching Basic proficiency level in Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in Grade 5 - Lao Language 95.5%; World Around Us 84.1%; and Mathematics 34.6%.</td>
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</tbody>
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Page 5 of the Country report shows progress since 2000/01 to 2009/10, disaggregated by gender.
Progress on disadvantaged and marginalized groups

Table 2: 6-20 year old who never been to school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lao Expenditure and Consumption Surveys, 3 & 4, National Statistics Centre
## Progress on disadvantaged and marginalized groups

### Table 3: Literacy rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995 Male</th>
<th>1995 Female</th>
<th>2005 Male</th>
<th>2005 Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural with road</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural without road</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1995 & 2005 Population Census, National Statistics Centre
Major Challenges in meeting EFA goals

- Large number of in-complete primary schools.
- Food insecurity in many districts.
- Improving access to pre-school level of education.
- The continued deficit in access to “the last 10%” for primary education.
- Improving the survival rate for primary education.
- Mobilizing sufficient funding to deliver literacy programs.
- The difference in the enrollment rate and survival rate points to demand side problems as well as the problem of the quality of supply of education.
- The incidence of these problems is unevenly spread across different parts of the country.
Response to challenges in providing services for marginalized and unreached groups

**Targeting:** Priority to the 56 most educationally disadvantaged districts.

**A policy-driven approach:** The ESDF identifies key policy priorities and strategies and is linked explicitly to achieving EFA goals and MDG target.

**A holistic approach:** MOE has a policy that all primary schools countrywide has to realize the SoQ approach using a minimum set of standards of education along six dimensions of educational quality.
Response to challenges in providing services for marginalized and unreached groups (cont.)

Transition from project to program-base: a large ($65 million) EFA program, with funding from AusAID, FTI, World Bank.

Reaching the unreached: Equivalency programs through mobile teachers and community-based school readiness programs.
Key policies for targeting marginalised and unreached groups

- The *ESDF* defines the government policies and strategies to meet the education goals, targets and outputs concerning this key Millennium Development Goal.
- Abolition of all school fees with these funds being offset by the provision of annual school block grants.
- Empowerment of the Village Education Development Committee (VEDC).
- Expansion of Schools of Quality approach.
- 20010/11 budget projects an increase from 14% to 17% of total public expenditure for education.

2010: Established three Focal Groups as part of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG): Basic Education, Post Basic Education and Finance, Planning and Performance Management
Follow up from EFA Mid-Decade Assessment

Assuring Expanded Access to Early Childhood Care and Development Opportunities:

EFA program will be supporting the introduction of a 1-year pre-primary program and community-based school readiness programs.
Follow up from EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (cont.)

Assuring Equitable Access to Quality Primary Education:

- Abolition of all school fees and the introduction of annual school Block Grants.
- Introduce Budget norms to increase significantly the non-wage allocation in provincial education budgets.
- A change from a historically based quota system for new teachers to a demand driven system, to be managed at provincial and district levels, with incentives for teachers to be deployed to areas of need.
Follow up from EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (cont.)

Expansion of Lifelong Learning Opportunities:

- The ESDF has proposed a much greater role for Village Education Development Committees as a transition to locally managed schools.
- Mobile teachers are to be deployed to villages without access to formal schooling using an equivalent non-formal curriculum.
Follow up from EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (cont.)

Assuring Gender Parity in Accessing Education Opportunities:

- MOE has identified the 56 most educationally disadvantaged districts of the country on the basis of gender disparity and therefore places priority on improving gender parity.
- At secondary level, the MOE with the support of ADB, is introducing a voucher system targeting ethnic girls to encourage them to undertake skills training.
- The EFA program is providing scholarships targeting ethnic women to become teachers in order to increase the number of role models for girls.
10th Regional Meeting of Nat. EFA Coordinators: Policy recommendations on reaching the unreached outlining some 7 strategic objectives

1. Inclusion of children who are not in school and retention of children at risk of dropping out of school:

Lao response:

- Schools of Quality approach
- Use of mobile a teachers and
- Community-based school-readiness programs.
2. Achieve gender and social equity and equality at all levels of education.

Lao response:
- MOE has established an Inclusive Education Centre (IEC) and adopted an IE policy with implementation being supported by the EFA program.
- All school fees will be abolished together with introduction of annual school block grants, supplemented by school meals in areas of food insecurity.
- A voucher system is targeting ethnic women to attend skills training and special scholarships are targeting ethnic women to become teachers.
3. Attain basic and functional literacy for the unreached and underserved populations.

Lao response:

- mobile teacher program will target 6-14 year old children in a flexible way in order to advocate literacy.
- The EFA program is supporting the training and deployment of ethnic people as teachers in order to have local teachers available for those children whose mother tongue is not Lao language.
10th Regional Meeting of Nat. EFA Coordinators:
Policy recommendations on reaching the unreached outlining some 7 strategic objectives

4. Achieve quality education for all, including the unreached and underserved populations with an improved quality of teaching & learning.

Lao response:
- continue teacher upgrading.
- provide a teaching and learning kit to formal & mobile teachers.
- Deployment of teachers will be according to need.
- Assessment of Learning Outcomes introduced to Grade 3 (currently only at grade 5) and early grade reading assessment (EGRA) will both be introduced as part of the EFA Program.
5. Institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of EFA.

**Lao response:**
- A Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) linked to the ESDF has been developed and a sector-wide monitoring and evaluation network established to apply the PAF to assess sector performance.
6. Ensure adequate investment in resources to provide accessible education of good quality for all, including targeted support for the unreached and underserved populations.

Lao response:

- ESDF financing plan identifies resources required for achieving EFA, by specific sub-sector.
- Education sector’s share of public expenditure will increase from 14% in 2009/10 to 17% in 2010/11.
- VEDCs will be empowered to manage school level funds to implement what they see as necessary for school improvement.
10th Regional Meeting of Nat. EFA Coordinators: Policy recommendations on reaching the unreached outlining some 7 strategic objectives

7. Promote and institutionalize partnerships, technical and financial support for EFA, particularly targeting the unreached and underserved populations.

**Lao response:**

- The ESWG has been established and acts to implement the Country Action Plan of the Vientiane Declaration (localized Paris Declaration).
- An ESWG Focal group for basic Education established.
- Lao PDR is also an active partner of SEAMEO, taking a lead role for multi-grade pedagogy and is a member of ASEAN.
The 2008 Progress Report Lao implied that Lao PDR would not achieve its education MDGs. However, the previous development trend (pre-2008) has been significantly improved by:

- Appropriate policy responses to the mid-decade assessment; and
- Extra funding for EFA/MDG from AusAID and FTI (in addition to WB, JICA, ADB and INGOs).

However, there is still a need for additional financial support, particularly for the remaining 87 Districts.