

Ministry of Education and Sports

System Transformation Grant

Global Partnership for Education

Program Document

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASLO	Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BEQUAL	Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR
CBSR	Community Based School Readiness
CCDG	Community Child Development Group
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPDMIS	CPD Management Information System
DECE	Department of Early Childhood Education
DEQA	Department of Education Quality Assurance
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
DGE	Department of General Education
DoP	Department of Planning
DTE	Department of Teacher Education
ECE	Early childhood education
EPS	External Pedagogical Support
ESSDP	Education and Sports Sector Development Plan
ESSWG	Education and Sports Sector Working Group
FQS	Fundamental Quality Standards
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
LEAP	Learning and Equity Acceleration Project
LESMIS	Lao Education and Sports Management Information System
LSIS	Lao Social Indicators Survey
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Service
PMU	Project Management Unit
POM	Project Operations Manual
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RIES	Research Institute for Educational Sciences
RRP	Reading Readiness Program
SCG	System Capacity Grant
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
STG	System Transformation Grant
TLM	Teacher and learning material
TTC	Teacher training college
VEDC	Village Education Development Committees

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1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is the implementing agency for a System Transformation Grant (STG) from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The Program Document describes the program, outcomes, components, and beneficiaries. The design is based on recent sector diagnostics and identifies activities to remove barriers to learning and girls' enrolment in targeted locations.

The design of the STG was led by a design committee chaired by the Department of Planning (DoP) with consultations with implementing and support departments, Provincial Education and Sports Services (PESS), District Education and Sports Bureaus (DESB), and development partners in the Education and Sports Sector Working Group (ESSWG). The program complements - and is coordinated with – major education projects.

Table 1 Grant summary

Donor	Global Partnerships for Education	
Grant	System Transformation Grant	
Value	US$10 million	K 221 billion
Start	1st July 2025	
Close	31st December 2028	
Years	3.5	
Implementing agency	Ministry of Education and Sports	
Coordinating agencies	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and UNICEF	
Grant agent	Save the Children	

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2. Alignment with planning framework

2.1 Partnership Compact

The program implements activities in the Partnership Compact 2024-2028 towards the priority reform objective: *Improving foundational learning outcomes for all and supporting students in lower secondary*. The compact reflects extensive dialogue between the government and its development partners and is based on a comprehensive analysis of enabling factors and educational data.

Specifically, the STG program contributes to the following long-term outcomes:

1. Increased equitable access to quality ECE to improve school readiness.
2. Improved foundational learning outcomes for all students at the primary level, including a focus on the most disadvantaged children.
3. Improved transition to, and retention in, lower secondary by addressing gender and learning barriers to education.

2.2 Education and Sports Sector Development Plan

The Partnership Compact focused on priorities from the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESSDP) 2021-2025. Specifically, the STG program contributes to the following ESSDP High-Level Outcomes:

1. Increased number of graduates from early childhood education (ECE) to upper secondary including Non-Formal Education, with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills but also other 21st Century skills, with a special focus on disadvantaged and gender equity.
2. Increased number of knowledgeable and competent teachers and principals meeting the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessment.

The Partnership Compact and STG design also drew on the findings of the 2023 Joint Sector Review Mission Report which recommended:

- Continuing and expanded teacher professional development, particularly for the implementation of the new primary curriculum.
- Greater advocacy for communities and parents on the value of education.
- Greater use of school clusters to improve accessibility to teachers and learning materials.
- Strengthened monitoring of teachers and principals by improved management and skills of DESBs.

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2.3 Sustainable Development Goal

The program contributes towards the country's progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4, specifically:

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

2.4 GPE priority areas

The STG program aligns with GPE priority areas, with a strong focus on ECE, learning, quality teaching and gender equity. The program components include activities to strengthen teachers' and principals' skills through continuing professional development (CPD), improve teaching and learning, and increase the availability of relevant high-quality teaching and learning materials (TLMs).

3. Alignment with partners

The program design complements and coordinates with existing projects, including:

Table 2 Selected development partner projects

Project	STG complementarity
Learning and Equity Acceleration Project (LEAP) World Bank and GPE 2021-2027	Targets additional districts. Utilizes TLMs, CPD materials and tools developed under LEAP. Implementing the in-service model in 40 districts.
Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) Government of Australia 2022-2026	Targets additional districts. Utilizes TLMs and CPD materials developed by BEQUAL, including the Spoken Lao Program. Reinforces the primary curriculum and CPD reforms.
System Capacity Grant (SCG) GPE, UNICEF as grant agent 2024-2028	Utilizes new CPD data system to be developed through the SCG. Expands Community Based School Readiness originally developed with UNICEF support. Uses multiple CPD modules developed with UNICEF support.
Strengthening Teacher Capacity to Improve Primary Mathematics Lessons (iTEAM2) JICA 2023-2026	Utilizes mathematics CPD materials.

Project	STG complementarity
Capacity Development for Education Programme: Capacity Building Support for Teacher Education in Lao PDR UNESCO 2022-2025	Coordination and shared resources. Utilises gender responsive pedagogy teacher training materials and CPD monitoring tools developed by CapED.
Addressing students' learning gaps to ensure quality learning for all children and prevent drop-out in Asia-Pacific (Lao PDR as pilot country) UNESCO	Coordination and shared resources.
Education Budget Support Program European Union 2023-2025	Coordination with budget support program.
Civil Society Organization ECE Program European Union 2025-2029	Coordination and shared TLMs and learning.
UNICEF Education Program UNICEF 2022-2026	Shared TLMs, CPD packs and resources. Close coordination on SCG.
Learn to Read USAID 2018-2025	TLMs and shared resources.
Learning and Engaging All in Primary School III USDA 2021-2025	TLMs and shared resources.
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition USDA 2024-2029	TLMs and shared resources.
Education for Employment Sector Development Program **Secondary Education Sector Development Project** (closed) Asian Development Bank	Expansion of stipends for secondary school students.
Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative GPE	New climate resilience CPD packs and learning spaces.

The project also utilizes approaches developed and piloted by non-government organizations. The 10-week summer pre-school program was originally developed with the support of Plan International as LEARN Plus funded by GPE. The Girls' Club materials are based on learning from the Plan International Student Clubs for adolescent young women and work on safe schools from UNICEF and Save the Children. The Inclusive Education Promotion Centre developed the inclusive education CPD module for component 2. The project design is flexible, enabling MoES to add newly approved CPD materials to the bank available to DESBs as they are developed with the support of other partners.

4. Diagnostics

The program design utilizes data from the Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS) and evidence from national surveys including the Lao Social Indicators Survey (LSIS) and the national Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO). The design also responds to the findings of comprehensive sector diagnostic reports.

Table 3 Key diagnostic reports

Year	Document
2023	ESSDP 2021-2025 Mid-Term Review Report
2023	Joint Sector Review Mission Report
2023	Education Sector Public Expenditure and Institutional Review
2023	Partnership Compact Enabling Factors Analysis
2022	Primary and Secondary Dropout Study: Findings from Six Districts in Lao PDR
2022	Laos Country-Level Gender Analysis

Evidence on the effectiveness of the selected activities is based on the global evidence base and national studies, including:

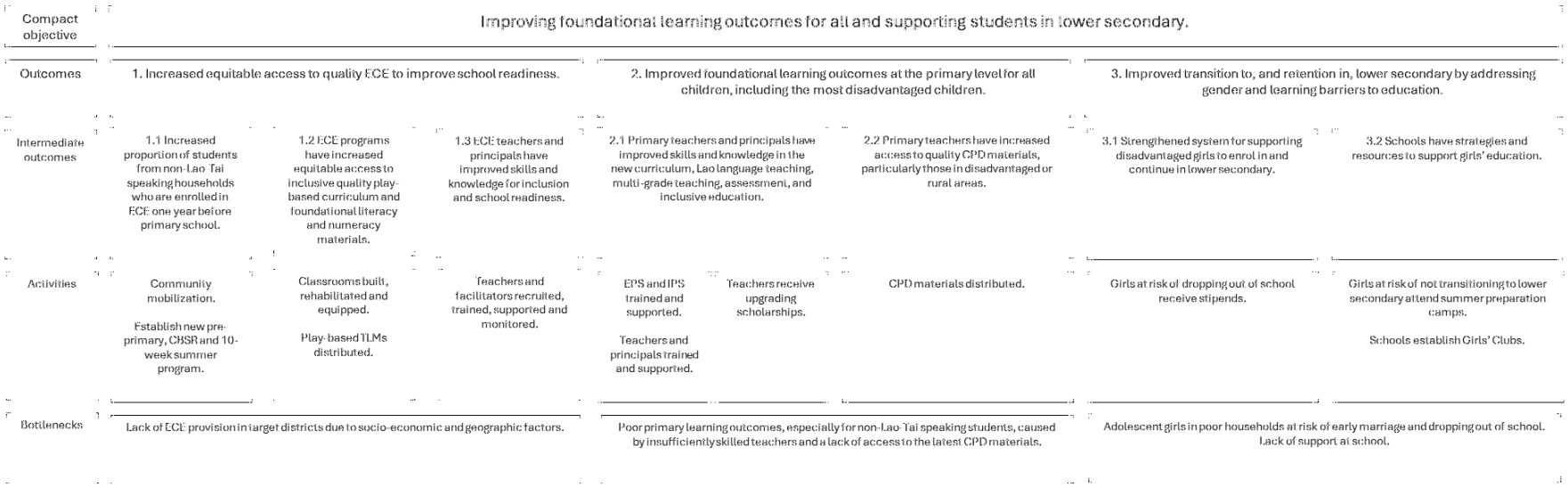
Table 4 Key country studies

Year	Report or study
2024	iTEAM2 Baseline Survey Report
2024	GPE KIX LEARN Plus: a proven intervention to accelerate access to pre-primary education in Lao PDR.
2024	ASLO Grade 3 Results
2023	ASLO Grade 5 Results
2023	School principals in highly effective schools – who are they and which good practices do they adopt?
2023	Evaluation of Australia's investment in teacher development in Lao PDR
2023	Child marriage, early union and adolescent pregnancy in Lao PDR
2023	Understanding pathways to adolescent pregnancy in Southeast Asia: findings from Lao PDR
2022	Primary and secondary dropout study: findings from six districts in Lao PDR
2022	Ready to School Endline Evaluation
2022	Lao PDR McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Project Baseline Evaluation

5. Theory of change

The theory of change has been adapted from the Partnership Compact.

Figure 1 Theory of change



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6. Outcomes

Partnership Compact objective

Improve foundational learning outcomes for all and supporting students in lower secondary.

Outcomes and intermediate outcomes

1. Increased equitable access to quality ECE to improve school readiness.

    1.1 Increased proportion of students from non-Lao-Tai speaking households who are enrolled in ECE one year before primary school.

    1.2 ECE programs have increased equitable access to inclusive quality play-based curriculum and foundational literacy and numeracy materials.

    1.3 ECE teachers and facilitators have improved skills and knowledge for inclusion and school readiness.

2. Improved foundational learning outcomes at the primary level for all children, including the most disadvantaged children.

    2.1 Primary teachers and principals have improved skills and knowledge in the new curriculum, Lao language teaching, multi-grade teaching, assessment, and inclusive education.

    2.2 Primary teachers have increased access to quality CPD materials, particularly those in disadvantaged or rural areas.

3. Improved transition to, and retention in, lower secondary by addressing gender and learning barriers to education.

    3.1 Strengthened system for supporting disadvantaged girls to enrol in and continue in lower secondary.

    3.2 Schools have strategies and resources to support girls' education.

7. Targeting

The selection criteria for target districts were:

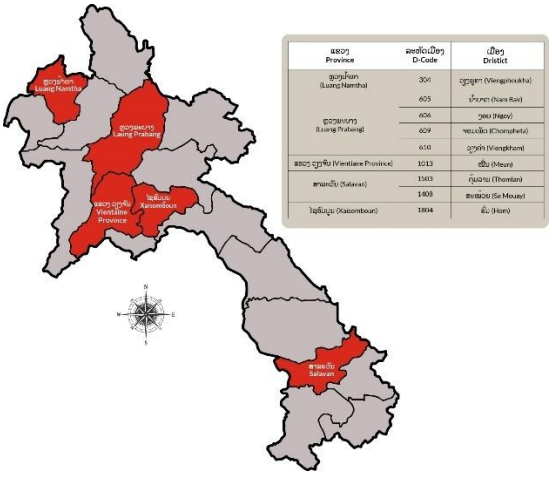
1. No duplication with similar projects.
2. High proportion of non-Lao-Tai speaking households.
3. Low proportion of grade 1 students with ECE experience.
4. And/or low female primary-secondary transition rates.

The MoES worked closely with the PESS, DESB and development partners, to identify disadvantaged locations which met these criteria.

Table 5 Targeted provinces, districts and schools

Province	District	ECE locations[1]	Primary schools	Lower secondary schools
Luang Namtha	Viengphoukha	5	42	9
Luang Prabang	Nam Bak	35	72	10
Luang Prabang	Ngoy	14	72	8
Luang Prabang	Chomphet	13	64	8
Luang Prabang	Viengkham	14	65	8
Vientiane Province	Meun	18	22	7
Salavan	Thomlan	12	39	8
Salavan	Sa Mouay	15	53	7
Xaisomboun	Hom	8	9	4
Total		**134**	**438**	**69**

Figure 2 Map of targeted districts



[1] Initial locations identified by DESBs during the design for new pre-primary classes, Community Based School Readiness programs or 10-week summer programs.

8. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries include an estimated **40,750** students (53% female) and **2223** teachers, principals and facilitators (42% female).

In component 1, the ultimate beneficiaries are five-year-old children, and the intermediate beneficiaries are their teachers and facilitators. The selection target is at least 70 percent of non-Lao-Tai speaking children. Over three years, approximately **4,260** students will be enrolled in pre-primary education programs supported by **268** principals, teachers and facilitators.

In component 2, the ultimate beneficiaries are grade 1-5 children, and the intermediate beneficiaries are their teachers and principals. Each year approximately, **33,220** students will benefit from **1955** better trained teachers and principals. Approximately **517** Internal Pedagogical Support and CPD system personnel will also receive training and support.

In component 3, the ultimate beneficiaries are at least **960** girls transitioning from primary school who will benefit from a summer preparation program and **800** girls enrolled in lower secondary school in targeted districts who will benefit from stipends. The number of girls who will benefit from Girls' Clubs at lower secondary schools is estimated at least **1510** (20% of the lower secondary female student enrolment).

Table 6 Component 1 beneficiaries

Component 1 ECE		**Students**			**Teachers and facilitators**			
Districts		**Female**	**Male**	**Total**	**1.1**	**1.2**	**1.3**	**Total**
1	Viengphoukha	74	77	150	0	6	4	10
2	Nam Bak	537	558	1095	6	54	10	70
3	Ngoy	228	237	465	6	6	16	28
4	Chomphet	206	214	420	4	8	14	26
5	Viengkham	206	214	420	0	16	12	28
6	Meun	272	283	555	2	4	30	36
7	Thomlan	206	214	420	8	12	4	24
8	Sa Mouay	221	230	450	0	10	20	30
9	Hom	140	145	285	6	0	10	16
	Total	**2087**	**2173**	**4260**	**32**	**116**	**120**	**268**
	%	49%	51%	-				

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Table 7 Component 2 beneficiaries

Component 2 Primary		**Students**			**Teachers and principals**		
Districts		**Female**	**Male**	**Total**	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
1	Viengphoukha	1,255	1,317	2,572	99	132	231
2	Nam Bak	3,682	3,868	7,550	127	194	321
3	Ngoy	1,669	1,738	3,407	114	139	253
4	Chomphet	1,673	1,755	3,428	124	122	246
5	Viengkham	1,537	1,666	3,203	54	184	238
6	Meun	2,708	2,804	5,512	60	99	159
7	Thomlan	1,615	1,808	3,423	47	135	182
8	Sa Mouay	1,214	1,282	2,496	81	157	238
9	Hom	781	848	1,629	21	66	87
	Total	**16,134**	**17,086**	**33,220**	**727**	**1,228**	**1,955**
	%	49%	51%		37%	63%	

Table 8 Component 3 beneficiaries

Component 3 Girls					
Districts		**Total female enrolment**	**C3.1 Stipends**	**C3.2 Summer camps**	**C3.2 Girls' Clubs**
1	Viengphoukha	730	77	92	146
2	Nam Bak	1,841	195	234	368
3	Ngoy	875	93	112	175
4	Chomphet	658	70	84	132
5	Viengkham	804	85	102	161
6	Meun	1,485	157	188	297
7	Thomlan	284	30	36	57
8	Sa Mouay	500	53	64	100
9	Hom	373	40	48	75
	Total	**7,177**	**800**	**960**	**1510**

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9. Components

Table 9 Outcomes, components and sub-components

Outcomes	Components and sub-components
1. Increased equitable access to quality ECE to improve school readiness.	1. Expand one-year school readiness programs for five-year-old children. 1.1 Establish one-year pre-primary classes. 1.2 Support Community Based School Readiness programs in locations without pre-primary classes. 1.3 Support 10-week summer pre-school programs in locations without pre-primary classes.
2. Improved foundational learning outcomes at the primary level for all children, including the most disadvantaged children.	2. Strengthen CPD for primary school principals and teachers. 2.1 Strengthen school-based CPD. 2.2 Scholarships for primary teachers. 2.3 Distribute CPD materials.
3. Improved transition to, and retention in, lower secondary by addressing gender and learning barriers to education.	3. Support for girls at risk of dropping out of secondary school. 3.1 Expand scholarships for girls who are at risk of dropping out. 3.2 Support lower secondary summer camps initiatives.
	4. Project management 4.1 Project implementation. 4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning. 4.3 Grant agent supervision and support.

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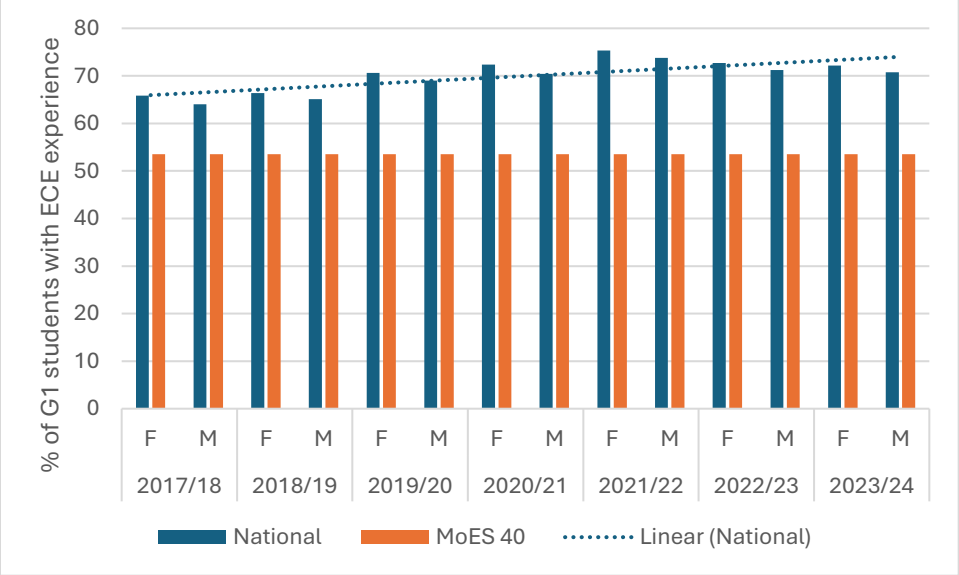
Component 1 Expand one-year school readiness programs for five-year-old children

Responsible	Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE)
Supporting	Department of Teacher Education (DTE) Research Institute for Educational Sciences (RIES) Department of Education Quality Assurance (DEQA)
Dates	3.5 years 1st July 2025-31st December 2028
Value	US$ 3,936,168

Rationale

Progress has been made to increase the percentage of grade 1 students with ECE experience. The national enrolment rate for five-year-olds has improved steadily to 83.8% in 2023/24 reflecting a concerted effort by the government and development partners. Despite these advances, progress has stalled since the COVID-19 and persistent inequities in access to ECE services remain a critical challenge with children from rural, poor, or non-Lao-Tai-speaking households less likely to be enrolled in ECE. The lack of access for these disadvantaged groups has a long-term impact on foundational learning outcomes and future educational success.

Figure 3 Percentage of grade 1 students with ECE experience



Source: LESMIS 2023/24

Children residing in remote and rural areas often have limited access to ECE services due to the scarcity of facilities and trained teachers. This lack of programs and infrastructure means that many young children miss out on the foundational skills that ECE provides, putting them at a disadvantage as they begin their formal education journey. Economic barriers also play a significant role in limiting access to ECE. Families in poorer regions struggle to afford the costs associated with ECE, such as

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school fees, transportation, and educational materials. When financial resources are constrained, families may prioritize other immediate needs over education, particularly for girls, who are often expected to contribute to household chores and caregiving responsibilities. Cultural and linguistic barriers further complicate the situation. Non-Lao-Tai-speaking households face additional challenges due to language barriers ad cultural differences, which can hinder enrolment and participation in ECE programs. These families may not fully understand the benefits of ECE or may have different educational priorities, leading to lower enrolment rates among their children.

Background

To address these challenges, the MoES has implemented several initiatives under the ESSDP ECE Strategy 1 and the National Decree on ECE. To concentrate limited resources, the MoES is prioritizing pre-primary five-year-old children to improve school readiness and foundational skills.

One key strategy is **Expanding Access to ECE** by increasing the number of ECE programs, especially in underserved areas. Additionally**, Enhancing the Quality of ECE** is a major focus. Providing training for ECE teachers is essential to improve the quality of play-based education provided to young children, ensuring that they receive a strong educational foundation, including reading readiness materials. Thirdly, **Community Engagement** is another critical component of these initiatives. Raising awareness among parents and communities about the importance of ECE and encouraging their involvement in their children's early learning can significantly impact enrolment and participation rates. By fostering a supportive environment, communities can help bridge the gap in ECE access. Finally, implementing complementary **Support Services** such as health and nutrition programs, disability screening and access to health services, and school meals addresses the holistic needs of children to ensure that children are healthy and ready to learn.

The impact of these efforts is aimed at creating a more equitable and inclusive ECE system in Laos. By addressing the various barriers to access and improving the quality of ECE, the MoES strives to ensure that all children, regardless of their background, can develop the skills they need for future success.

Description

ECE models

To respond to the geographical and cultural diversity, the MoES has approved different ECE service delivery models. This strategic move is designed to empower the Department of ECE (DECE), PESS, DESB, Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs), and local schools to select the most appropriate approach for their specific geography and demographic contexts. The DECE has the necessary materials, teacher training materials, and quality assurance tools for each model, and can draw on recent experience with the Community Child Development Groups (CCDG) piloted under the ECE Project and expanded to 245 CCDGs under LEAP. The DECE will include clear criteria for selection of the appropriate model in the Project Operations Manual.

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Table 10 Approved ECE pre-primary models

Model	Features	Situation
Pre-primary classes	Play-based pre-primary class with an ECE teacher at an existing primary school.	Existing primary school. High population density. May require classroom rehabilitation.
Community Based School Readiness	Play-based school readiness programs delivered in the community with trained facilitators.[2]	No primary school nearby. Low population density. May require rehabilitation of a community ECE space.
Summer Pre-Primary	Intense 10-week school readiness program delivered in the community by trained grade 1 teachers and teacher's assistants community volunteers.[3]	No pre-primary class or CBSR nearby. Low to medium population density. Will require a classroom or community space.

Menu for VEDC planning

In disadvantaged areas with an existing primary school but without a pre-primary class for five-year-old children, the MoES will support the DESB and VEDC to establish a new pre-primary class at the school. In areas where the children live too far away from the nearest primary school and there is no community-based ECE, the MoES will support the DESB and VEDC to select, establish and manage a community-based ECE program. The community-based options will be either i) a CBSR or ii) the 10-week summer school readiness program. The VEDC will be supported by the DESB to make the appropriate decision in consultation with their community and will be responsible for establishing and maintaining the new ECE service with the initial support of the program. There will be a strong emphasis on the enrolment of both girls and boys and ensuring successful transition to grade one. Where classrooms and learning spaces are rehabilitated, there will be focus on climate resilience to align with the complementary Climate Smart Education Systems initiative.

Approved materials

The DECE will utilize existing government-approved materials including the ECE Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS), play-based teaching and learning materials (TLMs), and reading readiness program materials and storybooks (developed by LEAP), and ECE CPD materials to support non-Lao-Tai-speaking children. The PESS and DESB technical staff will be trained by MoES to visit VEDCs to mobilize and engage communities, monitor stipends and grants, support the ECE programs, and train teachers, facilitators and caregivers.

[2] DECE and RIES train PESS, DESB and teacher training college master trainers who then train CBSR facilitators. The CBSR operates 4 hours per day, 4 days a week, 9 months per year at a community hall or space. CBSR caregivers receive a stipend (approximately US$35). The CBSR model was originally developed with the support of UNICEF.

[3] The 10-week summer pre-primary program was originally developed by Plan International as LEARN Plus with funding from GPE.

Table 11 Approved ECE materials

Material	Type	Used in model	Original donor
Reading Readiness Program (RRP)	Reading materials, TLM	Any	GPE III LEAP, GPE
Multi-age Teaching	Reading materials, TLM	Pre-primary classes	Early Childhood Development Project, World Bank
Read@home	Reading materials, TLM	Any	GPE III LEAP, GPE
CCDG	Reading materials, TLM	CBSR	GPE III LEAP, GPE
Summer Pre-Primary	TLMs and CPD	Summer Pre-Primary	Plan International
CBSR	TLMs and CPD	CBSR	UNICEF
FQS	Standards	Any	UNICEF
ECE TEACH lesson observation tool and COACH support tool	Tool	Any	World Bank
ECE Teaching Standards	Standards	Any	UNESCO

The DTE will be leading all training on the pre-primary school curriculum. RIES will be leading the TLMs and curriculum review and develop and train the master trainers for the CBSR and summer program 10 weeks. The DEQA will be leading the assessment of pre-primary school teachers and quality assurance.

Subcomponent activities

1.1 Establish one-year pre-primary classes.

Under this subcomponent DECE, in collaboration with RIES, DTE and the Department of Personnel will support the PESS and DESB in the targeted locations to identify target schools, engage VEDCs, establish new pre-primary classes for five-year-old children, rehabilitate and equip classrooms and WaSH facilities, supply TLMs and RRP materials, train existing teachers, orientate principals, monitor and inspect (using existing tools) new pre-primary classes at existing primary schools. The MoES will pay the salaries of the assigned pre-primary teachers.

Table 12 Subcomponent 1.1 pre-primary classes activities

#	Activity
1.1.1	Preparation for subnational induction meeting for one-year pre-primary classes
1.1.2	Component 1 Coordinator
1.1.3	Component 1 ICT equipment for DECE, PESS and DESB.
1.1.4	Subnational induction meeting on pre-primary classes.
1.1.5	Disseminate the national ECE Teaching Standards.

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#	Activity
1.1.6	Induction meeting for target VEDCs and schools on pre-primary classes.
1.1.7	Primary school rehabilitates and equips the new pre-primary classroom at the primary school.
1.1.8	Provide TLMs and resources for new pre-primary classes.
1.1.9	Provide the equipment for setting up classroom learning corners, RRP pack and reading materials
1.1.10	Train trainers on the new pre-primary curriculum and classroom tools.
1.1.11	Train existing ECE teachers and school principals (modules 1-4).
1.1.12	Train existing ECE teachers and school principals (modules 5-8).
1.1.13	Train trainers on the Reading Readiness Program.
1.1.14	Provincial training on Reading Readiness Program.
1.1.15	Regional training on pre-primary class monitoring tools (combined 1.1.17).
1.1.16	Coaching support to pre-primary classes (district team).
1.1.17	Coaching support to pre-primary classes (national team).
1.1.18	National annual pre-primary education learning workshop.
1.1.19	Subcomponent 1.1 capacity strengthening and technical assistance[4].

1.2 Support CBSR programs in locations without pre-primary classes

Under subcomponent 1.2 and 1.3, the MoES will support the PESS and DESB to engage with the VEDC of locations without primary schools to select either the CBSR or the 10-week summer program for their five-year-old children. The project would fund the recruitment, training and stipends of CBSR facilitators, provide supplies of TLMs and rehabilitate learning spaces.

Table 13 Subcomponent 1.2 CBSR activities

#	Activity
1.2.1	Preparation for subnational induction of CBSR program.
1.2.2	Subnational training on CBSR and selection of target villages for PESS and DESB.
1.2.3	Conduct community consultation and ECE service mapping exercise.
1.2.4	Rehabilitate and equip CBSR learning spaces in target villages.
1.2.5	Equip CBSR with TLMs, outdoor playground, and basic handwashing facilities with hygiene kits.
1.2.6	Annual resupply of TLMs to CBSRs.
1.2.7	Train trainers on CBSR curriculum and classroom tools for PESS and DESB staff.
1.2.8	Recruit and train new CBSR facilitators (modules 1-4).
1.2.9	Recruit and train new CBSR facilitators (modules 5-8).
1.2.10	Provide coaching support to CBSR program (DESB team).
1.2.11	Provide coaching support to CBSR program (national team).
1.2.12	Monthly stipends to CBSR facilitators.

[4]Capacity strengthening for system-level service delivery may include training and on-demand technical assistance for MoES, PESS and DESB subcomponent personnel on financial management, acquittals and procurement training, gender equity and disability inclusion, safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation, accountability, beneficiary feedback mechanisms, reporting, quality assurance and communication. Please refer to section 14.

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#	Activity
1.2.13	National annual CBSR learning workshop (combined with 1.1.18).
1.2.14	Subcomponent 1.2 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

1.3 Support 10-week summer programs in locations without pre-primary classes

The subcomponent would provide 10-week summer pre-school school readiness programs for five-year-olds in VEDCs without a pre-primary class or CBSR. The financing will include training and stipends for existing grade 1 teachers from the nearest schools, community volunteers (teacher assistants), TLMs, lunch provision for students, monitoring and reflection workshops. There would be a modest investment in a suitable learning space for the 10-week program. Each location would be managed by one teacher and one teacher's assistant.

Table 14 Subcomponent 1.3 summer pre-school program activities

#	Activity
1.3.1	Preparation for 10-week summer pre-school program.
1.3.2	Subnational induction for 10-week summer pre-school program.
1.3.3	Conduct community consultation and ECE service mapping exercise (DESB).
1.3.4	Rehabilitate and equip 10-week summer pre-school learning spaces in target villages.
1.3.5	Provide TLMs and resources for new 10-week summer pre-school program.
1.3.6	Train trainers on 10-week summer pre-school program.
1.3.7	Train new summer pre-school facilitators and cluster school principals.
1.3.8	Provide coaching support to 10-week summer pre-school program (DESB team).
1.3.9	Provide coaching support to 10-week summer pre-school program (national team).
1.3.10	Lunch provision for 10-week summer pre-school program.
1.3.11	Monthly stipends to 10-week summer pre-school teachers and teachers' assistants.
1.3.12	National annual 10-week summer pre-school program learning workshop (combined with 1.1.18).
1.3.13	Subcomponent 1.3 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

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Component 2 Strengthen CPD for primary school principals and teachers

Responsible	Department of Teacher Education (DTE)
Supporting	Research Institute for Educational Sciences (RIES) Department of Education Quality Assurance (DEQA)
Dates	3.5 years 1st July 2025-31st December 2028
Value	US$ 3,379,103

Rationale

The primary education sector faces significant challenges, including language barriers, teacher shortages, limited resources, and low teacher motivation. To address these issues, several initiatives and organizations have stepped in to support the development of CPD materials.

Multiple learning assessments show that learning outcomes are very low and well below other countries in the region. Preliminary analysis from the 2024 ASLO for grade 3 found that only 23 percent of students are proficient in reading. The JICA/iTEAM2 baseline study[5] also found that primary teachers' mathematics content knowledge was insufficient for teaching at the appropriate grade level. The data reinforces evidence that children from non-Lao-Tai speaking families, in rural areas, and from poorer socio-economic status perform worse than their peers with stark disparities in learning outcomes across the country.

Table 15 Average reading and comprehension score, Grade 3 ASLO 2024 preliminary results

All students	Male	Female	Lao-Tai	Non-Lao-Tai
23.2%	20.7%	25.4%	29.2%	18.3%

The World-Bank-and-GPE-financed LEAP assessed grade 1 teacher performance through classroom observation after introduction of the new curriculum(using the TEACH tool).[6] It found that teachers were good at respecting students and setting expectations and lesson objectives, but that more training was needed to help teachers address gender bias, particularly in challenging stereotypes, fostering equitable participation, and ensuring that teaching materials and practices promote gender equality, connecting classroom activities to other content knowledge or students' daily lives, and to enhance critical thinking questions.

A recent study on 'positive deviance' in school management in Lao PDR by UNICEF found that the use of various pedagogical approaches and the application of formative assessment, including checking classwork and providing remedial support to low performing students, results in higher learning outcomes.[7] In highly effective schools, principals promote a collaborative learning culture

[5] MoES, JICA, PADECO Co., Ltd, Project for Strengthening Teacher Capacity to Improve Primary Mathematics Lessons (iTEAM2) Baseline Survey Report, May 2024
[6] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1l7kkIQJsADqkoyTmie0dAuX77sBnktap/view
[7] DMS Research, Lao PDR. What can we learn about the practices and behaviors of highly effective schools in the Lao PDR? Pg. 10

by engaging teachers in decision making processes and supporting outreach to parents to become more involved in student learning.[8]

Globally, the most effective teacher training displays the 'four C's':[9]

- **Content**: focus on content knowledge
- **Colleagues**: practice with colleagues
- **Continued**: continued support via follow-up visits
- **Career:** career incentives (such as recognition of learning)

Background

The MoES and its partners have developed and implemented a comprehensive range of CPD packs supported by national master trainers, External Pedagogical Support (EPS) from the PESS and DESB and expertise from the teacher training colleges (TTCs). There are Internal Pedagogical Support (IPS) staff – usually a principal or outstanding classroom teacher - who are responsible for peer-based CPD activities with teachers in their school or cluster. Many CPD materials are also available online on the Khang Panya Lao digital learning platform, along with teacher guides, textbooks and demonstration videos, although the packs exist in different formats. Under the SCG, the MoES will implement a CPD Management Information System (CDPMIS) and allocate credit points to the CPD materials for recognition of prior learning. During the STG period, the CPD pack format will become more standardized, and additional CPD packs will be approved and made available to IPS and schools. This is likely to include climate resilience CPD materials developed by MoES through the Climate Smart Education Systems initiative.

Table 16 CPD packs

CPD pack name	Description	Approved (year)	Length of training (days)	Original donor
Teacher Support Packs	Modules to support implementation of the curriculum.[10] Eleven packs will be available for printing and distribution.	Approved (more in development)	1 day each as needed	Australia BEQUAL
Spoken Lao Program[11]	Oral language development program to boost Lao literacy.	Approved 2024	3 days	Australia BEQUAL
Formative Assessment	Four modules: 1) introduction to formative assessment, 2) relationship	Pending to be approved	5 days	UNICEF

[8] Ibid. See also DMS Policy Brief on Principals Pg. 3.
[9] Afkar et al. 2023. Fixing the Foundation: teachers and basic education in East Asia and Pacific. World Bank.
[10] Including: 1) classroom management; 2) supporting students whose home language is not Lao; 3) supporting multigrade; 4) flashcards; 5) assessment; 6) lesson planning; 7) pair and group work; 8) supporting English teaching; 9) multigrade teaching; 10) teacher guide and textbook use. More support packs are in development.
[11] The Government of Australia supported the MoES to pilot and scale up a Spoken Lao Program[11] in primary grade 1 which was expanded to all districts in 2024/25 based on the 2021 evaluation of the pilot found that more students in treatment schools improved their scores compared to students in control schools.

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CPD pack name	Description	Approved (year)	Length of training (days)	Original donor
	between curriculum and assessment; 3) methodology of formative assessment and 4) use of the assessment results.			
Remedial Classes	Four modules. Piloted in 13 provinces.	Approved 2024	3 days	UNICEF
Teacher Professional Title Guideline	Provides guidance on how to develop a portfolio.	Approved	1 day	DTE
Mathematics	Various CPD modules to support the implementation of the curriculum.[12]	Approved (more in development)	Various	JICA iTEAM2
Modules for teaching G1-3 Lao and mathematics	Supplementary materials.	Approved	5 days	GPE/ World Bank
Inclusive education	Gender equity and disability inclusion.	Approved	5 days	Inclusive Education Promotion Centre
Primary Teaching Standards training	Supports an IPS to use the standards to identify teacher learning needs and deliver targeted CPD activities.	Approved 2023	½ day	Australia BEQUAL
Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP)	Training manual and training agenda that equips teacher educators to educate student teachers in GRP. Adapted from GRPTT by Plan International.	Trial	6 days	UNESCO
FQS Manual	For principals.	Approved	8 days	UNICEF
Classroom Observation Tool (TEACH)	Use of the approved classroom observation tool for IPS and principals.	Approved	Included in teacher training	World Bank
School-based Management and School Development Plan	Guide the principal on how to manage schools including the school block grant.	Approved	5 days	GPE/ World Bank
Internal Pedagogical Support/ External Pedagogical Support	Three modules: 1) access to TLMs in primary schools; 2) supporting the CPD in cluster schools and schools and 3) supporting the coordination and	Approved 2024	5 days per module	UNICEF

[12] Including: 1) new ways of teaching and learning mathematics, 2) how to promote students' learning through problem-solving, 3) Grades 1-3 content for four domains (Numbers, Geometry, Measurement, Mathematical relations); and 4) lesson structure for effective teaching and learning. Contents for Grades 4-5 and other topics are in development.

CPD pack name	Description	Approved (year)	Length of training (days)	Original donor
	collaboration between schools on CPD.			
IPS Guides (five)	Guide the IPS on how to implement IPS plans	Approved 2025	5 workshops x 5 days 25 days total	Australia BEQUAL

Description

The project will not develop any new CPD materials or models; the aim of the component is to give EPS and IPS personnel, schools and teachers in the targeted districts better and more frequent access to the existing approved and harmonized CPD materials through regular capacity building for EPS and IPS staff to ensure they are competent and knowledgeable about the approved CPD materials, understand the latest ASLO and FQS data, and have sufficient resources to visit schools, and observe[13], train and coach teachers. The rationale for this activity is to sustainably build the capacity, reach and skills of the DESB and its IPS to make the CPD more responsive to the needs of the students and teachers. During the program, the CPD data system will be operationalized through the SCG to allow teachers' individual learning plans to be tracked.

In addition, to address the importance of career development for teachers, the DTE will provide scholarships for primary teachers in the targeted districts to upgrade their qualifications through summer school.

Subcomponent activities

2.1 Strengthen school-based CPD

Under subcomponent 2.1, the DTE will support PESS, DESB and TTCs to strengthen CPD support to the IPS to improve the frequency and quality of school and cluster-based in-service for principals and teachers. This includes annual training needs analyses and planning at the DESB level, TTCs and EPS training IPS in the CPD modules identified in the annual assessment, training for IPS on effective pedagogical support and classroom observation tools, digital technology for DESB and IPS personnel, monitoring visits, and annual reflection workshops.[14] The TTCs will support IPS teams and DESB staff with CPD activities, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their role with teachers. The subcomponent also funds the component coordinator, service delivery capacity strengthening, and technical assistance.

Table 17 Subcomponent 2.1 CPD activities

#	Activity
2.1.1	Introduce the CPD guidelines[15], teacher professional title guidelines and relevant policies.

[13] Using the TEACH lesson observation tool from LEAP.
[14] The LEAP III project will be implementing the same IPS model in 40 districts from 2025. The TTCs will be responsible for carrying out the work with the PESS and DESB as well as training the IPS-school principals. Several master trainers and provincial trainers will be trained by DTE central trainers.
[15] CPD Guidelines being piloted by DTE with BEQUAL support in the 2025-26 school year.

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#	Activity
2.1.2	Annual training needs assessment.[16]
2.1.3	Provincial and district CPD planning.
2.1.4	Review existing course and curriculum and training module development.
2.1.5	Training-of-trainers for EPS based on results of 2.1.2.
2.1.6	Training-of-trainers on Pedagogical Support Strategies.
2.1.7	In-service teacher training rollout as a result of 2.1.2.
2.1.8	Training for IPS personnel.
2.1.9	Implementation of CPD Plan by EPS and IPS.
2.1.10	Annual IPS supply.
2.1.11	Motorcycles for EPS.
2.1.12	Annual visits to CPD selected districts (MoES and PESS).
2.1.13	National annual learning workshop.[17]
2.1.14	Component 2 ICT equipment for DTE, PESS and DESBs.[18]
2.1.15	Component 2 Coordinator.
2.1.16	Subcomponent 2.1 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

2.2 Scholarships for primary teachers

Subcomponent 2.2 will provide scholarships for 600 primary teachers to upgrade their qualifications during summer schools at the teacher training colleges (TTC).[19] The activities include developing guidelines, disbursing scholarships, monitoring scholars and promoting the scholarships to teachers.[20] Priority will be given to female teachers and principals (75% of scholarships) as they are underrepresented in the workforce.

Table 18 Subcomponent 2.2 scholarship activities

#	Activity
2.2.1	Develop scholarship guidelines for primary school teachers.
2.2.2	Review existing course and curriculum.
2.2.3	Regional workshop to introduce scholarship guidelines for primary school teachers.
2.2.4	Establish scholarship selection committees and recruitment process.
2.2.5	Scholarship provision for summer upgrading course.
2.2.6	Registration fee for scholars.
2.2.7	Annual monitoring and support visits.

[16] Based on digital data from lesson observations conducted using the Classroom Observation Tool.
[17] Similarly, the LEAP III project is planning events to review progress and lessons learning from the IPS model.
[18] Including tablets for EPS and IPS for communication, digital tools (for example, the COT, training needs assessment and CPD monitoring and reporting tool), CPD module archive and teacher training videos.
[19] The courses will be conducted over three summers. Upon completion, approximately 30% of teachers will receive a higher diploma and 70% will receive a bachelor's degree, which will qualify them for higher salaries and promotions. There are 10-15 courses available in all TTCs, the courses taught subject-specific knowledge e.g., math, literacy, science, and English as a second Language. Pedagogical skills include student-centered learning, inclusive education, and classroom management including multigrade teaching strategies, assessment practices and ICT.
[20] The proposed World Bank Improving Frontline Workers Performance in Education and Health project may also provide scholarships to primary school teachers during their certification/bachelor at a TTC. If approved, the STG and new project would share one scholarship manual and one monitoring system.

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#	Activity
2.2.8	Annual learning workshop for scholarship recipients (combined with 2.1.13).
2.2.9	Subcomponent 2.2 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

2.3 Distribute CPD materials

The subcomponent would reprint and distribute existing harmonized and approved CPD packs to IPS personnel for use with teachers and principals. The IPS will also receive a tablet under subcomponent 1.1 with digital CPD materials, communication (e.g. WhatsApp coaching groups) and data collection tools, and demonstration videos.

Table 19 Subcomponent 2.3 activity

#	Activity
2.3.1	Print and distribute CPD packs (IPS and DESB).
2.3.2	Training of trainers on approved CPD packs.
2.3.3	Rollout training on approved CPD packs to IPS.
2.3.4	Coaching and support for Internal Pedagogical Supervisors (combined with 2.1).
2.3.5	Annual monitoring and support visits.
2.3.6	Subcomponent 2.3 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

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Component 3 Support for girls at risk of dropping out of secondary school.

Responsible	Department of General Education (DGE)
Dates	3 years 1st January 2026-31st December 2028
Value	US$ 1,307,757

Rationale

Only 84 percent of students who complete grade 5 continue to lower secondary school. Lower secondary dropout rates are high in grades 6,7, and 8 at 11 percent with a slight improvement in Grade 9 at 9.1 percent.[21] According to a recent study, girls are slightly more likely to drop out due to financial pressures (32 percent of girls vs. 28 percent of boys) and to get married (26 percent of girls vs. 20 percent of boys).[22] Other reasons that lead girls to drop out are teenage pregnancy, helping with household chores, long distances to secondary school, including hazardous travel, and the lack of safe and affordable boarding facilities.[23] Despite the achievement of gender parity in primary and lower secondary, there are still persistent gender barriers facing adolescent girls that require attention in certain locations. In the 2023 ASLO, sixty percent of students report problems related to the school climate, including bullying among students and violent interaction between students and teachers, and student achievement is significantly lower in schools where these problems are more prevalent.

Background

In 2013, the MoES introduced and approved selection criteria and methods for student selection under the Directive degree No. 5775/2013, dated December 31, 2013. This directive aimed to support the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Secondary Education Sector Development Project, which focuses on identifying and nurturing students with academic potential, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, at the secondary education level.

As part of this initiative, the ADB-financed project provided targeted support to 100 high schools. The project identified 1,740 lower secondary students from these schools and an additional 1,200 upper secondary students from 30 designated areas. The objective was to assist students facing socioeconomic challenges by addressing barriers to education through specific policies and interventions designed to enhance learning opportunities.

In 2017, the government issued General Education Directive No. 385/GoL, dated December 15, 2017. The MoES expanded the scope of support for students experiencing poverty and disadvantaged girls. For the academic year 2017-2018, the government allocated funding to support these initiatives as part of its broader educational policy agenda. In October 2019, the Ministry of Finance and ADB

[21] European Union, REIS, and UNICEF. 2022. Primary and Secondary Dropout Study: Findings from Six Districts in Lao PDR.
[22] NCAWMC and Plan International. 2023. Child marriage, early union and adolescent pregnancy in Lao People's Democratic Republic: Investigating drivers and recommendations for action.
[23] UNICEF and UNFPA. 2023. Understanding pathways to adolescent pregnancy in Southeast Asia: Findings from Lao PDR.

approved Directive No. 3822/LAO (loan) to implement an extended Education for Employment Sector Development Program. This project aims to improve educational quality and outcomes over a five-year period, spanning November 14, 2019, to November 14, 2024.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has supported MoES to improve enrolment of disadvantaged girls in lower secondary through the provision of stipends for lower secondary girls[24], remedial learning classes and secure dormitories which resulted in increased enrolment in target districts[25]. Improved quality was evidenced by improved learning outcomes measured in test scores[26]. It was found that weak learning outcomes contribute to student dropout, but remedial learning support can address low level achievement. The ESSDP mid-term review also noted a link between learning outcomes and poor participation in lower secondary, for both boy and girls.

Description

There is strong global and local evidence that providing scholarships to girls from poor families to attend lower secondary schools is an effective approach to improving transition, attendance, and completion outcomes. The STG will expand the existing government scholarship program and utilize the same administrative machinery by providing stipends to 800 additional girls per year. The process for selecting, disbursing and monitoring stipends will be:

1. Eligibility criteria (e.g. households identified as vulnerable under the national poverty index)
2. Transparent selection process involving village selection committees, principals, teachers and community members.
3. Verification through household visits.
4. Disbursement twice per year directly to schools using the school block grant machinery.
5. Distribution to scholars from schools to cover costs such as school supplies, transportation, uniforms, and other essential expenses.
6. Tracking attendance and performance.
7. Field monitoring.
8. Feedback from participants.
9. Annual reviews.

To better support female grade 5 graduates to enrol in lower secondary school, the program will also finance summer preparation camps for vulnerable girls to enhance their literacy, numeracy and social emotional learning skills. The girls will be selected based on their academic performance and a risk-of-drop-out assessment by their VEDC and teachers. The four-week camps will be held at the cluster secondary school, taught by secondary teachers and monitored by secondary school directors and the DESB.[27] The costs will include TLMs, lunch, transport, first aid kits, and stipends to the teachers.

[24] 3,674 lower secondary girls under the government program and 5,500 girls under the ADB program.
[25] https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/40368/40368-022-pcr-en.pdf
[26] Independent Consultant Report. 2019. Lao PDR, Secondary Education Sector Development Program: Project Impact Evaluation. Vientiane
[27] The students will stay at the boarding house in the secondary in the cluster, which is usually close to their homes. This will also introduce children to the new location and facilities of the school where they will enroll in

Finally, the program will print and distribute existing peer Girls' Club materials to lower secondary schools to improve the learning and social emotional environment for girls once they enroll. The Girls' Clubs will operate twice monthly during the eight-month school year and be facilitated by female teachers and peers.

Subcomponent activities

Subcomponent 3.1 Expand scholarships for girls who are risk of dropping out.

The subcomponent will expand the successful stipend program introduced by the government and ADB. Subcomponent 3.1 also includes the component coordination for the component.

Table 20 Subcomponent 3.1 girls' scholarships activity

#	Activity
3.1.1	Review existing scholarship programs.
3.1.2	Train PESS and DESB representatives on stipend guidelines.
3.1.3	Stipend distribution to at-risk girls.
3.1.4	Annual learning workshop on stipends at school level (combined with 3.2.10).
3.1.5	Component 3 ICT equipment for DECE, PESS and DESBs.
3.1.6	Component 3 Coordinator.
3.1.7	Subcomponent 3.1 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

Subcomponent 3.2 Support lower secondary summer camps initiatives.

The subcomponent 3.2 activities will focus on girls at risk of not transiting to lower secondary through provision of summer preparation camps, including cash vouchers for the girls to attend (to reduce the costs to their family), and distribution of peer Girls' Clubs materials for social emotional and life skills development during the school year.

Table 21 Subcomponent 3.2 summer camps activity

#	Activity
3.2.1	Develop and train PESS and DESB on summer preparation course.
3.2.2	Train school principals and teachers on summer preparation program.
3.2.3	Provide camp equipment and materials.
3.2.4	Implementation Girl's Club (1 club per school).
3.2.5	Distribution of cash vouchers through bank service.
3.2.6	Camp Facilitator and Supervisors stipends.
3.2.7	Monitoring visits (DESB).
3.2.8	Monitoring visits (MoES and PESS).
3.2.9	Annual learning workshop on summer camp program.
3.2.10	Subcomponent 3.2 capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

September and they may stay in the boarding house, so they will familiarize with new life in boarding school activity.

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Component 4 Project management

Dates	3.5 years 1st July 2025-31st December 2028
Estimated value	US$ 1,376,972 (*incl. of Grant Agent Supervision cost*)

Description

Sub-component 1 Project implementation

- Project staff:
  - Project manager
  - Finance and procurement manager
  - Monitoring and evaluation manager
  - Safeguarding officer
  - Driver and administration officer
- Equipment
- Vehicles
- Operations
- Audit

Sub-component 4.2 Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

- Endline study
- Knowledge products and events
- Governance and accountability (Project Steering Committee and Closing Workshop)

Sub-component 4.3 Grant agent supervision and support

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10. Gender equality

As described in the Partnership Compact, there are no significant gender differences in enrolment[28] or learning outcomes[29] in ECE or primary grades at the national aggregate level. At lower secondary grades, girls and boys have roughly equal drop-out rates (12.3% v 12.5%). However, there are disparities between districts which are targeted by the STG (for example, there are more male than female teachers in the target provinces).

In line with the ESSDP, the STG project systematically addresses gender equality in each component:

Table 22 Gender equality actions

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses gender equality
1. ECE	• Community decision making to include equal representation of women. • Active identification or recruitment and training of female ECE teachers and facilitators (target 75% of new staff to be women). • Gender-sensitive TLMs, play materials, and WaSH facilities. • Reduction on the demands on women freeing them for economic activities to improve household income.
2. Primary CPD	• Gender-sensitive CPD for EPS, IPS and teachers. • Use of existing gender-sensitive CPD packs, including classroom management and new GRP package (training manual and training agenda).[30] • Prioritizing upgrading scholarships to female teachers and principals (target of 75% female). • Prioritizing female teachers and principals for in-service and IPS opportunities.
3. Lower secondary girls	The component is fully focused on the needs of girls enrolling and studying in lower secondary schools, including: • Identifying girls at risk of dropping out during transition and providing summer school and scholarships. • Engaging with families and communities to support vulnerable girls. • Recruiting and training female summer camp facilitators and supervisors. • Training female teachers to facilitate Girls' Clubs.

[28] For example, the 2023/24 LESMIS found that girls were more likely (72.1%) than boys (70.7%) to have ECE experience, are less likely to drop out of M1 (12.2% v 13.6%), and have higher primary completion rates (80.1% v 76.7%). There are also more female primary teachers (13,685) than male teachers (12,980) at the national level.

[29] For example: i) the 2024 iTEAM2 mathematics baseline found no statistical difference in mathematics learning outcomes between male and female students at grade 3 or 5; ii) the 2024 LSIS found girls outperformed boys in reading and numeracy; and iii) the 2023 grade 5 ASLO found that girls outperformed boys by 30 points in Lao language and eight points in mathematics.

[30] Recently field-tested at teacher training colleges by DTE and UNESCO and based on materials from Plan International.

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Component	Brief description of how the component addresses gender equality
	• Disbursing and monitoring scholarships to the schools of vulnerable girls. • Providing Girls' Club materials and CPD pack to lower secondary schools to improve retention. • Collecting and analyzing data on girls' enrolment and retention. • Focus groups with girls to improve activity implementation.
4. Project management	• Hiring a full-time safeguarding officer. • Sex-disaggregated data and reporting. • Staff and consultants will receive gender training and have mandatory gender equality responsibilities in their terms of reference. • Knowledge products will represent male and female beneficiaries equally.
Girls' Education Accelerator	If additional financing becomes available from the Girls' Education Accelerator, additional dormitory spaces and WASH facilities will be constructed for lower secondary girls in schools without gender parity, and the stipends program will be expanded.

11. Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH)

Students report high levels of bullying and corporal punishment. The project will have strong prevention and response systems for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and the MoES Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidelines will be used in mandatory training for PESS and DESBs. Relevant Save the Children policies will also apply to the grant, including:

- Safer Partnerships Core Standards
- Prevention of SEAH Policy and Guidelines
- Code of Conduct
- Supplier Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Child Safeguarding Guidelines
- Safeguarding Procedure
- Safeguarding Reporting Process
- Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Exploitation Policy
- Whistleblower Policy, Guidelines and Procedures
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Storytelling and Image Policy and Guidelines
- Privacy Statement, Information and Technology Policy and Guidelines and Social Media Standards

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The specific actions for each component are:

Table 23 SEAH actions

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses SEAH risks
1. ECE	• Mandatory SEAH module in teacher and facilitator training and for all PESS and DESB frontline staff. • Safe schools TLMs (posters, etc.).
2. Primary CPD	• Mandatory SEAH and classroom management CPD module for EPS and IPS developed, including safeguarding guidance to reduce risks. • Safe schools TLMs (posters, etc.) and clear messaging on corporal punishment and gender-based bullying. • SEAH-sensitive lesson observation tool.
3. Lower secondary girls	The component is fully focused on the needs of girls enrolling and studying in lower secondary schools, including: • Annual school safety climate surveys with girls. • Inclusion of support services, anti-bullying approaches, gender-based violence prevention strategies, and SEAH information in Girls' Clubs pack and summer school lessons. • Training for teachers on SEAH, non-violent classroom management, and bullying prevention. • Identification, supporting and monitoring girls at risk of dropping out. • Family engagement during selection and enrolment of girls.
4. Project management	• Safeguarding and complaints reporting system. • Staff and consultants will receive SEAH training and sign the code of conduct. • Technical assistance to MoES and implementing departments from Save the Children's safe schools and safeguarding local team.

13. Disability inclusion

Children living with disabilities are a particularly vulnerable group. The STG project will address their needs through the following activities:

Table 24 Disability inclusion actions

Component	Brief description of how the component addresses disability inclusion
1. ECE	• Inclusive education approaches included in initial training of ECE teachers and facilitators. • Provision of accessible toilets. • Screening for early intervention. • Community and parental engagement to encourage enrolment of children with disabilities in ECE.
2. Primary CPD	• Inclusive education sensitization for PESS and DESB EPS and IPS during orientation. • Printing and distribution of existing inclusive education CPD pack and tools.

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Component	Brief description of how the component addresses disability inclusion
	• Linking schools with additional services for children with disabilities.
3. Lower secondary girls	• Identification of girls with inclusive education needs for additional support during summer camps and after enrolment. • Inclusion of disability themed activities in the Girls' Clubs pack. • Prioritizing scholarships for vulnerable girls living with disabilities or with additional needs.
4. Project management	• Collection and reporting of disability-disaggregated data. • Staff and consultants will receive disability sensitization training and have mandatory inclusive education responsibilities in their terms of reference. • Knowledge products will include a wide range of abilities.

14. Capacity strengthening

The project has a strong focus on strengthening decentralized decision-making and service delivery at the departmental, provincial, district and school level. Each subcomponent includes a proportional allocation for on-demand local technical assistance and system capacity strengthening activities for MoES, PESS and DESB in areas such as gender equity, disability, SEAH and safeguarding, financial management and procurement, ICT, communications and media, accountability and beneficiary feedback mechanisms, and quality assurance. Existing capacity strengthening resources (such as BEQUAL's grant training materials) will be utilized.

14.1 MoES

National project implementation will be supported by a small team of staff hired by MoES and embedded in the implementing departments to ensure donor and grant agent policies are followed, activities are delivered in a timely and efficient manner, and there are no financial or procurement bottlenecks.

Table 25 Project Management Unit

Role	Location
Project manager	Department of Planning
Finance and procurement manager	Department of Planning
Monitoring and evaluation manager	Department of Planning
Driver and administration officer	Department of Planning
Component 1 coordinator	Department of ECE
Component 2 coordinator	Department of Teacher Education
Component 3 coordinator	Department of General Education

The MoES can also draw on technical assistance from relevant projects and development partners as well as the specific capacity strengthening budget line in each subcomponent to build the departments' ability to implement the project effectively.

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14.2 PESS

The project will finance the PESS to oversee their respective activities in each component. The PESS will each be represented on the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and be accountable for supporting their respective DESB to deliver the front-line activities. The STG budget includes essential ICT equipment and capacity strengthening to enable the PESS to effectively support the target DESBs, plan and acquit project funds, collect and report data, and communicate with the national project team. Each component includes annual planning, training and learning events for the PESS to facilitate in partnership with the implementing departments.

14.3 DESB

The DESB lead the day-to-day activities for each subcomponent, coordinating personnel (e.g. from the TTCs), and communicating with their schools, VEDCs and IPS personnel at the school and cluster level. The subcomponent budgets include support for the DESB communications, monitoring visits, and annual planning, training and reflection activities. The IPS – critical to sustainably training and coaching principals and teachers – will receive significant capacity development to enhance their skills. Each subcomponent includes a capacity strengthening activity line to improve the DESB's ability to plan, deliver, acquit, report and communicate on project activities and implement the mandatory SEAH, gender, and disability inclusion policies.

14.4 Sustainability

The STG activities and approaches have been selected for sustainability, replicability, and government ownership. The sustainability strategies include:

Table 26 Sustainability strategies

Component	Sustainability strategies	Rating
1. ECE	• Use of approved and tested approaches where the materials and approach already exist and have been used in multiple locations. • Integrating existing approved materials from other related projects (e.g., the RRP TLMs). • Strong community ownership and decision-making process to ensure the ECE model will be supported locally and is appropriate for the village. • Government salary for ECE pre-school teachers. • Use of government grade 1 teachers for summer program. • Training on ECE models and standards for PESS, DESB and VEDC staff. • National and subnational capacity strengthening on systems for improved ECE service delivery.	Medium
2. Primary CPD	• Focused on the new primary curriculum, teacher guides and textbooks.	High

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Component	Sustainability strategies	Rating
	• Distributing and promoting existing digital learning platform[31], CPD packs and teacher development videos[32]. • Reinforcing shared CPD model with BEQUAL, LEAP and other partners. • Supports EPS and IPS model and flexible to allow DESB to make local decisions. • Aligned with the CPDMIS being supported by UNICEF under the SCG. • Uses same lesson observation tool (COT TEACH). • Training on CPD packs and CPDMIS for PESS, DESB, TTC and IPS personnel. • National and subnational capacity strengthening on systems for improved CPD service delivery.	
3. Lower secondary girls	• Builds on and expands the existing ADB and MoES scholarship scheme. • Utilizes existing Girls' Club materials developed by Plan International. • Use of government teachers for summer program. • Training on girls' education and scholarships for PESS, DESB, VEDCs and targeted schools. • National and subnational capacity strengthening on systems for improved girls' education service delivery.	Medium
4. Project management	• Lean management structure embedded in line departments. • Decentralized activities with financing flowing directly to PESS and DESB. • Locally engaged consultants and staff who speak Lao-Tai and understand the context. • Each component includes capacity strengthening for PESS and DESB. • Inclusion of government contributions in the annual financial and operational plan. • Post-project sustainability plan and budget developed in first year of project implementation.	High

The government will absorb the salary and stipend costs of the additional ECE pre-primary classes. However, the national budget is highly constrained and the MoES has encountered difficulty recruiting and paying sufficient teachers so there is a sustainability risk for component 1 beyond the lifespan of the project. The sustainability of the CBSR and 10-week summer programs is less certain, and it is plausible these may require continued aid support after project closure.

[31] www.laos.learningpassport.unicef.org
[32] https://www.youtube.com/@teacherdevelopmentvideos1354

The distribution of CPD tablets for EPS and IPS under component 2 has sustainability risks due to the costs of replacing lost, broken or outdated technology, mobile device management software, connectivity, and updating software and content. However, this is manageable within the lifespan of the project, a priority for government, piloted under BEQUAL, and desirable in terms of data collection and equity. Additionally, the recurrent costs of the new ECE services and girls' scholarships are dependent on limited domestic education financing. Both are strongly aligned with government priorities and targets, and are likely to be in the new ESSDP, so will probably have pipeline donor commitments to mitigate the risk.

During the first year of the project, the MoES will prepare a sustainability plan for post-project activities and budget requirements.

14.5 Aid effectiveness

The STG project will continue to use country systems for treasury, financial management and procurement. The project will use Save the Children's safeguarding policies and have an external annual audit. Please refer to table 8 in the Application Form for more information.

The Department of Planning will report regularly to the ESSWG and relevant technical working groups to ensure aid harmonization and integrate lessons and new materials from partner projects. In the event of a program revision notification, the MoES will consult with, and seek the approval of, the ESSWG. The Department of Planning and other departments will coordinate with key development partner projects, particularly BEQUAL, LEAP, CapED and the SCG. If agreeable with other partners, the relevant projects may attend or share the PSC.

15. Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) coordinator will support the Department of Planning to deliver the monitoring, evaluation and learning activities for the grant. All relevant data will be sex- and disability-disaggregated (for example, beneficiary numbers). The MEL activities will be described in an M&E Plan in the Project Operations Manual which will be reviewed and updated annually and include indicator descriptions and data collection and reporting tools.

15.1 Monitoring

Monitoring activities will include quarterly whole-of-project review workshops, subnational school monitoring visits, and a project database to track progress on project outputs.

Table 27 Monitoring activities

Activity	Type	Frequency
Project Steering Committee	Review	Quarterly
Grant Management Committee (Save the Children internal)	Monitor	Monthly
Monitoring visits from MoES, PESS, DESB and grant agent	Visit	Termly
Annual beneficiary school climate survey (lower secondary girls)	Survey	Annual
Beneficiary database	Data	Monthly
Annual school census (LESMIS)	EMIS	Annual
Quarterly Progress Reports	Report	Quarterly

The MoES will be refining its data collection tools with the support of partners (for example, BEQUAL and UNESCO have introduced data tools and apps) and the new CPDMIS will provide another source of monitoring data during the implementation period. These data strengthening activities will be reflected in the M&E Plan once fully operational and rolled out to all locations.

15.2 Evaluation

One evaluation activity (the endline study) is financed by the grant and one activity is financed by the SCG (Partnership Compact midterm review). The STG baseline study will be financed by the Program Development Grant. The annual school census will provide data on the enrolment outcomes for component 1 and 3. Once operational, the CPDMIS will be able to provide outcome data on the frequency and completeness of teacher professional development activities. Please refer to the SCG proposal for more details on the CPDMIS.

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Table 28 Evaluation activities

Activity	Type	Frequency
STG endline study, including lesson observations and beneficiary surveys.	Study	Once (2028)
Mid-term review of the Partnership Compact (financed by the SCG).	Review	Once (2026/27)
Annual school census (LESMIS) for ECE and lower secondary enrolment data.	EMIS	Annual
FQS Primary	Learning assessment and quality assessment	Annual Endline (2028)
FQS ECE	Quality assessment	Annual Endline (2028)

15.3 Learning

Learning and iteration are crucial for effective implementation of the Partnership Compact and the STG. The project will engage with the existing formal mechanisms for sharing learning within the education sector, including the regular meetings of ESSWG and its technical working groups. In addition, the implementing departments will facilitate annual component learning workshops to share and adapt to learning and the Department of Planning will lead the production of knowledge products, reports, and learning seminars.

Table 29 Learning activities

Activity	Type	Frequency
ESSWG Technical Level	Forum	Biannual
ESSWG technical working groups	Working group	As needed
Annual component learning workshops	Workshops	Annual (x3)
Knowledge products	Briefings	Annual (x3)
Knowledge sharing events	Seminars	Annual
STG Annual Progress Report	Report	Annual
STG Completion Report	Report	Once (2029)
Close out meeting	Workshop	Once (2028)

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16. Results framework

Table 30 Results framework

<table>
<tr><th>Outcome</th><th>Indicator</th><th>Disaggregation</th><th>Baseline 2024/25</th><th>Y1
Dec 2025</th><th>Y2
Dec 2026</th><th>Y3
Dec 2027</th><th>Y4
Dec 2028</th><th>Source
Frequency
Responsibility</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1. Increased equitable access to quality ECE to improve school readiness.</td><td>1a. Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex in targeted districts.[33]</td><td>Sex
District</td><td>LESMIS 2024/25
Laos: F: 84.6% M: 84.8% T: 84.7%
<table><tr><th>District</th><th>F</th><th>M</th></tr><tr><td>Viengphoukha</td><td>78.6</td><td>80.5</td></tr><tr><td>Nam Bak</td><td>75.9</td><td>82.5</td></tr><tr><td>Ngoy</td><td>73.7</td><td>69.1</td></tr><tr><td>Chomphet</td><td>52.3</td><td>57.0</td></tr><tr><td>Viengkham</td><td>72.2</td><td>74.8</td></tr><tr><td>Meun</td><td>63.0</td><td>67.0</td></tr><tr><td>Thomlan</td><td>77.1</td><td>69.6</td></tr><tr><td>Sa Mouay</td><td>76.3</td><td>78.9</td></tr><tr><td>Hom</td><td>48.7</td><td>52.0</td></tr><tr><td>Average</td><td>68.6</td><td>70.2</td></tr></table></td><td>F: 69
M: 70</td><td>F: 71
M: 72</td><td>F: 73
M: 74</td><td>+5 percentage points
F: 74
M:75</td><td>LESMIS
Annual
Education Statistics Centre</td></tr>
<tr><td>1b. Number of ECE students enrolled in project programs in targeted districts. [34]</td><td>Sex
Disability
Language status
Type of ECE program</td><td>-[35]</td><td>F: -
M: -
T: -</td><td>F: 696
M: 724
T: 1420</td><td>F: 696
M: 724
T: 1420</td><td>F: 696
M: 724
T: 1420

Total
<table><tr><th>C</th><th>F</th><th>M</th><th>T</th></tr><tr><td>1.1</td><td>353</td><td>367</td><td>720</td></tr><tr><td>1.2</td><td>853</td><td>887</td><td>1740</td></tr><tr><td>1.3</td><td>882</td><td>918</td><td>1800</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>2087</td><td>2173</td><td>4260</td></tr></table>70% of students from non-Lao-Tai speaking households.</td><td>LESMIS
Annual
Education Statistics Centre

Activity reports
Quarterly
DESB</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.1 Increased proportion of</td><td>1.1.a Percentage of</td><td>Sex
District</td><td>LESMIS 2024/25
National: F: 72.0% M: 70.6% T:71.3%</td><td>F: 64
M: 61</td><td>F: 65
M: 62</td><td>F: 67
M: 64</td><td>+5 percentage point increase
F: 69</td><td>LESMIS
Annual</td></tr>
</table>

[33] SDG 4.2.2. Net Enrolment Rate (five-year-old children).

[34] ESSDP 4.a. The student enrolment target is based on initial site selection by DESBs and an average enrolment of 15 students per new pre-primary class and 10 students per community-based program.

[35] New STG programs only.

<table>
<tr><th>Outcome</th><th>Indicator</th><th>Disaggregation</th><th>Baseline 2024/25</th><th>Y1
Dec 2025</th><th>Y2
Dec 2026</th><th>Y3
Dec 2027</th><th>Y4
Dec 2028</th><th>Source
Frequency
Responsibility</th></tr>
<tr><td>students from non-Lao-Tai speaking households who are enrolled in ECE one year before primary school.</td><td>primary entrants who have attended ECE in targeted districts.[36]</td><td></td><td><table><tr><th>District</th><th>F</th><th>M</th></tr><tr><td>Viengphoukha</td><td>83.4</td><td>84.2</td></tr><tr><td>Nam Bak</td><td>62.0</td><td>57.5</td></tr><tr><td>Ngoy</td><td>71.2</td><td>68.3</td></tr><tr><td>Chomphet</td><td>57.8</td><td>54.5</td></tr><tr><td>Viengkham</td><td>63.7</td><td>62.9</td></tr><tr><td>Meun</td><td>65.7</td><td>58.5</td></tr><tr><td>Thomlan</td><td>59.2</td><td>53.7</td></tr><tr><td>Sa Mouay</td><td>51.4</td><td>51.7</td></tr><tr><td>Hom</td><td>59.6</td><td>59.3</td></tr><tr><td>Average</td><td>63.8</td><td>61.2</td></tr></table></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>M: 66</td><td>Education Statistics Centre</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1.2 ECE programs have increased equitable access to inclusive quality play-based curriculum and foundational literacy and numeracy materials.</td><td>1.2.a Percentage of new ECE pre-primary programs meeting minimum standards.</td><td>Type of ECE program</td><td>-[37]</td><td>-</td><td>65%</td><td>75%</td><td>80%</td><td>ECE FQS
Annual
DEQA</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.2.b Number of classrooms built or rehabilitated.[38]</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>40</td><td>10</td><td>0</td><td>50</td><td>Activity report
Quarterly
DECE/DESB</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.3 ECE teachers and facilitators have improved skills and knowledge for</td><td>1.3.a Percentage of new ECE teachers and facilitators in target districts</td><td>Sex
Type of ECE program</td><td>-[40]</td><td>50%</td><td>60%</td><td>70%</td><td>70%</td><td>TEACH ECE or alternate.
Annual
DEQA</td></tr>
</table>

[36] ESSDP 4

[37] New STG programs only.

[38] GPE core indicator. Includes learning spaces for community-based programs.

[40] New STG trained teachers and facilitators only.

Outcome	Indicator	Disaggregation	Baseline 2024/25	Y1 Dec 2025	Y2 Dec 2026	Y3 Dec 2027	Y4 Dec 2028	Source Frequency Responsibility
inclusion and school readiness.	demonstrating minimum teaching competency.[39]							
	1.3.b Number of ECE teachers and facilitators trained.	Sex	-	F: 201 M: 67 T: 268	F: 201 M: 67 T: 268	F: 201 M: 67 T: 268	Coaching only in Y4 **Total** F: 201 M: 67 T: 268 75% female	Training report Quarterly DECE
2. Improved foundational learning outcomes at the primary level for all children, including the most disadvantaged children.	2.a Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 3 and (b) at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics in target districts.[41]	Sex Grade Subject	**Reading** To be determined at baseline[42] **Mathematics** To be determined at baseline	-	-	-	Increased	FQS Primary (G3-5) Annual DEQA/DESB
2.1 Primary teachers and principals have improved skills and knowledge in the new curriculum, Lao language teaching, multi-grade	2.1.a Percentage of primary teachers in target districts demonstrating minimum teaching competency.[43]	Sex Grade	To be determined at baseline[44]	-	-	-	Increased	Classroom Observation Tool Annual DEQA/DESB

[39] ESSDP 15

[41] ESSDP 2 and SDG 4.1.1.

[42] The learning assessment will use the MoES FQS Primary as used by UNICEF and GPE III.

[43] ESSDP 15

[44] The baseline study is funded by the Program Development Grant. The results framework will be updated with the baseline data.

Outcome	Indicator	Disaggregation	Baseline 2024/25	Y1 Dec 2025	Y2 Dec 2026	Y3 Dec 2027	Y4 Dec 2028	Source Frequency Responsibility
teaching, assessment, and inclusive education.								
	2.1.b Percentage of teachers receiving training and a lesson observation from their IPS in the target districts.	District Type of support	To be determined at baseline	-	-	-	Increased	Survey Annual DESB
	2.1.c Number of IPS trained and supported annually.	District Sex	-	0	517	517	517	Training report[45] Quarterly DTE/DESB
	2.1.d Number of teachers trained annually.[46]	Sex Grade CPD module	-	0	F: 727 M: 1228 T: 1955	F: 727 M: 1228 T: 1955	F: 727 M: 1288 T: 1955 37% female	Training report Quarterly IPD/DESB
	2.1.e Number of teachers receiving scholarships.	Sex	-	0	600 F: 450	600 F: 450	600 F: 450 (75%)	Training report Annual DTE
2.2 Primary teachers have increased access to quality CPD materials, particularly those in disadvantaged or rural areas.	2.2.a Percentage of education staff in targeted districts reporting adequate access to approved CPD materials.	Type of staff (IPS, teacher, principal) District CPD topic	To be determined at baseline	-	-	-	Increased	Teacher survey Annual IPS/DESB

[45] Once CPDMIS is operational, the training reports could be generated from CPDMIS. In the interim, the existing CPD reporting systems will be used.

[46] GPE core indicator.

<table>
<tr><th>Outcome</th><th>Indicator</th><th>Disaggregation</th><th>Baseline 2024/25</th><th>Y1
Dec 2025</th><th>Y2
Dec 2026</th><th>Y3
Dec 2027</th><th>Y4
Dec 2028</th><th>Source
Frequency
Responsibility</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>2.2.b Number of CPD materials distributed.</td><td>Topic</td><td>-</td><td>10,380</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>10,380[47]</td><td>Distribution report
Quarterly
DTE/DESB</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">3. Improved transition to, and retention in, lower secondary by addressing gender and learning barriers to education.</td><td>3.a Transition rate (primary-lower secondary) in targeted locations.[48]</td><td>Sex
District</td><td>LESMIS 2024/25
Laos: F: 88.3% M: 89.9% T:89.1%
<table><tr><th>District</th><th>F</th><th>M</th></tr><tr><td>Viengphoukha</td><td>64.2</td><td>63.8</td></tr><tr><td>Nam Bak</td><td>56.5</td><td>67.5</td></tr><tr><td>Ngoy</td><td>50.0</td><td>60.5</td></tr><tr><td>Chomphet</td><td>42.4</td><td>51.7</td></tr><tr><td>Viengkham</td><td>41.0</td><td>49.5</td></tr><tr><td>Meun</td><td>61.4</td><td>73.8</td></tr><tr><td>Thomlan</td><td>51.0</td><td>41.0</td></tr><tr><td>Sa Mouay</td><td>48.8</td><td>58.6</td></tr><tr><td>Hom</td><td>66.7</td><td>92.3</td></tr><tr><td>Average</td><td>53.6</td><td>62.1</td></tr></table></td><td>F: 54%
M: 62%</td><td>F: 55%
M: 63%</td><td>F: 57%
M: 64%</td><td>+ 5 percentage points
F: 59
M: 65%</td><td>LESMIS Annual Education Statistics Centre</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.b Completion rate (lower secondary) in targeted schools.[49]</td><td>Sex
Ethnicity</td><td>LESMIS 2024/25
Laos: F: 61.9% M: 61.2% T: 61.5%
<table><tr><th>District</th><th>F</th><th>M</th></tr><tr><td>Viengphoukha</td><td>43.2</td><td>44.3</td></tr><tr><td>Nam Bak</td><td>37.2</td><td>34.3</td></tr><tr><td>Ngoy</td><td>41.9</td><td>33.4</td></tr><tr><td>Chomphet</td><td>25.6</td><td>22.2</td></tr><tr><td>Viengkham</td><td>32.6</td><td>38.2</td></tr><tr><td>Meun</td><td>22.4</td><td>25.3</td></tr><tr><td>Thomlan</td><td>11.9</td><td>8.6</td></tr><tr><td>Sa Mouay</td><td>10.3</td><td>15.9</td></tr><tr><td>Hom</td><td>32.8</td><td>27.0</td></tr><tr><td>Average</td><td>28.7</td><td>27.7</td></tr></table></td><td>F: 29%
M: 28%</td><td>F: 30%
M: 29%</td><td>F: 32%
M: 30%</td><td>+ 5 percentage points
F: 34%
M: 31%</td><td>LESMIS Annual Education Statistics Centre</td></tr>
</table>

[47] Assumes 10 printed CPD packs per school (438 x 10) and per IPS (600 x 10). Does not include digital distribution.

[48] ESSDP 6

[49] ESSDP 1.b

<table>
<tr><th>Outcome</th><th>Indicator</th><th>Disaggregation</th><th>Baseline 2024/25</th><th>Y1
Dec 2025</th><th>Y2
Dec 2026</th><th>Y3
Dec 2027</th><th>Y4
Dec 2028</th><th>Source
Frequency
Responsibility</th></tr>
<tr><td>3.1 Strengthened system for supporting disadvantaged girls to enroll in and continue in lower secondary.</td><td>3.1.a Number of female students receiving scholarships.</td><td>Grade
Disability</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>800</td><td>800</td><td>800</td><td>Activity report
Annual
DGE</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">3.2 Schools have strategies and resources to support girls' education.</td><td>3.2.a Number of female students attending summer preparation programs.</td><td>District</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>960</td><td>960</td><td>960</td><td>Activity report
Annual
DGE/DESB</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.2.b Number of female students attending Girls' Clubs.</td><td>District</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>1510</td><td>1510</td><td>1510[50]</td><td>Activity report
Quarterly
School/DESB</td></tr>
<tr><td>Program-level output</td><td>4.a Number of children directly benefiting from the program.[51]</td><td>Sex
Level
Disability</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>40,750</td><td>40,750</td><td><table><tr><th>C</th><th>F</th><th>M</th><th>T</th></tr><tr><td>C1</td><td>2087</td><td>2173</td><td>4260</td></tr><tr><td>C2</td><td>16,134</td><td>17,086</td><td>33220</td></tr><tr><td>C3</td><td>3270</td><td>0</td><td>3270</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>21491</td><td>19259</td><td>40750</td></tr></table></td><td>LESMIS
Annual
Education Statistics Centre

Project database</td></tr>
</table>

[50] Assumes 20% of 7177 enrolled lower secondary girls attend Girls' Clubs.

[51] GPE core indicator.

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17. Budget

Table 31 Budget by subcomponent and year, US$

Component	Year 1 2025	Year 2 2026	Year 3 2027	Year 4 2028	Total
Component 1 Expansion of one-year school readiness programs for five-year-old children	1,008,742	1,192,298	959,773	775,355	3,936,168
Subcomponent 1.1 Establish one-year pre-primary classes	398,756	152,449	170,545	79,802	801,551
Subcomponent 1.2 Support CBSR programs in areas without pre-primary classes	609,987	344,533	385,432	270,151	1,610,102
Subcomponent 1.3 Support 10-week summer pre-school programs in locations without pre-primary classes	-	695,315	403,796	425,403	1,524,515
Component 2 Strengthen CPD for primary school principals and teachers	1,088,809	1,117,391	460,931	711,971	3,379,103
Subcomponent 2.1 Strengthen school-based CPD	153,497	639,344	204,304	420,468	1,417,613
Subcomponent 2.2 Scholarships for primary teachers	7,373	235,388	256,627	287,598	786,986
Subcomponent 2.3 Support the Spoken Lao Program	927,940	242,659	-	3,905	1,174,503
Component 3 Support for girls at risk of dropping out of secondary school	28,758	556,659	351,322	371,019	1,307,757
Subcomponent 3.1 Expand scholarships for girls who are risk of dropping out	28,758	140,950	157,682	165,205	492,595
Subcomponent 3.2 Support lower secondary summer camps initiatives	-	415,709	193,640	205,814	815,163
4. Program management	226,387	252,134	270,640	327,810	1,076,972
Subcomponent 4.1 Project implementation	212,616	166,268	174,581	198,310	751,775
Subcomponent 4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning	13,771	85,867	96,059	129,500	325,197
Grant agent supervision	39,369	82,674	86,808	91,149	300,000
Total	**2,392,065**	**3,201,156**	**2,129,475**	**2,277,305**	**10,000,000**

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18. Implementation arrangements

18.1 Implementing agency

The MoES is the implementing agency as per the Memorandum of Understanding (including the Finance Agreement) between the government and Save the Children Lao PDR. The MoES Department of Planning Project Support Unit will coordinate project implementation, collate reports from the implementing departments, and report progress to the ESSWG, GPE and Save the Children. Implementation will be the responsibility of:

Table 32 Responsible and supporting departments

Component	Responsible	Supporting
1. ECE	DECE	DTE, RIES, DEQA
2. Primary CPD	DTE	RIES, DEQA
3. Lower secondary girls	DGE	-
4. Project management	DOP	Department of Finance

18.2 Subnational arrangements

The PESS will be responsible for supporting the respective target districts. The targeted PESS and nine DESB will nominate at least one officer for each component as the project focal point. The PESS will be responsible for project oversight and provision of technical assistance to the DESB. The DESB will be responsible for day-to-day project implementation. The PESS will be signatories on the Memorandum of Understanding.

18.3 Governance

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established by the Department of Planning to meet quarterly to monitor project progress, approve the annual plan and budget, and address any implementation bottlenecks. To strengthen coordination between the STG and other major projects, the Education Coordination Unit for LEAP III and projects such as BEQUAL and SCG will be invited to attend the PSC as needed. The core PSC members will include:

1. Department of Planning
2. Department of ECE
3. Department of Teacher Education
4. Department of General Education
5. Department of Education Quality Assurance
6. PESS representatives (virtually)
7. STG project manager
8. Save the Children

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18.4 Accountability

Save the Children will establish an internal **Grant Management Committee** which will monitor grant disbursements and ensure that policies are being followed directly. A key role of the committee is to quickly detect any issues which may arise during implementation to ensure the grant remains on track.

The Department of Planning will report on grant progress on a regular basis to the ESSWG Technical Level. This mechanism will provide aid coordination, consultation, and transparency functions. The ESSWG will be able to provide feedback on draft annual and completion reports and will receive copies of knowledge products. In addition, the respective implementing departments will report on project activities at the regular technical working groups.

18.5 Fiduciary arrangements and financial management

Account

The MoES Department of Finance will establish a project account (the designated account) at the Bank of Lao or an agreed commercial bank with an accounting system approved by Save the Children. Existing PESS and DESB operational accounts will be used for subnational activities.

Flow of funds

Table 33 Flow of funds

Steps	Currency
1. Save the Children Australia sends cash transfer request to GPE Trust Fund Agent (World Bank).	USD
2. Trust Fund agent transfers funds to Save the Children Australia.	USD
3. Save the Children Australia transfers funds to Save the Children Laos.	USD
4. In response to a disbursement letter (cash forecast), quarterly financial report (acquittal) and Annual Work Plan and budget, Save the Children Laos disburses funds to the MoES project account (designated account) which will be opened at the Ministry of Finance.	USD to LAK
5. The Ministry of Finance records receipt of funds in the government accounting system. Save the Children informs the Project Management Unit (PMU) and DoP of all transactions.	LAK
6a. **At Central** Save the Children advances funds to designated project account at Ministry of Finance based on approved budget proposals of MoES implementing departments; this can be done by activity or by approved quarterly workplans. Once transferred, the notification is sent to lead departments and inform DoF for accounting records before cashing money from MoF. **Reporting**: On the completion of activity implementation, lead departments send financial report on expenditures to PMU for reviewing and clearing advances; this can be done by activity or by quarterly financial report.	LAK
6b. **At Provincial** 1. SCI advances funds as a grant to designated project account at Provincial Department of Finance on approved budget proposals of PESS; this can be done by	LAK

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Steps	Currency
activity or by approved quarterly workplans.[52] Once transferred, the notification is sent to PMU and keep informed DoF for accounting records. The transfer notification also keep informed MoES lead departments. 2. The PMU processes the transfers to project account at Provincial Department of Finance and informs PESS for cashing money from the Provincial Department of Finance. The transfers are reported to the relevant MoES department. **Reporting**: On the completion of activity implementation, the PESS sends reports on expenditures to PMU for reviewing and clearing advances; this can be done by activity or by quarterly. The financial report should also keep the MoES implementing departments informed.	
6c. **At District** 1. Save the Children transfers advances to the MoES designated account based on approved budget proposals of DESB; this can be done by activity or by approved quarterly workplans. Once transferred, a notification is sent to the PMU and DoF for accounting records. 2. The PSU processes the transfers to the project account at District Finance Bureau and keep informed DESB for cashing money from District Finance Bureau. The transfers also keep informed the PESS and MoES relevant department. **Reporting**: On the completion of activity implementation, the DESB sends a report on expenditures to the PMU for reviewing and clearing advances; this can be done by activity or by quarterly. The financial report should also keep the MoES implementing departments informed.	LAK

Financial management

The project will use the government's financial management system, accounting system, and internal controls as described in the Ministry of Finance regulations and as managed by the MoES Department of Finance. The arrangements will be described in a Project Operations Manual (POM) agreed between MoES and Save the Children. In addition to the government's internal controls, Save the Children will include a condition requiring a no objection for expenditure above an agreed amount. The Financing Agreement will also include a clause allowing MoES to request direct payment for goods and services from Save the Children in the disbursement letter (for example, to reduce exchange rate losses).

Annual Work Plan

The Department of Planning will facilitate the writing of an Annual Work Plan (AWP) which will align with government expenditure categories to allow inclusion and ease of reporting in the national budget process and the MoES annual plan. The AWP will include:

[52] Similar to the existing BEQUAL CPD grants to subnational entities.

- Implementation plan by activity and month.
- Budget and projected disbursements by month.
- Estimated government contributions to components (e.g. personnel salaries).
- Approved variations to the budget including any Program Revision Notifications.
- Disbursements by quarterly tranche including the prevailing exchange rate at the time of transfer.
- Monthly, quarterly, and annual actual v budget expenditures based on the Quarterly Financial Reports.
- Risk and mitigation matrix.
- Procurement plan (plan v actual).
- Capacity strengthening activities by subcomponent at the national and subnational level.

Financial reporting

To better monitor project expenditures, the PMU will produce unaudited quarterly financial reports (QFR) for the PSC and Save the Children. There will be live digital tracking of project expenditures at the national and subnational levels, allowing immediate oversight of financial records and improving financial reporting. The QFRs will include:

- Disbursements and transfers to entities
- Posted transactions
- Budget v actual
- Bank reconciliation
- Explanations for any variance
- Any direct payments made by Save the Children
- Links to scans of original documents (receipts, invoices, payment requests, etc.)

The QFR is an important document for triggering additional disbursements to the project account from Save the Children.

Audit

The project will finance an annual external independent audit of the project accounts. The MoES will conduct internal mid-year audits as per government regulations. Satisfactory completion of audit actions is a requirement before further disbursements are made.

18.6 Procurement

The procurement of goods and services will be managed by the government using government systems, approval controls, and procedures. Save the Children will have to provide no objection for high-value procurements and a representative of Save the Children will attend tender panels for contracts above an agreed limit. The PMU will manage the tender and contract ledger. In exceptional circumstances, the MoES may request the use of Save the Children procurement systems.

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18.7 Project Operations Manual

The Project Operations Manual will include specific implementation arrangements, templates, M&E plan, financial and procurement procedures, and safeguarding protocols. Job descriptions and terms of reference for consultants will be included as developed. The POM will be written by MoES, reviewed annually, and approved by Save the Children.

19. Risks and mitigation

The MoES and Save the Children have identified the major risks to the project as:

- Implementation capacity
- Fiduciary
- Safeguarding
- Economic

The risks due to natural hazards, legal, governance, political change, and stakeholders are considered lower. There are no outstanding legal or fiduciary issues from previous grants.

Table 34 Risks and mitigation

Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
SEAH and safety			
Major disaster in one or more target districts resulting in suspension or restriction of activities and/or reprioritisation of resources/staff.	Moderate	1. Emergency Preparedness Plan in the Project Operations Manual. 2. All staff inducted in Plan.	Low
Accident involving staff or beneficiaries during project activity leading to injuries or loss of life.	Moderate	1. Emergency Preparedness Plan in the POM. 2. Travel risk assessments for travel. 3. First aid equipment for travel. 4. All staff inducted in Plan.	Low
Child safeguarding, protection or sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, or gender-based violence incident involving project staff leading to harm to beneficiaries, conflict or reputational damage.	High	1. Child protection, gender equity and safeguarding questions during selection, onboarding, and training for all staff and consultants. 2. Mandatory safeguarding training for all those in contact with children including officials, principals, teachers, and study enumerators. Interviews with children will be conducted in a safe space (e.g. in public view but not overheard) or with a second adult present. 3. Safeguarding and anti-violence messaging in CPD modules. 4. Safeguarding plan and checklist for all studies, workshops and school-based activities.	Moderate

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Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
		5. Complaints and safeguarding response system operational and made known to beneficiaries. 6. All project staff and consultants sign and orientated in the mandatory Save the Children policies for safeguarding and the code of conduct. 7. Beneficiary feedback and response mechanisms (e.g. annual school climate survey with girls receiving scholarship).	
Operational			
Difficulty recruiting key personnel or high turnover of officials, staff or consultants. Lack of skills or knowledge for program activities among implementing officers. Overreliance on grant agent to implement activities.	High	1. Robust recruitment process including technical assessments of applicant's skills and knowledge. 2. Competitive remuneration packages. 3. Performance-based contracts for staff and consultants. 4. Professional development opportunities and targeted training prior to effectiveness (funded by the Program Development Grant) and during component implementation (funded by the STG or SCG). 5. Inclusion of a capacity strengthening and technical assistance activity budget in each subcomponent. 6. Clear terms of reference including mandatory skills transfer from embedded staff and technical advisers. 7. Clear leadership structure where senior MoES leaders are responsible for each component. 8. Regular review meetings (PSC, quarterly review, GMC) to identify and mitigate emerging capacity gaps. 9. Close coordination with other capacity strengthening activities from development partners to avoid poaching staff or overcommitting divisions. 10. Inclusion of project budget and activities in the national budget, new ESSDP, and MoES annual operational plan. 11. Inclusion of national and subnational capacity strengthening activities in the AWP. 12. On-demand technical assistance from local Save the Children office (e.g. financial management, safeguarding, etc.).	Moderate

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Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
Challenges coordinating the project with existing or planned support from other development partners/projects.	Moderate	1. Use the PSC, ESSWG and TWGs as a coordination mechanism and ask for partner input on the Job Descriptions of planned technical assistance. 2. Regular review meetings with LEAP (GPE III), BEQUAL, UNICEF SCG, EU, USAID, UNESCO, JICA and USDA and other projects to ensure technical assistance and program activities are harmonized. 3. If necessary, joint working arrangements and allocated deliverables/tasks to ensure no duplication of roles. 4. Sharing the AWP with the ESSWG on an annual basis. 5. Include Education Coordination Unit on PSC.	Low
Fiduciary			
Fraud or theft of program materials	High	1. Transparently using government financial management and procurement processes. 2. Regular audits, post-distribution school visits and spot checks. 3. Regular budget v actual expenditure reports. 4. Rigorous background checks on project staff. 5. Electronic transfer of funds where applicable. 6. Use of existing systems (e.g. national scholarships). 7. Minimizing large events outside of the capital. 8. Communicating the distribution of TLMs and scholarships to public via mass media. 9. Fraud reporting system operational and mentioned in all materials. 10. Save the Children no objection required for large expenditure items. Save the Children represented on tender panels for high value procurements. 11. Financial management training for subcomponent staff,.	Moderate
Economic			
Deteriorating public finances lead to reduction in services or staffing.	High	1. Sufficient budget for new teachers and facilitators.	Moderate

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Risk	Risk rating	Mitigation strategies	Rating after mitigation
		2. Provision of stipends for summer program staff. 3. Community mobilization in VEDCs. 4. Provision of scholarships to girls to attend school. 5. Low cost locally delivered models to increase sustainability. 6. Use of local staff and consultants. 7. Quarterly budget reviews by PSC and monthly GMCs. 8. Sustainability plan.	

20. Consultations

The STG project was developed by the MoES Design Working Group in consultation with PESS and DESB and the ESSWG.

Table 35 STG Design Working Group

Organisation	Name	Position	Sex
MoES	PhD Samlane PHANTHAVONG	Deputy Minister	Male
MoES, DoP	Sithong SIKHAO	Director General	Male
MoES, DECE	Siphaporn Manivanh	Director General	Female
MoES, Department of Organization and Personnel	Thoudavanh Normuengseng	Director General	Male
MoES, DTE	Vong Deuan OSAY	Director General	Female
MoES, DoP	Anoupheng KEOVONGSA	Deputy Director General	Male
MoES, DoF	Suenchait Sesinokham	Deputy Director General	Female
MoES, DoF	Kongmany VATHTANA	Deputy Director General	Female
MoES,DI	Phoutsavath Vongphachanh	Deputy Director General	Female
MoES,DIC	Dai Lathanaphaivanh	Deputy Director General	Male
MoES, DGE	Oudalone SYLAVONG	Deputy Director General	Male
MoES, DECE	Chompheng VONGSA	Deputy Director General	Female
MoES, DTE	Khamphat XAYYALINKHAM	Deputy Director General	Female
MoES, DNFE	Visan SOMVANG	Deputy Director General	Male
MoES, RIES	Anoulom VILAYPHONE	Director of RIES	Male
MoES	Phoudthong KHAMVILAI	Secretary to the Ministers	Male
MoES, DoP	Khamfong SOMMALA	Head of Division	Male
MoES, IFEAD	Khampasert Fongchalearn	Head of Division	Male
MoES, DoP	Phanthanome DIDARAVONG	Head of Division	Female
MoES, DGE	Sayakone PANYATHONG	Head of Primary Education Division	Male
MoES, DECE	Bounhieng Singvongsa	Head of ECE Division	Female
MoES, DoP	Phisithxay SOULINTHONE	Head of ECU	Male
MoES, DECE	Oi LUENGVANHXAY	Head of Division	Female
MoES, DTE	Bouaphet INTHAVONG	Head of INSET Division	Male
MoES, RIES	Chonla KHEMTHONG	Head of ECE Division	Female

Organisation	Name	Position	Sex
MoES, DoF	Anousone VONGPHAXAY	Head of Division	Male
MoES, IFEAD	Lamphoun Luangxay	Deputy Head of Center	Male
MoES	Phommaseang THIPHAVONG	Deputy Head of Office	Male
MoES, DTE	Tavanh Khounbolay	Deputy Head of Center	Male
MoES, RIES	Phetsamone Sibounhueng	Acting Director of Curriculum Development Center	Female
MoES, DTE	Chaikeo Xaiyasing	Deputy Head of INSET	Female
MoES, DoP	Soudachanh SENMANY	Deputy Head of Division	Female
MoES, DGE	Phouangsouk XAYYABOUN	Deputy Head of Division	Female
MoES, DNFE	Silisak DOUNGPHACHANH	Deputy Head of Division	Male
MOES, DIC	Youlee XIAYINGYANG	Deputy Head of INGO Division	Female
MoES, DoP	Tavansai PEUNGNHOUNG	Technical Staff	Male
MoES, DoP, ICT	Lamphanh Phimmasone	Technical Staff	Female
MoES, DoP	Sithphavanh MANYLON	Technical Staff	Female
MoES, DoOP	Tony Outhaithip	Technical Staff	Male
MOES, DIC	Viengphanh Xayalath	Technical Staff	Female
MoES, DoP	Kannika SENSOULINTHA	Technical Staff	Female
MoES, DoP	Sida XAIYAPHANHTHONG	Technical Staff	Female
MoES, DoP	Phisithxay SOULINTHONE	Head of ECU	Male
Australian Embassy	Davone Bounpheng	Program Manager	Female
EU	Xaymano Sanouban	Program Manager	Female
UNICEF	Takaho FUKAMI	Education Chief	Female
UNICEF	Phouvong SIHALATH	Education Specialist	Male
UNICEF	Anolack Chanpasith	Education Officer	Male
UNESCO	Nyi Nyi Thaung	Programme Specialist	Male
UNESCO	Nantawan Hinds	Programme Coordinator	Female
JICA	Yasu NAGAOKA	Education Advisor	Male
JICA	Anna VILAISACK	Secretary to the Expert	Female
SCI	Namrata Jaitli	SPDQI	Female
SCI	Phouvanh Phommalangsy	Education Advisor	Male
SCI	Somxay INTHASONE	National Education Specialist	Male
Consultant	Somkhan Didaravong	Education Expert	Male

Table 36 Consultations

Date	Consultation	Participants	Female	Male	Total
2024-10-22	Kick Off Meeting 1 Strategic	MoES & ESSWG	25	17	42
2024-10-28	DWG Meeting 2 Compact	DWG	15	17	32
2024-10-29	DWG Meeting 3 Components	DWG	15	17	32
2024-11-07	DWG Meeting 4 Edit Outline	DWG	12	13	25
2024-11-21	Review Program Outline	ESSWG	-	-	-
2025-02-03	Review Program Document (subnational)	DWG	20	33	53
2025-02-18	Review Program Document	ESSWG	12	26	38

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