

## APPENDIX 5

# EDUCATION SECTOR

In this section, the current education system, education statistics, and the future vision of the education sector in Lao PDR are reviewed.

### A5.1 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN LAO PDR

The system of formal education in Lao PDR is divided into 4 levels: primary (5 years); lower secondary (3 years); upper secondary (3 years); and tertiary education (3-7 years). Children are supposed to enter primary school at the age of 6. Non-formal education comprises short-term literacy training for adult and skill training.

Specialisation begins at the end of lower secondary level. Students can remain within general/academic education for the 3 years of upper secondary school, or they can move to vocational training, also for 3 years, which focuses on skill development. Technical training is offered to graduates of either upper secondary school (= grade 11) or vocational training (8 + 3). The technical training school aims at producing the middle- and high-level technical and managerial workforce. The graduates obtain a diploma. The organisation of vocational and technical education is in a transitional stage. Technical training is to be shortened from 3 to 2 years according to a national decree on vocational education development and training issued in October 1998, which will end the current distinction between schools offering courses of different lengths. Some schools are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, but some are under the other Ministries such as Health, Agriculture and Forestry, and others.

In general, vocational training, which consists of technical, nursing and art, dance, and music subjects, confers low-level qualifications (“santon” in Lao) whereas technical training, including technical, paramedical, agricultural, financial, art, -dance and music subjects, confer middle- or high-level qualifications (“sankang”).

Teacher training has a separate system. To become a pre-primary teacher, students enrol in a one-year programme after completing upper secondary school. To become a primary school teacher, students take a 1-year training course after completion of upper secondary school. Lower secondary school teachers receive 3 years of training after finishing upper secondary

school. To teach at upper secondary school level, students must study for 5 in the Faculty of Education at the National University of Laos.

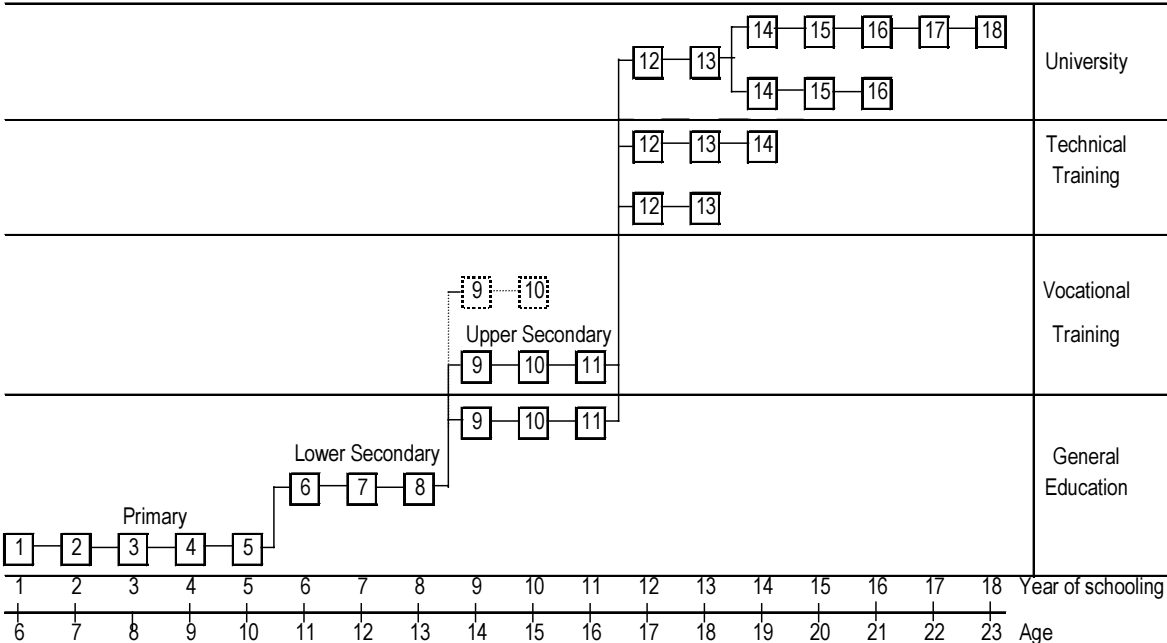
With regard to higher education, the National University of Laos (NUOL) was established in 1995 through the consolidation of three post-secondary institutions: the University of Health Sciences, the National Polytechnic Institute, and the Pedagogical University of Vientiane. 7 colleges have been incorporated into NUOL since then. NUOL now consists of 9 faculties:

1. Faculty of Foundation Studies
2. Faculty of Sciences
3. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
4. Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
5. Faculty of Medical Sciences
6. Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry
7. Faculty of Economics and Management
8. Faculty of Law
9. Faculty of Education

Except for newly founded Faculty of Economics and Management, all faculties are successors of different institutes which previously existed separately under the different Ministries.

Figure A5.1 and Table A5.1 show the formal education system and basic statistics of schools, respectively.

**Figure A5.1 Formal Education System in Lao PDR**



Source: ADB (1): *Lao People’s Democratic Republic: Education Sector Development Plan Report*, 2000.  
 The World Bank: *Lao PDR: Financing and Management of Education*, 1997.

**Table A5.1 Number of Schools, Students, Teachers by Education Level (1996-97)\***

Education level	Number of schools	Number of students	Number of teachers
Primary education	7,896	786,335	25,714
Lower secondary education	749	133,891	7,714
Upper secondary education (general/academic)	140	46,269	2,871
Vocational/Technical education**	35	7,839	774
Tertiary education	(NUOL & other institutes)	8,759	839

Source: Ministry of Education: *Annual Bulletin 1996-97*

Note: \*The figures include teacher training institutes.

\*\*The figures in 1998-99 school year from Yukio KIUCHI, *Education and Teacher Training in Laos* (in Japanese), 2000

Students entering vocational and technical schools are selected in one of 2 ways. About half enter through the quota system, whereby a fixed number of places are allocated to each province, to which the provincial education director selects students based on grade 11 examination scores and other considerations. The remaining places are filled through a competitive examination developed and administered by the Department of Vocational, Technical and Higher Education (DVTHE)<sup>1</sup>. Entrance to NUOL also follows a similar procedure, with the difference being that the entrance examination is administered by the examination committee of the university. In the event that quota places are not filled, they are added to those competed for by examination candidates.

## A5.2 CURRENT EDUCATION STATISTICS

### (1) School Enrolment

Primary school intake has improved significantly in the last decades. The gross enrolment rate (GER)<sup>2</sup> in primary school rose from 102% in 1989/90 to 114% in 1997/98. The net enrolment rate (NER)<sup>3</sup> also rose from 66% to 76%, over the same period.

However, repetition and dropout rates are exceedingly high. Repetition rates range from 40% in Grade 1 to 15 % in grade 5. Repeaters constitute 30% of total enrolments at primary level. Dropout rates range from 25% in Grade 1 to 10% in Grade 5<sup>4</sup>. Ultimately only a half of the children who enrol in primary school go on to complete Grade 5.

<sup>1</sup> ADB (1), 2000, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> GER is defined as the total number of students enrolled in primary school, of any age, divided by the total primary-school-aged population (ADB (2): *Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region*, Lao PDR Country Report, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> NER is defined as the total number of children of primary school age currently enrolled as a percentage of the primary-school-aged population (ADB (2), 2000, op. cit.).

<sup>4</sup> ADB: *Lao PDR Human Development: Future Strategic Directions*, Programs Department (West) Division 3, 1996.

Dropout rate is high at secondary level too. Forty-four of each 100 children who enrol in lower secondary school will enter upper secondary school. Of those, only 23 will complete upper secondary school. Of every 100 children who enrol in Grade 1 of primary school, only 6 will complete secondary education (Table A5.2).

**Table A5.2 Student Progression Rates for Grades 1-11**

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Graduate
Progression Rate (%)	100	86	78	87	85	80	94	61	77	72	72	91
Cohort of 100	100	86	67	58	50	39	37	23	18	13	9	6
Cohort of 100						100	94	57	44	32	23	21

Source: ADB (1), 2000, op. cit.

The number of students completing each level of education varies among provinces. Females are underrepresented in all provinces and at all levels (Table A5.3).

**Table A5.3 Completion of Formal Education by Province  
(1996-97 school year)**

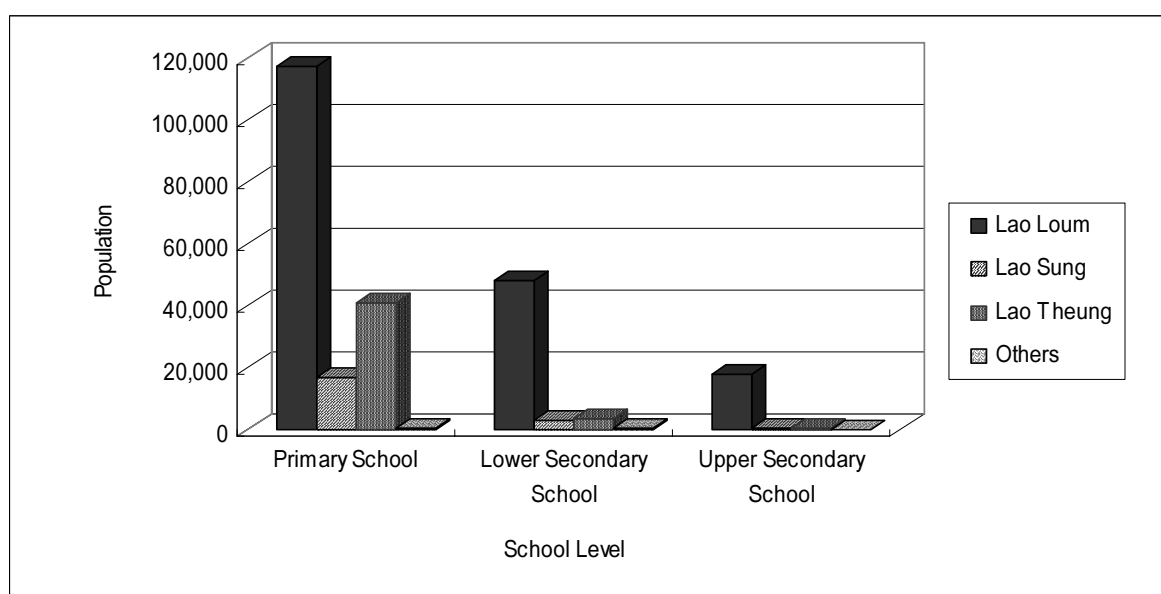
Province	Primary School		Lower Secondary School		Upper Secondary School*	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
Vientiane Municipality	13,913	6,654	7,727	3,689	4,092	1,972
Phongsaly	1,123	515	329	191	92	34
Luangnamtha	1,444	634	512	195	110	36
Oudomxay	2,003	694	498	188	118	35
Bokeo	1,406	549	546	218	86	26
Luangphrabang	3,945	1,376	1,658	696	482	212
Huaphanh	3,085	1,679	669	385	205	94
Xayaboury	6,634	3,089	1,930	694	660	203
Xiengkhuang	4,383	1,897	979	373	113	23
Vientiane	7,051	3,183	3,121	1,235	1,317	546
Bolikhamxay	2,532	1,113	797	316	432	171
Khammuane	2,820	1,592	1,197	465	495	191
Savannakhet	7,980	3,664	2,777	1,238	1,503	586
Saravane	1,934	724	458	171	203	59
Sekong	278	80	80	30	34	15
Champasak	8,950	3,758	3,405	1,199	1,421	512
Attapeu	860	348	224	66	86	24
Xaysomboun Special Region	413	158	215	21	65	5
Total	70,754	31,707	27,122	11,370	11,514	4,744

Source: Ministry of Education: *Annual Bulletin*, 1996-1997.

Note: \* General upper secondary school graduates only.

School intake differs widely among ethnic groups too. Lao Loum is over-represented at all levels (Figure A5.2). Table A5.4 demonstrates that the proportion of females decreases the higher the level. Only 37% of Lao Sung entrants to primary school are female, and by upper secondary school, this figure has fallen to 16%. It clearly indicates that ethnic minority females are greatly marginalised in terms of education opportunities<sup>5</sup>.

**Figure A5.2 New Entrance to Formal Education by Ethnic Group (1996-97)**



Source: Ministry of Education: Annual Bulletin, 1996-1997.

Note: Classification of ethnic groups used is cited from the original data sources.

**Table A5.4 New Entrance to Formal Education by Ethnic Group and Gender (1996-97)**

Category		Primary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School
Lao Loum	Total	117,407	48,349	18,219
	Male	60,742 (52%)	27,417 (57%)	11,017 (60%)
	Female	56,665 (48%)	20,932 (43%)	7,202 (40%)
Lao Sung	Total	17,171	2,958	635
	Male	10,807 (63%)	2,260 (76%)	532 (84%)
	Female	6,364 (37%)	698 (24%)	103 (16%)
Lao Theung	Total	40,873	3,607	531
	Male	23,126 (57%)	2,637 (73%)	410 (77%)
	Female	17,747 (43%)	970 (27%)	121 (23%)
Others (total)		647	370	95

Source: Ministry of Education: *Annual Bulletin*, 1996-1997.

Note: Classification of ethnic groups used is cited from the original data sources.

<sup>5</sup> Names of ethnic groups used are cited from the original source of data.

## **(2) Literacy**

Compared to the achievements in school enrolment, less has been achieved in literacy over the last decade. The literacy rate only increased from 56% in 1987 to 60.2% in 1995, and this rise is mostly attributed to the increase in school enrolment rather than progress in adult literacy.

Literacy rates vary between males and females and among ethnic groups. Over 65% of women nationwide are illiterate. Rates are much higher in rural areas and among ethnic minorities. Table A5.5 breaks literacy rates down by gender and major ethnic group. For all ethnic groups, female literacy is substantially lower than male. Lao-Phutai ethno-linguistic groups achieve much higher literacy rates for both male and female than other groups. The literacy rates for both males and females are lowest in the Tibeto-Burman and the Hmong-Yao ethno-linguistic group<sup>6</sup>. This fact clearly indicates that ethnic minority females are most disadvantaged in terms of Lao language communication.

Regional disparities in literacy rates are also significant (Table A5.6). It appears that females in rural areas are the most marginalised section of the population.

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<sup>6</sup> The names of linguistic and ethnic groups used are cited from the original data sources.

**Table A5.5 Literacy Rates for the Population Aged 15 and above by Gender and Major Ethnic Group**

Language Group	Ethnic Group	Literacy Rate (%)		
		Male	Female	Total
Lao-Phutai		84.4	62.3	72.9
	Lao	86.0	65.1	75.2
	Phutai	77.2	50.1	63.0
	Leu	73.9	46.6	59.7
	Nhuane	71.2	48.7	59.4
Mon-Khmer		55.6	19.9	36.9
	Khmu	60.8	22.7	40.9
	Katang	49.3	12.8	30.3
	Makong	39.1	12.3	25.0
	Xuay	55.7	20.5	36.8
	Taoey	54.8	20.3	36.6
	Talieng	58.4	25.0	40.4
	Lavae	52.2	18.7	34.4
	Katu	43.0	10.6	26.2
	Lamed	49.0	10.2	28.0
	Thin	40.6	20.0	29.6
	Alack	54.6	21.3	37.1
	Oey	69.4	34.2	50.2
	Ngae	52.3	15.6	33.5
	Jeng	56.9	19.9	36.8
Yae	45.9	17.9	30.8	
Hmong-Yao		45.7	8.1	26.5
	Hmong	45.7	8.1	26.5
Tibeto-Burman		22.3	12.0	17.0
	Phounoy	58.8	36.2	46.8
	Musir	2.9	0.4	1.6
	Kor	7.0	0.7	3.8
Others		60.8	32.9	46.8
Total		73.5	47.9	60.2

Source: ADB (2): *Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region*, Lao PDR Country Report, 2000. State Planning Committee and National Statistical Centre: *Results from the Population Census 1995, 1997*.

Note: Names of language and ethnic groups used in the table are as per the original data sources.

**Table A5.6 Literacy Rates for the Population Aged 15 years and above by Gender and Province**

Province	Literacy rate (%)		
	Male	Female	Total
Vientiane Municipality	92.2	78.9	85.5
Phongsaly	44.8	25.0	34.6
Luangnamtha	46.6	19.6	32.5
Oudomxay	59.8	24.3	41.6
Bokeo	56.8	27.3	41.6
Luangphrabang	68.3	38.5	52.9
Huaphanh	71.0	40.8	55.5
Xayaboury	75.2	54.8	64.9
Xiengkhuang	73.7	47.1	60.0
Vientiane	83.6	60.7	72.2
Bolikhamsay	77.6	52.6	64.9
Khammuane	70.7	43.1	56.0
Savannakhet	70.2	43.6	56.2
Saravane	65.7	35.2	49.4
Sekong	55.9	24.0	39.4
Champasak	84.7	59.4	71.3
Attapeu	69.2	37.2	52.1
Xaysomboun Special Region	69.5	30.9	50.0
Average	73.5	47.9	60.2
Urban	92.4	78.1	85.2
Rural	69.0	41.2	54.5

Source: State Planning Committee and National Statistical Centre, 1997, op. cit.

### **A5.3 SCHOOL GROUP SYSTEM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

At primary level, there are complete schools which are staffed and sized to provide instruction for the full range of primary grades and incomplete schools which offer often only the first two or three grades of primary education. Around 90% of households are in villages with a primary school, but only 55% of households have access to a complete primary school. It is estimated that half of all complete schools in the country are located in Vientiane Municipality and Vientiane Province. By contrast, as shown in Table A5.7, only about 15% of primary schools in Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha and Sekong are complete.



**Table A5.7 Primary School Coverage by Provinces 1997-98**

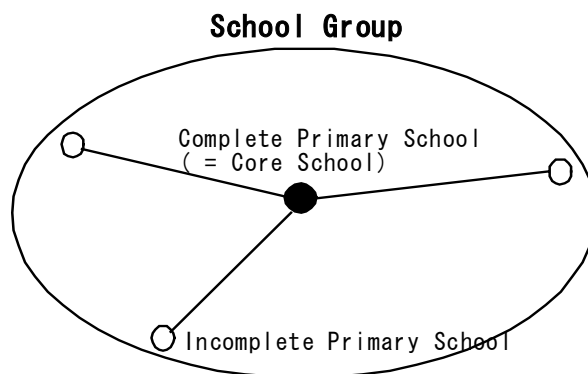
Province	Percentage of villages with primary school	Percentage of villages with complete primary school
Lao PDR	85	43
Urban	69	60
Rural	87	42
Vientiane Municipality	88	76
Phongsaly	63	14
Luangnamtha	63	16
Oudomxay	66	13
Bokeo	64	20
Luangphrabang	97	37
Huaphanh	100	50
Xayaboury	99	64
Xiengkhuang	91	52
Vientiane	89	58
Bolikhamxay	88	45
Khammuane	88	36
Savannakhet	82	52
Saravane	91	52
Sekong	68	16
Champasak	98	56
Attapeu	85	55
Xaysomboun Special Region	90	54

Source: State Planning Committee, National Statistical Centre: *The Households of Lao PDR: Social and economic indicators, Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 1997/98*, 1999.

In practice, most primary school students go to the incomplete school in their own village up to 2nd or 3rd year, and then move to the nearest complete school to continue their schooling, so that one complete school must take care of the students from several incomplete schools, constituting a school group as depicted in Figure A5.3. Nationally, the gross catchment area per complete primary school is more than 100 square km, but variations between provinces are enormous. In densely-populated Vientiane Municipality for example, a complete primary school can be found in, on average, every 14 square km.; in Phongsaly, the average catchment area is 1500 square km<sup>7</sup>. In remote rural areas, complete primary schools are often too far to go for students from incomplete primary schools. This contributes, therefore, to the high dropout rate.

<sup>7</sup> The World Bank: *Lao PDR: Financing and Management of Education*, 1997.

**Figure A5.3 Image of School Group**



#### **A5.4 Development Vision and Plan<sup>8</sup>**

According to the Education Strategic Vision up to the Year 2020, the general goals for education are as follows:

1. To continue to work towards compulsory education at primary level and subsequently lower secondary level;
2. To continue to eradicate illiteracy among target groups and upgrade their level of education;
3. To continue to improve the quality of education with a focus on moral, intellectual, arts, physical and labour education;
4. To raise the internal efficiency of the national education system by gradually reducing the dropout and repetition rates;
5. To develop vocational, technical and higher education to meet the needs of the labour market;
6. To select and introduce appropriate science and technologies in teaching and learning and pay more attention to scientific research to serve development;
7. To expand education widely, and reduce disparities between localities, provinces, genders and ethnic groups; and
8. To pay more attention to talented students and handicapped people.

In order to achieve these goals, the objectives of the 5-Year Education Development Plan 2001-2005 are as follows:

(Equitable Access)

- Expansion of school provision, particularly in remote areas,
- Rehabilitation and renovation of existing schools,

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education: *The Education Strategic Vision Up To the Year 2020*, Vientiane, 2000.

- Facilitation of the role of the private sector,
- Specific programmes aimed at improving access for disadvantaged groups,
- Conducting a feasibility study for open learning,
- Increased access to non-formal education,
- Conducting a feasibility study for distance education

(Quality)

- Improving the quality of teachers at all levels through pre-service and in-service training programmes,
- Improving the curricula at all levels of education,
- Providing teaching-learning materials, equipment and promoting local production of low cost materials.

(Relevance)

- Linkage between education and society,
- Revising and adapting the curriculum to respond to changes in society,
- Establishing guidance system for students on schooling in vocational and technical fields,
- Strengthening the linkages between educational institutions, industry and the private sector.

(Planning and Management)

- Strengthening operational and human resource development planning,
- Strengthening the existing network of EMIS at central, provincial, district and school levels,
- Strengthening budget and finance capacity,
- Developing investment programme management and monitoring and improving aid co-ordination capacity within MOE,
- Establishing an endowment fund for promoting private sector participation.

## APPENDIX 6

# THE SITUATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN LAOS

### A6.1 CLASSIFICATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

In Laos, the following three categories have long been used to classify ethnic minorities: *Lao Lum*, Lowlander' (Tai-Kadai ethno-linguistic family); *Lao Thoeng*, Midlander' or Uplander' (Mon-Khmer ethno-linguistic family); and *Lao Sung*, Highlander' (Sino-Tibetan and Hmong-Mien ethno-linguistic families). This classification is said to be based on: ethno-linguistic family, customary habitat (and altitude especially), and customary types of agricultural production (paddy or swidden cultivation). However, these distinctions have ceased to be used in official parlance<sup>1</sup> since the Conference on Ethnic Minorities in 1981. Among the major reasons for this are those: 1) the Government has been promoting solidarity and unity among all the people of the nation; and 2) these distinctions do not reflect changes that have taken place in habitat and agricultural production.

At the moment, the system of 47 groupings developed by the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) is the official classification of ethnic minorities in Laos. This system was adopted for the Lao census in 1995 and a variety of categories of information by ethnic group was provided. However, the LFNC reviewed this ethno-linguistic system and a new system of 49 groupings was proposed at the Conference held in August 2000. The Lao government is now legislating to incorporate the 49 groupings as the official system of classification (Table A6.1).

What should be noted here is the fact that an ethno-linguistic system of classification has been used, and that official ethnic names have been established based on what groups prefer to call themselves. Changes were made to all the ethnic names for which requests for change were made by ethnic minorities.

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<sup>1</sup> However, these three categories are still found in official documents.

**Table A6.1 Classification of Ethnic Minorities Based on Ethno-Linguistic Families by LFNC**

Ethno-linguistic Family		Ethnic Name (2000 <sup>1</sup> )	Comparisons to 1995 Census
<b>1. Tai-Kadai</b>	1	Lao	
	2	Phuthai	
	3	Tai	Branched from <i>Phuthai</i> group
	4	Lue	
	5	Nhouan	
	6	Nhang	
	7	Xek	
	8	Thai Neua	Branched from <i>Lue</i> group
<b>2. Mon-Khmer</b>	9	Kammou	
	10	Pray	Changed name from <i>Thin</i>
	11	Xingmoun	
	12	Phong	
	13	Then	
	14	Eudou	Not found in 1995 Census
	15	Bit	
	16	Lamet	
	17	Sam Tao	
	18	Katang	
	19	Makong	
	20	Tri	
	21	Jru	Changed name from <i>Laven</i>
	22	Talieng	
	23	Ta Ooy	
	24	Jeh	
	25	Brau	Changed name from <i>Lavae</i>
	26	Katou	
	27	Halak	Changed name from <i>Alak</i>
	28	Ooy	
	29	Kriang	Changed name from <i>Ngeh</i>
	30	Cheng	
	31	Sadang	
	32	Xouey	
	33	Nhahoen	
	34	Lavi	
	35	Pako	
	36	Khmer	

Ethno-linguistic Family		Ethnic Name (2000 <sup>1</sup> )	Comparisons to 1995 Census
	37	Toum	
	38	Ngouan	
	39	Meuang	Changed name from <i>Mone</i>
	40	Kri	
<b>3. Sino-Tibetan</b>	41	Akha	Changed name from <i>Ko</i> , and integrated <i>Kheu</i> into <i>Akha</i>
	42	Singsili	Changed name from <i>Phou Noy</i>
	43	Lahu	Integrated <i>Muxoe</i> and <i>Kouy</i> , and changed name to <i>Lafu</i>
	44	Sila	Changed name from <i>Sida</i>

Source: (1) Lao Front for National Construction: *Conference on Agreement of Ethnic Name in Lao PDR*, 2000.  
(2) State Planning Committee: *Results from the Population Census 1995*, 1997.

Note: Some official ethnic names which are obviously misspelled in National Census 1995 have been changed by the JICA Study Team.

## A6.2 DISTRIBUTION OF ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS

The ethnic composition of each province is shown in Table A.6.2. Only the three largest ethnic groups are listed in the data. While many provinces are dominated by the Tai-Kadai family (Lao, Phutai and Lue) which constitutes 65 percent of the total Lao population, it is of some interest that the subgroups of the Mon-Khmer family (Kammou and Katou) dominate in some northern provinces and Sekong, and that the Hmong, belonging to the Hmong-Mien family, constitutes the majority in Xaysomboun Special Region. No ethnic groups of the Tai-Kadai family are listed among the top three in Phongsaly and Sekong. In Luangnamtha and Oudomxay, whilst the Lue in the Tai-Kadai ethno-linguistic family comes the third, the Lao, the largest ethnic group, is absent from the list.

The degree of ethnic mixture can be seen from the Table A6.2. The share of the 3 major ethnic groups of Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Bokeo and Sekong only amounts to around 60 percent of the total population in these provinces. This means either there is less of a gap between the top three and other groups compared to other provinces or that there are numerous ethnic groups in these provinces. As there is only a slight gap between the first and second most populous groups in these provinces, it is also difficult to infer from this data which ethnic group is socially dominant. This highlights the need to examine other indicators to analyse the ethnic situation in each province.

**Table A6.2 Ethnic Constitution by Province**

Province	Population (1995)	1st group (%)	2nd group (%)	3rd group (%)	Total percentage of the 3 major groups (%)
Vientiane Municipality	524107	Lao (92.6)	Phutai (3.1)	Hmong (1.4)	97.1
Phongsaly	152848	Kammou (24.4)	Akha (20.0)	Singsili (19.4)	63.8
Luangnamtha	114741	Kammou (24.7)	Akha (23.9)	Lue (15.8)	64.4
Oudomxay	210207	Kammou (57.7)	Hmong (13.1)	Lue (12.2)	83.0
Bokeo	113612	Kammou (23.8)	Lue (20.6)	Lao (13.4)	57.8
Luangphrabang	364840	Kammou (45.9)	Lao (28.6)	Hmong (15.2)	89.7
Huaphanh	244651	Phutai (31.5)	Lao (30.0)	Hmong (20.3)	81.8
Xayaboury	291764	Lao (63.4)	Kammou (9.0)	Lue (8.1)	80.5
Xiengkhuang	200619	Lao (44.3)	Hmong (34.2)	Phutai (10.2)?	88.7
Vientiane	286564	Lao (63.8)	Phutai (14.0)	Kammou (12.5)	90.3
Bolikhamxay	163589	Phutai (41.0)	Lao (40.2)	Hmong (9.2)	90.4
Khammuane	272463	Lao (59.4)	Phutai (21.7)	Makong (13.4)	94.5
Savannakhet	671758	Lao (57.5)	Phutai (18.9)	Katang (8.7)	85.1
Saravane	256231	Lao (60.0)	Katang (13.3)	Xouey (8.1)	81.4
Sekong	64170	Katou (24.3)	Talieng (21.8)	Halack (15.5)	61.6
Champasak	501387	Lao (84.8)	Lavi (4.9)	Xouey (2.4)	92.1
Attapeu	87229	Lao (36.9)	Lavi (17.4)	Ooy (16.4)	70.7
Xaysomboun Special Region	54068	Hmong (53.7)	Lao (19.4)	Kammou (16.7)	89.8

Source: National Statistical Centre, 1995, Census 1995

### A6.3 LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS AND SIMILARITIES AMONG ETHNIC MINORITIES<sup>2</sup>

Although a variety of means can be used to classify ethnic minorities, the below provides a brief examination of the level of communication within the same ethno-linguistic families based on the 49 groupings.

#### (1) Tai-Kadai Group

8 Lao-speaking groups<sup>3</sup> belonging to the Tai-Kadai Group share approximately 90 percent of their vocabulary and thus communication within this Tai-Kadai group is relatively easy.

#### (2) Mon-Khmer Group

These 32 ethnic groups are Austro-Asiatic speakers. They can be further divided into 8 subgroups based on linguistic similarities. Communication between the different subgroups is

<sup>2</sup> Based on the findings from an interview with an anthropologist working for the Department of Ethnic Groups and Social Class, Lao Front for National Construction.

<sup>3</sup> The Lao language contains many words derived from Sanskrit and Pali.

difficult. However, as can be seen in the example of the Brau and Sadang in the Table A.6.3, smaller groups are susceptible to a range of socio-economic influences and tend to acquire the language of the largest group in their locality.

**Table A6.3 Linguistic Similarities within the Mon-Khmer Group**

Group	Ethnic Name	Characteristics	
1	9 (Kammou) 13 (Then) 15 (Bit) 16 (Lamet) 17 (Sam Tao)	Their languages are similar and comprehension reaches a level of 80-100%.	Languages between Group 1 and Group 2 are not mutually comprehensible.
2	18 (Katang) 19 (Makong) 20 (Tri) 23 (Ta Ooy) 26 (Katou) 29 (Kriang) 32 (Xouey) 35 (Pako)	Their languages are similar and 80-100% of them are mutually comprehensible.	
3	21 (Jru) 25 (Brau) 28 (Ooy) 30 (Cheng) 33 (Nhahoen)	Their languages are similar and mutually comprehensible.	
4	22 (Talieng) 24 (Jeh) 27 (Halak) 34 (Lavi)	Their languages are similar and mutually comprehensible.	
5	37 (Toum) 38 (Ngouan) 39 (Meuang) 40 (Kri)	Their languages are similar and mutually comprehensible.	
6	25 (Brau) 31 (Sadang)	Group 31 understands the language of Group 25 but not vice versa. The population of group 31 is about 18,000, while Group 25 has a population of only 700. They live close to each other, and the smaller group, Group 25, cannot survive without acquiring the language of Group 31, the bigger group.	
7	36 (Khmer)	This group lives only in Champasak, and has a population of 3,000. They speak Cambodian Khmer.	
8	10 (Pray) 11 (Xingmoun) 12 (Phong)	They only understand about 10% of each other's language. Group 10 live in Xayaboury, Group 11 live in Xieng Kho District of Huaphanh, and Group 12 live in Huaphanh and Bolikhamxay.	

Note: The shaded parts show the largest ethnic group in each sub-group.



### **(3) Sino-Tibetan Group**

The Sino-Tibetan Group consists of 6 ethnic groups in Laos. 41 (Akha), 42 (Sengsili), 43 (Lahu), 44 (Sila), 45 (Hayi), and 46 (Lolo) speak similar languages and can thus communicate easily with one another. 47 (Ho) immigrated from China and speak a language derived from Chinese.

### **(4) Hmong-Mien Group**

This Group consists of two ethnic groups. They are highlanders living in the centre and north of Laos. As they are originally from China, they speak a language derived from Chinese. 48 (Hmong) traditionally inhabits highlands in the north of Khammuane, while 49 (Iu Mien) inhabits the north of Bolikhamxay. Although 48 (Hmong) has no script, 49 (Iu Mien) uses Chinese characters. Communication between these two ethnic groups is difficult.

## **A6.4 ETHNIC MINORITY POLICY AND ORGANISATION**

### **(1) Ethnic Minority Policy**

The Resolution of the Political Bureau Concerning the Affairs of Various Minorities, Especially the Hmong Minority (Hmong Policy 1981)<sup>4</sup> adopted in 1981 was the first explicit statement of policy on ethnic minorities since the founding the People's Democratic Republic in 1975. The Government had little political presence in the areas inhabited by the Hmong, and thus had limited understanding of and attention to the needs of the Hmong population. With this policy, the Government aimed at building political foundations in Hmong areas, improving their living conditions (especially, health and education), and strengthening national security and defence after a prolonged conflict with the Hmong since 1975<sup>4</sup>.

The Hmong Policy 1981 was later developed into The Resolution of the Central Administration Committee of the Party Regarding Ethnic Minorities in a New Phase (Resolution 1992)<sup>4</sup> and its scope was expanded to cover other ethnic minorities as well as the Hmong. The first section of the Resolution, evaluating the implementation of ethnic minority policy since 1981, contains many self-critical statements such as “not enough attention has been paid to the ethnic minority issue”, and “measures taken so far have not been so satisfactory as they should have been”, and “even some of the central organisations concerned have neglected this issue of importance”. Providing a strong critique of past efforts, it showed the strong commitment and determination of the Government in tackling the minority-related problems, setting forth the following essential tasks.

1. Strengthening the political foundations;

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<sup>4</sup> ILO: *Policy Study on Ethnic Minority Issues in Rural Development*, 2000.

2. Encouraging production and opening channels of distribution in order to shift from a subsistence economy into a productive economy; promoting and developing the potential of the mountainous areas; improving the quality of life;
3. Expanding education, culture, health and social welfare;
4. Improving national defence and peacekeeping; and
5. Strengthening the Party's leadership in ethnic minority affairs.

For tasks 2 and 3 especially, a detailed action plan (see Table A6.4) has been developed with a strong focus on issues of basic human needs, such as occupation, education, culture, health and social welfare.

**Table A6.4 Tasks for Implementation of Ethnic Minority Policy**

Task	Contents
Economic Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue programmes to halt shifting cultivation</li> <li>• Allocate land for cultivation and raising livestock</li> <li>• Introduce policies on taxation and credit</li> <li>• LFNC is in charge of the development of mountainous areas to reduce socio-economic disparities between urban and rural areas.</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the literacy rate</li> <li>• Expand the primary education network</li> <li>• Improve access to education for all children of school age</li> <li>• Improve the system of schools for ethnic minority children</li> <li>• Develop training programmes for teachers of ethnic minority schools in rural mountainous areas</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Hmong and Khammu scripts using Lao alphabet, and introduce these alphabets to schools simultaneously with the Lao language</li> <li>• Promote traditional arts, literature and their heritage to foster the rich cultural diversity of the nation</li> <li>• Educate ethnic minorities to eradicate those traditional customs which are backward and have negative effects on production, life and the state of unity</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote hygiene, prevent diseases, and eliminate serious epidemics for better health and longer life expectancy</li> <li>• Make appropriate investments in the health sector, combining modern and traditional medicines</li> </ul>
Social welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data on ethnic retirees, handicapped persons and families of those who died for the nation to give them special services</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up information systems in mountainous ethnic areas, for example, radio broadcasts in minority languages</li> </ul>

Source: Central Administration Committee of the Party: *The Resolution of Central Administration Committee of the Party Regarding Ethnic Minority in a New Phase, 1992.*

## (2) Organisation

There are three principal agencies working with ethnic minorities.

The first is the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC)<sup>5</sup>, whose main aim is to promote a sense of solidarity and equality among the population irrespective of social status, ethnicity and religion. The LFNC currently has overall charge of the planning and implementation of ethnic minority programmes. The LFNC co-ordinates with the Party, the ministries and relevant committees.

The second agency is the Ethnic Minorities Committee of the National Assembly. Its obligations are principally legal in nature, including drafting legislation, bills and budgets.

Thirdly, and in addition to the research section of the LFNC, within the Ministry of Information and Culture, there are two institutes engaging in research on ethnic minorities: the Institute for Cultural Research conducting anthropological studies, and the Institute for Linguistic Research carrying out linguistic research<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The forerunner of the LFNC was *Neo Lao Hak Xat* (Lao Patriotic Front) which served as the major governmental organisation until the founding of the People's Democratic Republic. In 1987, two Offices were combined to form a Central Committee which is placed at the same level as the ministries.

<sup>6</sup> ILO: *Policy Study on Ethnic Minority Issues in Rural Development*, 2000

## APPENDIX 7

# WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

### A7.1 BACKGROUND

The National Clean Water Project in Laos was established in 1981 as part of the Water Decade initiated by the United Nations. The purpose of the project was to supply clean water to urban and rural areas; it was managed by two different institutions : the clean water supply for urban areas (Nampapa) was under the Committee of International Cooperation (CIC), while the clean water supply for rural areas (Nam Saat) was under the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology.

From 1981 to 1992, Nam Saat followed very much a donor-driven approach. WHO and UNDP supported national capacity building, while UNICEF and EU were supporting the hardware component of the project. In 1989-90 AusAID funded a Nam Saat project implemented by UNICEF. Some NGOs (Mennonites, Quakers Service in Laos) assisted district authorities (Savannakhet, Oudomxay, Phongsaly) with technical training, and the supply of materials and equipment necessary for the installation of water schemes.

### A7.2 RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR STRATEGY

From 1994 to 1997, SIDA, UNDP-World Bank, and UNICEF provided joint support to Nam Saat in formulating the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy (RWSS Sector Strategy). The strategy was launched in November 1997, and Nam Saat as an institution established units in all provinces and districts.

The RWSS Sector Strategy begins with the statement: *"Water and Environment Health have a well acknowledged importance in Lao PDR, where they are seen as important components in ensuring the wellbeing of Lao people and as important preconditions for rapid development. Access to water and sanitation is recognised as a major component for improving primary health care in rural areas, and as such, is an essential link in the process of rural development"*<sup>1</sup>.

The Sector Strategy set up a long-term goal: *Every rural person of the Lao PDR has access to safe and adequate water supply and sanitation facilities and lives in a hygienic environment.*

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<sup>1</sup> Concept Paper of Nam Saat, October 1994

The specific objectives of the RWSS strategy are to:

- 1) Improve personal and community hygiene practices, and
- 2) Increase people's access to clean water supplies and use of latrines in an effective and sustainable manner.

The strategic directions of RWSS show a significant shift from the past approach driven by external support to a Lao owned (Lao-led, Lao-management) approach. The main strategic points are:

- bottom-up planning from community to district, province and centre , guided by Lao-led strategic principles
- hygiene awareness (behaviour change), provision of latrines and water supply in an effective and sustainable manner.
- concentration on under-served, poor and remote areas
- after Nam Saat informs entire community about technical options (informed choice), everyone participates in decisions (community demand)
- community contributes to cost of construction (in labour, local resources, and sometimes cash) and complement government technical assistance and external funds. User fee system becomes universal.
- Community Water and Sanitation Committees (WATSANS) collect user fees for maintenance, repairs, and future extensions.
- Many government offices and mass organizations (LWU, LYU, Rural Development Office, Education, Health and others) involved through District and Provincial Co-ordination Units.
- Strengthen collaboration and co-ordinate efforts.
- District Nam Saat work directly with communities on all aspects, Provincial Nam Saat provides back-up support on planning, technical training, management and dissemination of learning with support from Nam Saat Central.
- Encouraged to expand services, especially to accessible well-off areas.
- Central level sets standards and enforcement process.
- Women and minorities actively recruited into all types of work

The guiding principles for the RWSS Programme Planning and Operations are:

1. Equity of service
2. Partnership
3. Bottom-up, decentralised planning
4. Learning process

5. Gender and Cultural Sensitivity
6. Accountability and Transparency
7. National Policies and Standards

The launching of the RWSS Sector Strategy (Nam Saat) was followed by a transitional period from the donor-driven approach to the Lao owned approach.

In the second phase of SIDA's support, bilateral funds were directly channelled from SIDA to support the transitional programme. This support programme was expected to bring all activities in line with the principles of the sector strategy, and to accelerate the process through which Nam Saat will ultimately take full responsibility for all aspects of the national programme. Three provinces (Huaphanh, Bolikhamxay, Sekong) were selected to be the spearhead provinces for the implementation of RWSS funded by SIDA.

Although the national Programme as a whole will be under the responsibility and management of Nam Saat from the outset, supporting inputs will still be necessary from UNICEF and the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Supply (WB WSP), Nam Saat's traditional partners. The SIDA support for Nam Saat is to be channelled in three linked ways:

- through Nam Saat directly;
- through UNICEF (for implementing the school latrine programme and for the RWSS implementation in 3 spearhead provinces, regarded as a SIDA Project);
- through the UNDP-World Bank Water and Sanitation Program (for facilitating the institutional learning process and its documentation, and for a small number of training activities).

The support of UNICEF and the UNDP- World Bank Programme focus on aspects of personnel, applying the Strategy Framework, and helping establish the Water Resources Council. In order to make the transition successful, Nam Saat staff of all levels require vigilant support, guidance and training development. The central office staff should perform primarily policy-making, national level planning, investing, training, learning/researching, advising and supporting functions, while the province and district staff should concentrate on assisting and advising the communities, and regulation and monitoring efforts. A key aspect will be the further development of management skills at all Nam Saat levels, especially in accountability-related tasks (account-keeping, written and oral reporting, and monitoring and evaluating).

A World Bank Loan is provided for the implementation of RWSS in Oudomxay and Phongsaly as a pilot programme applying the sector strategic directions, where the WB WSP is closely working with the institutional learning process.

After the end of SIDA's Phase II support, SIDA will continue to provide funding support to the sector for a short transition period, but will reduce its contribution to zero, while Nam Saat, the Government and others progressively increasing their share of investment in order to keep total sector investment at the same level.

The RWSS schemes are: gravity fed system, bore-holes, protected dugwells, water spring protection, family latrines, and school latrines.

### **A7.3 PRESENT SITUATION OF RWSS IMPLEMENTATION**

Since the start of the transitional period Nam Saat has been able to maintain its capacity to support and promote implementation activities under the national programme.

Project activities have been implemented throughout the country in spite of the fact that Nam Saat have had to devote considerable management attention and staff time to the introduction of new methodologies and to creating learning processes, and the slow pace of the SIDA project due project specific problem not related to the Nam Saat capacity as an institution. NGOs (more than 40), and other donor agencies' projects (AusAid, GTZ, EU) have compensated for this by implementing other activities in the sector.

The RWSS implementation is being carried out by a large of number of actors, which creates a strong dynamic of its own. In some reviews and evaluations of Nam Saat, it is suggested that the number of RWSS actors seems to be too large to be controlled by a single institution; and the growth of the sector i.e. the rate at which water supply and sanitation coverage is increased, will be contingent on how efficiently the RWSS functions.

The annual reports on the implementation of Nam Saat show that water coverage is consistently greater than latrine coverage, that implementation is mainstreaming on scheme construction / installation and repairs; while there seem to be fewer hygiene activities related to the activities of water and sanitation supply, which would ensure more effective and sustainable impacts.

Some review reports point out the increasing involvement of the private sector in water and sanitation construction. It is evident that the private sector has been involved in the RWSS implementation for two reasons:

1. Water is a basic need. In rural areas where roads have been constructed and where people can afford it, the private sector competes with the Nam Saat national programme and other projects; road construction attracts people to live along the roadside, and this creates a need for latrines.
2. Nam Saat national programme has devoted much of its time to staff capacity building (training and processes for interaction learning) and strengthening the institution (and its management). This has led to a slow pace in implementation and providing technical service for construction / installation to many projects, including the

SIDA/UNICEF project in 3 spearhead provinces. In order to perform the work on time, some donor-agencies and NGOs have invited the private sector to become involved in water and latrine construction.

The large number of RWSS actors and the involvement of the private sector leads the author of the mid-term review report of Nam Saat (April 2001) to suggest that Nam Saat as an institution and as a national programme needs to review its Goals and Roles.

It is proposed that Nam Saat should:

- for keeping in line the existing rapid development of the RWSS regardless the national standard of the technical process for the implementation performance.
- increase back-stopping support on planning, monitoring, coordinating experience of technical construction design, and facilitating projects for the equity of service (since the most inaccessible areas are less likely to be served by other projects or the private sector) <sup>2</sup>
- promote and support improved hygiene behaviour change in parallel with the expansion of coverage of water systems and latrines, which will lead to achieving the long-term goal of Nam Saat as per the Sector Strategy paper.

A statement at the annual meeting of NAG noted that the campaign for latrine use is done with dispersion. Many national programmes and projects are working actively at the rural village level to promote the use of family and school latrines. But when rural people, both adults and children, come to some health centres and hospitals, the latrines are unusable because they are either closed or too dirty to contemplate using. This fact pushes them back to their old behaviour; this shows that hygiene awareness and behaviour of health staff at local health facilities is also of some concern.

The monitoring of primary health care education (including hygiene and sanitation) is needed not only for rural villagers and schoolchildren, but also for health staff at rural health facilities in order that health worker's behaviour is a proper model for people (latrine use, latrine cleaning, encouraging patients to use latrines and keeping latrines clean at the health facilities).

There are some suggestions that health sector investment should focus more on malaria control and prevention of diarrhoeal diseases, but there is no doubt that basic disease prevention is related very much to personal hygiene behaviour and maintenance of a safe environment.

Nam Saat as an institution still has many challenges to overcome before it achieves the long-term goal stated in the Concept paper of October 1994:

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<sup>2</sup> statement given at the annual meeting of NAG (National Advisory Group for RWSS supported by WB WSP)



Mentioned in the National Work Plan of Nam Saat, reviewed in October 2000 as Nam Saat's Programme Goals:

- *To improve access, use and sustainability of new and existing water supply and sanitation facilities in rural areas*
- *To maximise the health and socio-economic impact of water and sanitation facilities in the context of rural development and water resource management.*
- *To reduce infant mortality and morbidity rates in rural areas.*

**Table A7.1 Implementation in Coverage of water and sanitation**

No	Areas	% of population covered		% of increase on previous year		Expected coverage by year 2005
		1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001	1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001	
1.	Water Supply		55.06	5.74	3.06	66.51
2.	Sanitation	35.9	39.72	1.43	2.12	47.18
3.	School Latrines		8.19	4.62	1.65	21.00

**Table A7.2 Planned and actual implementation, Oct 2000 – June 2001**

No	scheme	new construction		repairs	
		planned	implemented	planned	implemented
1	Gravity fed system	200	164	80	8
2.	Bore-holes	897	714	0	145
3.	Dug well	303	172	0	24
4.	water jar	14	30	-	-
5.	community water supply	14	2	1	0
6.	water spring protection	2	1	-	-
7.	Sanitation (family latrine)	14.088	16.547	-	-
8.	School latrine	150	135	-	-

**Table A7.3 Proportion of investment by the funding partners (%)**

No	Scheme	Government	Community	Funding agency (international)
1.	Gravity fed system	12.64	20.52	66.83
2.	Bore-hole	1.97	19.42	78.59
3.	Dug well	0.29	27.01	72.69
4.	water jar	no information	no information	no information
5.	community water supply	no information	no information	no information
6.	water spring protection	0	18.79	81.20
7.	sanitation (family latrine)	2.70	85.12	12.17

8.	school latrine	0.52	28.68	70.77
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**Table A7.4 Sum of funds provided by partners**

No	Agencies	Kip		US \$		Bhats
		planned	used	planned	used	used
1.	SIDA			543,392.57	350,899.71	
2.	WSP-EAP / WB			292,000.00	305,468.38	
3.	Belgium BTC/MTCPC				7,839.00	9,336.45
4.	WHO		1,383,000,000		832.00	
5.	NGOs		4,059,786,900			
6.	Government	736,497,227	736,497,227			
7.	Community	3,325,610,808	3,325,610,808			
8.	UNICEF/SIDA		1,033,250,860			
9.	World Bank Loan for Luangnamtha			209,089.45	122,877.87	

## APPENDIX 8 GENDER

### A8.1 COMMITMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

The Lao Constitution of 1991 defines the equal rights of men and women through the following points:

- Husband and wife enjoy equal rights to property.
- Both men and women can inherit property.
- A husband and a wife have an equal right to all family property, regardless of who is the actual wage earner.
- Marriage is monogamous.
- Family surname can be from the husband, the wife, or both can retain their own names.
- Men and women have an equal right to vote after 18 years of age.
- Men and women have an equal right concerning political, socio-economic, cultural and familial activities.
- There is not any discrimination with regards to salaries, wages, bonuses and pensions.
- Working age for men is from 16 to 60, and that for women is from 16 to 55.

The government also signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1980, initiated by the United Nations.

In 1995, the government ratified the “Platform for Action” from the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing.

### A8.2 GENDER SITUATION IN LAO PDR

Lao PDR has a population of 5,218,300, of which males make up 49.4% (2,579,000) and females 50.6% (2,639,300)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> NSC, Basic Statistics of Lao PDR 2000

Lao women represent 10% of the total workforce. Lao women represent 49% of public health employees, 57% of medical doctors, 25% of public employees and 40% of schoolteachers<sup>2</sup>.

In the productive sectors, women represent 60% of handicraft workers, 50% of traders and 20% of factory workers.

Adult literacy is estimated at 50%, but the literacy rate among female is estimated at 35 % compared to 65%. among men

### **A8.3 INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM: LAO WOMEN'S UNION**

The Lao Revolutionary Party established the Lao women's association in 1954 in the half of the country they controlled at the time. The Lao Women's association was set up for the purpose of participating in the war for national liberation. The association's members were mainly patriotic women living in rural areas.

After 1975, the Association of Lao Women became the national organisation for women. Its membership was expanded to include women working in the government system and village women.

Presently the purpose of the Lao Women Union's (LWU) is to protect the rights and interests of Women and Children of all Lao ethnic groups.

The supreme organ of the LWU is the Central Committee, which is elected every four years. Each province has a LWU Office whose head who is a member of the central committee. The Provincial LWU, on behalf of the central union, is responsible for co-ordinating with the district Lao Women's Union, which in turn co-ordinates with the Village LWU.

In each institution of the government system there is also a LWU committee. The committee's head is a member of the Central Committee of the LWU.

The central LWU coordinates with its committee vertically (provincial and district) for implementing all kinds of development activities and for social-political education.

The central LWU co-ordinates with LWU in the ministries and in state institutions only for social-political education.

The LWU's main funding source is from the National Budget, since the amount collected from membership fees is very modest.

The LWU was the first institution to work with external aid agencies because:

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<sup>2</sup> MOH: *Country Report of the Council of Medical Science*, 1995

- it was recognised that Lao women, like other women in the less developed world, perform most productive activities in the family, including caring for the health of family members; and
- members of CEDAW were allowed to give foreign aid to Lao women.

Collaboration with foreign agencies has allowed the LWU to gain the technical knowledge and management skills needed for development work.

The women who gained these skills are only those who are working the vertical institutional line(?) of the LWU, since existing working procedures in the country do not give opportunities to LWU members in the ministries and institutions to share their knowledge and experience. However, many ministries and institutions also work with outside agencies as well as Lao Women Union.

Supported by international financial and technical aid, the Gender Resource Information for Development Centre (GRID Centre) was established in 1997 for gender development.

At present, based on the availability of resources, the GRID Centre is working:

- To introduce basic gender awareness to members of the LWU and its partners in development work (local Agriculture, Education and Health offices);
- To develop the capacity of the gender resource group (gender trainers) for the LWU and its network.
- To disseminate information on gender aspects of socio-economic development.

The main activities of the GRID Centre are:

- To carry out Training on Basic Gender Awareness;
- To carry out Training on Gender Sensitive Planning; and
- To provide Gender Research Assistants to donors' projects.

The GRID Centre is assisting the central Lao Women Union to train groups of trainers for promoting basic gender awareness around the country.

Supported by the government committee for Planning and Co-operation, the GRID Centre is preparing to provide training on Gender Sensitive Planning to local planning divisions throughout the country.

Beside the GRID Centre, the National Statistics Centre has also incorporated gender-related data categories into the national census.

#### **A8.4 GENDER-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF MINISTRIES**

In the line ministries and technical institutions, there has been some gender development activities courtesy of development projects and programmes supported by donor agencies, but these have not been integrated with existing LWU activities or ministry policy. ACTIVITIES of Donors and NGOs for Gender Development

Mainly the donor agencies are developing gender awareness through programmes with:

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, mainly with programme on farming systems, irrigation, forest and land allocation, watershed conservation, livestock. For example, in the Department of Forestry, Sida has worked for gender mainstreaming, but a substantial impact on policies and action plans has not yet been seen.

The Ministry of Education has introduced programmes such as Women's Education Project, Basic Education (Girls) Project, Strategies for the Promotion of Basic Education for Women and Girls, Non-Formal Education, Illiteracy Elimination for Adults, programme for Writing and Reading Materials for Women with limited reading skills.

The LWU within the Ministry of Education has achieved more in the process of gender development, in that a Gender Team has been established to study the feasibility of incorporating Gender into the curricula of various Education programmes.

##### Ministry of Health:

As well as the input of LWU and donor agencies in gender development, many NGOs are also making efforts to introduce gender issues to people in project villages and to local counterparts at province and district level.

All gender development activities carried out can be classified as aiming at:

- introducing Basic Gender Awareness; or
- Understanding Gender, which differs from sex. Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female:

Understanding Gender, which refers to the differences between men and women in what they do, means:

- To encourage men and women to participate in equal numbers in project and programme activities.
- Organising equal numbers of women and men to also plan and evaluate programmes.

These two topics do not imply the impact to the changes for the Gender Equality. It is visible that women participating in equal number with men in any program activities at any level are under-represented at policy making, management and decision-making.(?don't understand this paragraph?)

It is recognized theoretically that the crucial aspects in making changes for the gender equality are:

- The empowerment of women to influence what is valued and to share decision-making about society's development priorities and directions;
- The motivation of more men to participate as equal partners of women in the process of defining the visions and strategies for a more gender-equal society;

The crucial step for more advanced gender development in the country will not happen unless there is a country-wide perspective and policy for Gender development announced by the Party and Lao Government.

Presently a Lao project supported by the ADB (Asian Development Bank) is being implemented to strengthen the capacity of LWU staff in the area of Gender Development. It is expected that the outcome of this project will be a Proposal for a country perspective and policy.

## APPENDIX 9 POVERTY ALLEVIATION

### A9.1 POVERTY STATUS IN LAOS

In Laos, poverty is measured by per capita real consumption of food and non-food items based on a poverty line. The poverty line was officially set at 2,000kcal per person per day. The percentage of those who fall below this line was 45 percent of the total Lao PDR population in 1992/93 and 38.6 percent in 1997/98.

Looking at the data in 1997/98 by province, the top four provinces were all in the northern region: Houaphanh (74.6%), Oudomxay (73.2%), Phongsaly (64.2%) and Luangnamtha (57.5%).

**Table A9.1 Percentage of the Poor by Region and Province - 1992/93 and 1997/98**

Region/Province	1992/93	1997/98	Growth Rate
Vientiane Municipality	24.4	12.2	-13.9
Northern Region	58.4	52.5	-2.1
Phongsaly	68.7	64.2	-1.3
Luangnamtha	60.3	57.5	-1.0
Oudomxay	51.1	73.2	7.2
Bokeo	63.5	37.4	-10.6
Luangphrabang	62.7	49.4	-4.8
Huaphanh	78.4	74.6	-1.0
Xayaboury	30.1	21.2	-7.0
Central Region	39.5	34.9	-2.5
Xiengkhuang	57.3	34.9	-9.9
Vientiane	28.1	24.3	-2.9
Bolikhambay	10.6	25.8	17.8
Khammuane	43.7	41.6	-1.0
Savannakhet	45.7	37.1	-4.2
Xaysomboun S R		55.0	
Southern Region	45.9	38.4	-3.6
Saravane	36.7	39.6	1.5
Sekong	65.9	45.7	-7.3
Champasak	43.6	35.6	-4.1
Attapeu	72.2	45.3	-9.3
All Laos	45.0	38.6	-3.1

Source: ADB, 2001, Participatory Poverty Assessment<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The original source of the data is Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey 1992/93 and 1997/98.

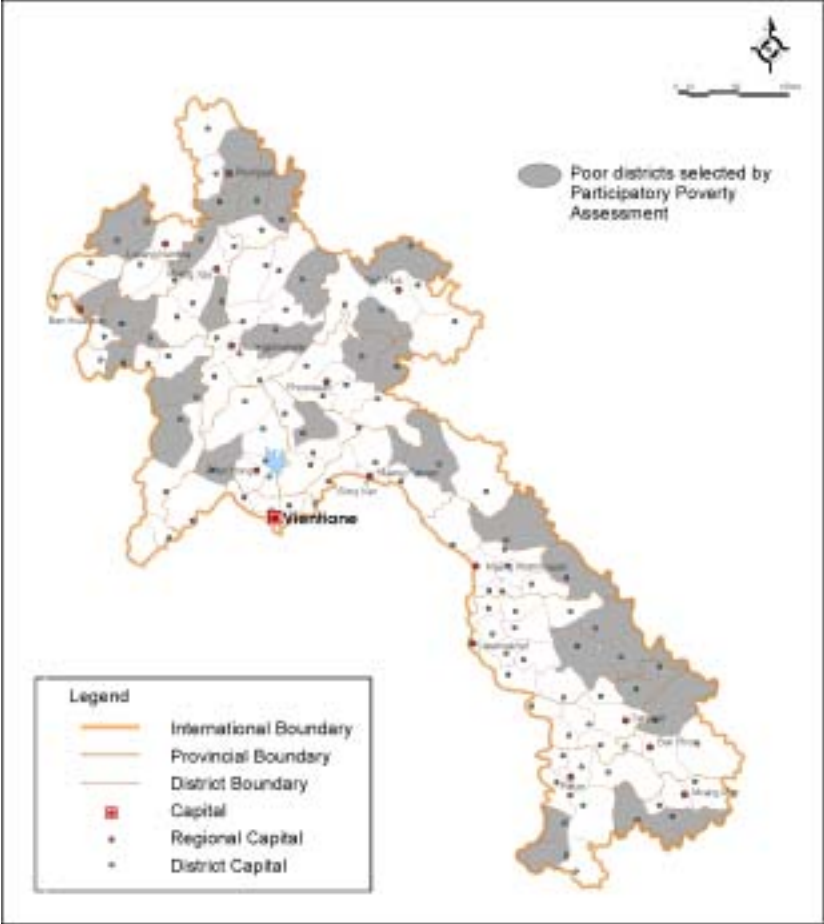


A comparison of data between 1992/93 and 1997/98 demonstrates a growing disparity between the urban and rural areas. Vientiane Municipality showed a 13.9 percent decline, whilst all other provinces a slight decline between 2.1 and 3.6 percent. An increase in poverty was seen in Oudomxay (+7.2%), Bolikhamxay (+17.8%) and Saravane (+1.5%).

**A9.2 POVERTY DISTRIBUTION**

The Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) conducted by the Committee for Planning and Cooperation (CPC) with support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) selected poor districts on the basis on the qualitative analysis of PPA data together with the quantitative analysis of the data of the Laos Expenditure and Construction Survey (LECS) 1997/98. As seen in the Figure A9.1, most of poor districts are located in the upland and highland area where swidden cultivation is widely practiced and the area along the Mekong River near the Thai border in the north, and the area near the Thai or Cambodian border in the south.

**Figure A9.1 Poverty Distribution**



Source: ADB, 2001, Participatory Poverty Assessment  
 Note: The original data is from the LECS1992/93 and LECS1997/98.

### A9.3 MAJOY UNDERLYING CAUSES OF POVERTY

#### (1) Background

The below briefly analyses the major problems the Lao PDR poor populations currently faces based on the findings of the village survey by the joint MOH/JICA Survey Team, together with those of the PPA surveying 84 villages. These problems appeared to underlie poverty in Laos.

##### 1) Poverty caused by decreased productivity: implications of the resettlement programmes and the policies to reduce swidden cultivation

Decreased rice productivity is the biggest problem raised by the farmers affected by the government policies and programmes to reduce swidden cultivation and encourage resettlement into lowland areas: (1) absence of the knowledge and skills on paddy cultivation together with non-workable irrigation systems in the resettled area caused lower rice productivity than expected; and (2) due to a decrease of land available for swidden cultivation, the fallow period was reduced from 7-8 years to once 2-3 years resulting in soil depletion and thus productivity per hector was decreased more than by half. Decreased rice production has serious effects on livelihoods as well as the physical and mental health of the people. With increasing mistrust to the present administration and a sense of uncertainty for the future resulted in increasing opium addiction<sup>2</sup>.

##### 2) Poverty caused by livestock losses: the vaccination service does not reach into poor villages

The livestock is very important to livelihood of farmers in Laos. Not only plays it an important role in agricultural production but also is an important household asset functioning as insurance in case of poor harvests or as merchandise to generate cash when necessary. Many farmers have experienced losses of livestock, such as water buffalo, cattle and chicken because of infectious animal diseases. Although the governmental system to provide the vaccination service for livestock through the provincial livestock and fishery offices<sup>3</sup> is already in place, it is not put into full operation and the vaccination is, in many cases, beyond the reach of most of the poor villages.

##### 3) Poverty caused by the exhaustion of natural resources

Many farming households rely heavily on the forests and river for supplemental foods, such as mushrooms, bamboos, fish and frogs. However, wild foods are becoming increasingly scarce due to recent population pressure, disafforestation, and its over-exploitation for market

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<sup>2</sup> Opium is widely used in the north and it is commonly used at 55 percent of the villages surveyed in the north. By ethnic group, 62 percent was Tibeto-Burman, 31 percent is Hmong-Myan and 21 percent is Mon-Khmer.

<sup>3</sup> The Provincial Livestock and Fishery Offices train vaccination technique, provide necessary tools and equipment. Trained VHV's conduct vaccination at the villages.

sale. Likewise, wood for fuel is becoming scarce. The increasing scarcity of the natural resources results in impoverishing the farming households.

4) Poverty caused by illness amongst the family

The major epidemics in Lao farming societies are malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, and acute respiratory infections. There is a close association between these epidemics and poverty, as illness of a member costs the entire family a great deal. It leads to decreasing labour inputs for agricultural and other farmwork and thus decreased productivity. The family also loses livestock as they are sacrificed to appease the spirits. Moreover, the family is unable to attend to the field as they should be, customary, in mourning for 30 days after the death of its member and during this time they are not allowed to work in the field.

5) Poverty caused by lack of cash: infrastructure, such as roads, schools and health facilities will be of little use if it does not generate cash

In the past, most people lived on a subsistence economy and barter rice surplus and food and non-foods items from the forests with clothes and salt. Once roads were constructed and people started going out to the cities. Whilst choices of commodities have increased, people are unable to purchase the necessities as income generated from the surplus of rice and forest products has decreased. People know that health and education is the key to get out of poverty. However, they do not have enough money to go to school or hospital. What is needed now is to generate income by improving agricultural techniques and making use of the existing skills and knowledge. Even if roads, schools and health facilities are constructed, poor people and people living far from those facilities will not be benefited<sup>4</sup>.

#### **A9.4 CAUSES OF POVERTY BY REGION<sup>5</sup>**

The causes of poverty by region and by degree were given in Table A9.2. The biggest cause of poverty is agricultural-related and this applies to all regions. In this category, land shortage, poor soil fertility and livestock diseases ranks the top three (except in the central region), followed by lack of irrigation, lack of cash crops and lack of business opportunity in the stated order. Under the health category, a decreased labour due to illness came first in the north and south. Access to health facilities was not mentioned. It is unclear whether this reflects lack of trust to health facilities. In contrast, poor access to hospitals was named, reflecting a desire for health care services.

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to lack of cash, there are other reasons for poor people being unable to benefit from these services include 'too busy with farm work', 'far from these facilities', 'childcare', 'language barrier', 'untrained teachers' and 'health centres without drugs'.

<sup>5</sup> Source: SPC, NSC and ADB, 2001, Participatory Poverty Assessment Lao PDR

**Table A9. 2 Course of the Poverty by Degree**

<b>Cause of Poverty</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>South</b>
<b>AGRICULTURE-RELATED</b>				
Unequal Land allocation, Declining agricultural productivity due to the shortened fallow period	★★★★★	★★★★★		★★★★
Declined soil fertility, Environmental degradation	★★★★★	★★★★★		★★★★
Livestock losses, Livestock diseases	★★★★★	★★★★★		★★★★★
Land shortage	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Pests, insects, rats, birds, wild pigs, bears	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★
Lack of irrigation and water supply	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
Resettlement, poor adaptation to paddy cultivation due to lack of skills and knowledge	★	★★★	★★	★
Poor business skills and knowledge, Poor competitiveness	★★★	★★	★★	★★★
Lack of cash crops and markets to sell agricultural products	★★★			
Theft of Livestock	★★			★
Diminishing forest resources		★		★★
UXOs		★		★
Lack of skills and knowledge on cash crops				★★
No market to sell crops promoted by the Government	★			
<b>HEALTH-RELATED</b>				
Frequent illness & Declined labour inputs	★★★	★		★★★★
Unavailable or insufficient health care services		★★★		★
Inaccessibility to hospitals (distance)		★★	★★★	
Poor access to safe and clean water	★		★★	
Poor health			★★★	
<b>OTHERS</b>				
Natural disaster (floods, drought etc.)	★★★★	★★★★		★★★★★
Poor technical skills and knowledge	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★
Lack of cash savings for investment	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★
Lack of all-weather roads	★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★
Low educational level (Shortage of trained teachers)	★★		★★★★	★★★
Too big families, increasing population		★★★	★★★★	
Opium addiction	★★★★			
Heritage of poverty (My parents were poor, so am I)	★★	★		
Increasing prices of goods				★★★
Lack of local leadership	★★			
Lack of will to solve own problems, Dependency on the others				★★
Gender inequality, unbalanced workload to women				★★
Ban on opium cultivation	★			

Source: SPC, NSC and ADB, 2001, Participatory Poverty Assessment Lao PDR

## **A9.5 GOVERNMENT'S POVERTY ALLEVIATION MEASURES**

At the Round Table Meeting VI held in June 1997, 'eight priority programmes' was proposed as part of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000. Eight priority programmes are: 1) food production; 2) commercial production; 3) shifting cultivation stabilization; 4) rural development; 5) infrastructure development; 6) external economic relations; 7) human resources development; and 8) services development. Poverty alleviation programmes should be implemented within the framework of eight priority programmes. However, eight priority programmes did not set a clear strategic plan or the implementing agency for each programme. As a result, most of the major targets in the Plan have not been implemented. At the Round Table Meeting VII held in November 2000, a more detailed action plan was presented and 4 key sectors, agriculture/forestry, education, health and road infrastructure, were identified as the key pillars for poverty alleviation. According to the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) issued in March 2001, the Government set the following targets for 2001-2003:

1. Expand health care service network at grassroots level (village, zone) and rehabilitate building and operational laboratory equipment to central, provincial, regional and district hospitals;
2. Ensure the existence of health care providers and improve their skills including village health volunteers in villages;
3. Improve the quality of services delivered;
4. Extend and improve the quality of maternal and child health care to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality;
5. Achieve universal child immunization and neonatal tetanus;
6. Reduce risks of disease outbreaks, particularly for cholera, malaria and dengue hemorrhage fever through improved clean water supply, information education communication (IEC) and social mobilization; and
7. Improve quality standards and monitoring of food and drug supply to ensure adequate quality and reasonable costs through new food and drug regulations and enhanced inspections.

The strategies for poverty alleviation include the strategic use of the findings of the Participatory Poverty Assessment as well as the use of other indicators for measuring poverty, such as education and health.