MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

Social Assessment Report

GPE III Learning Equity Acceleration Project (P173407)

Department of Planning, Ministry of Education and Sports

6/30/2020

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Tables and Annexes

Acronyms and abbreviations

CoC	Code of Conduct
ECE	early childhood education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESF	Environmental and Social Framework
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESSDP	Education and Sports Sector Development Plan
ESSs	Environmental and Social Standards
GBV	gender-based violence
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender Parity Index
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
SAR	Social Assessment Report
SEA	sexual exploitation and abuse
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
VAWC	violence against women and children
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee
WB	World Bank

1. Executive summary

This Social Assessment Report (SAR) is for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) III Learning Equity Acceleration Project (P173407). It describes the project baseline with regard to participation in early education, identifies key project-related risks and impacts and provides recommendations informed by assessment results. Research for this report was undertaken May–June 2020.

Key project activities involve training on multi-age teaching targeted at 3–5-year-olds; development of play-based content and activities for 3–4-year-olds; teacher performance appraisals; design of a teacher allocation plan; school-based management training and coaching for school principals, VEDCs, teachers and pedagogical advisors; and school block grants for construction and rehabilitation of existing schools. While these activities are to be undertaken nationwide, priority is likely to be given to the 40 poorest districts in the country with regard to educational services and outcomes.

Key findings

An initial social assessment undertaken for the project in May-June 2020 identifies proposals to ensure project activities more effectively address structural inequality in receipt of early childhood education (ECE) and do not prolong poor participation of ethnic groups and remote area communities. The assessment also recommends measures to ensure project activities do not ignore social protection risks associated with gender-based and physical violence experienced by women and children.

Structural barriers to ethnic groups' participation

With regard to structural inequality, while overall access to ECE has improved and Laos is close to achieving universal basic education, persistent inequalities remain. Since 2015, enrolment rates for 3-5-year-olds in the 40 poorest districts of the country (likely project target area) have increased from 56 percent to 76 percent but these remain substantially lower than in urban areas. These priority districts are distinct in that many contain substantial and diverse ethnic communities located in remote areas with comparative disadvantages in terms of education services and infrastructure. While project activity locations are either system-wide or yet to be determined, it is likely that the block grants and other activities will be focused in these priority districts.

Persistent barriers to participation identified in ECE assessments in 2003,[1] 2013–2014[2] and 2019[3] include (i) participation and quality of education for rural ethnic group communities/villages, both teachers and students, compounded by issues around language, culture, remoteness and poverty; (ii) school infrastructure, classroom conditions and supporting facilities such as water supply, sanitation systems, rest areas for teachers and play areas for students; and (iii) issues related to teachers/ caregivers, including the limited number of suitable teachers in rural schools, their teaching capacity, management skills and performance.

Language barriers remain a significant issue affecting education participation and quality for very young children. Where caregivers/teachers are members of particular ethnic groups, there is a visibly closer relationship between the teachers and children. In contrast, where the teachers do not come from the same ethnic group, the children tend to play among themselves rather than demand the attention of the teacher. Despite some targeting under previous ECE projects, the number of ethnic teachers in the system that can navigate the challenges of teaching Lao as a second language and provide role models to ethnic children is low.

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[1] WB's Second Education Development Project, 2003.
[2] WB's Early Childhood Education Project, 2014.
[3] Asian Development Bank's Lao PDR: Education for Employment Sector Development Program, 2019.

School/Village Checklist

The project is making a general contribution to implementing Article 12 of the Government Decree on Ethnic Groups No. 207/GoL, issued on 20 March 2020, by increasing the percentage of students[4] who can read, disaggregated by gender and ethnic group; additional measures to build understanding and trust for the care and outcomes associated with ECE among parents and communities of children from ethnic group backgrounds are recommended below.

Key recommendations

To reduce structural barriers to ethnic participation:

- Recruit a social development/ethnic groups specialist, also specialized in gender, to work part-time throughout the life cycle of the project and conduct social risk screening for each new proposed subproject site. The specialist should develop communications and consultations for ethnic groups, monitor remote community participation levels, collect disaggregated information and data on gender and ethnicity relevant to aspects of teacher training related to ECE supported by the project (for baseline and periodically during implementation), and develop a training of trainers manual with measures to improve access, facilitate delivery of gender/sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA)/violence against women and children (VAWC) training, and address risk management and awareness-raising.

- Undertake further disaggregated analysis during project implementation of enrolment, completion, dropout and transition rates to factor in gender, ethnicity and disability. Explore underlying inequality in participation in the 40 poorest districts of the country, which are a likely priority target for the project.

- Develop cultural awareness messages in a field guide that incorporates the concept of sensitivity to ethnic groups (cultural responsiveness) and inclusive consultation/social inclusion. These messages can also ensure that the project and its staff and subcontractors respect ancestral and spiritual land and forest use and remain sensitive to customary use of land by the community, especially ethnic groups. Pilot use of Talking Book/Talking Box or similar technology for cultural communication purposes as well as incorporate it into the curriculum. Talking Box offers a participatory community feedback mechanism and Talking Book offers audio recordings on topics to encourage the traditional literacy skills of reading and writing.

- Prioritize distribution of block grants and project training activities where ethnic and gender gaps are identified (e.g. language, culture, social structure, geographic isolation, infrastructure) and provide preferential selection and budget for ethnic teachers and poor families/students who are more likely to lack access to project services due to distance, poverty, language or educational attainment. Preference teachers for training selected for ethnic sensitivity, or who are recognized mentors as they are members of same ethnic group.

With regard to social protection, Laos has developed relevant laws on preventing and combating VAWC but levels of conceptual and practical understanding of the issue are low. At the same time, cultural tolerance for certain forms of VAWC is high. While the target group of children in ECE (3–5-year-olds) is not a high risk group (13–17-year-olds), several areas of concern are identified for project activities: (i) both urban and rural communities, more so among women and ethnic group communities, accept and justify certain forms of violence; (ii) quite a high prevalence of physical, emotional and sexual violence was reported and recorded in recent surveys; (iii) despite Lao PDR having substantial legal frameworks to safeguard the rights and interests

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[4] Grade 4 was chosen because there is a baseline from the Systems Approach to Better Education Results – Service Delivery survey 2017, with a new round in September 2020. An alternative is to use the Grade 3 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes conducted in 2017, but the data are not publicly available yet, so there is no baseline.

of women and children, services and help systems are limited; and (iv) the issue is only vaguely understood at all administrative levels and at the individual level.

This assessment raises a flag that basic understanding of the concepts, degree and issues of gender-based violence (GBV), SEA/child rights should be made available to responsible school officers, principals, teachers and project staff. While the majority of ECE child carers and teachers are young women, it is likely that more men are employed at administrative and management levels, as reflected in the fact that most of the principals interviewed by this assessment were men, while ECE and primary teachers were women. Both female and male informants at the school level reported they neither have issues nor have heard reports of VAWC at school. There few complaints from teachers were related to long hours teaching, multiple-age/multi-class teaching and other issues related to teaching and not sexual violence and/or child abuse. Such issues are highly sensitive and remain hidden.

To ensure protection of women and children participating in project activities:

- Provide teacher counselling services at the school cluster level linked to national specialist guidance. Teacher-focused counseling services should initially be done by training selected cluster (several schools overseen from one administrative office) office staff to refer issues to a specialized social protection consultant or organization operating in-country to address the SEA/VAWC risk. Identify a trained female national guidance consultant (or existing service provider) to train district/school officials to enable safe disclosure and referral. Teacher-focused counseling services can also be used to facilitate other services such as teacher networking, sharing teaching techniques and experiences, and teacher support teachers. Ensure ethnic teachers participate in training and counselling services.

- The project has developed a Code of Conduct (CoC) for Child Protection and will provide training on how to implement it. The CoC guides prevention of child abuse from occurring within the operation of the project period. The CoC is to be communicated and agreed to by all stakeholders, including contractors, school managers/officers, teachers, and all volunteers and community members who are part of project implementation activities. The CoC includes practical measures such as working through Community Child Development Groups and VEDCs, and establishing children's group walks from home to school for child safety reasons. These are enjoyable for very young children and will discourage parents from taking them to the field.

- Provide training and promote awareness of GBV/SEA/VAWC risks by collaborating with the existing country Task Force (the optimal Government agency), if they are willing, to sensitize staff on the importance of addressing risks of GBV/SEA/VAWC and child protection issues.

2. Introduction

This Social Assessment Report (SAR) is for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) III Learning Equity Acceleration Project (P173407). It presents key project information and provides assessment results in line with the World Bank (WB) Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and requirements under the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). This SAR also provides assessment information in order to inform the development of the project's (i) Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), (ii) Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), and (iii) Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). These plans will be designed to manage the potential environmental and social impacts associated with project activities, as well as allow for meaningful and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations and engagement throughout the life cycle of the project.

The scope of the project is nationwide, covering all 18 provinces and 148 districts in the country, and will focus on districts with poor educational enrolment and performance outcomes. It is likely that its activities will be emphasized in schools located in the currently identified 40 poorest districts in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Therefore, the project areas include rural villages with a diverse array of ethnic groups and socioeconomic and livelihood activities. This assessment takes into account the circumstances of inclusion and social complexity, including aspects of vulnerable and marginalized individuals, disabled people, women and children, , as well as members of ethnic groups that are affected and/or potentially affected by the project's activities.

The SAR highlights challenges associated with early childhood education (ECE) in order to provide effective mitigation measures during project implementation. The analysis of social risks looks at current social circumstances, including general social development and social protection such as issues related to gender-based violence[5] (GBV) and child protection.[6] Although the project is expected to bring positive impacts and improve ECE teaching, learning and management outcomes, it highlights current ECE issues and potential impacts as well as core proposed mitigation activities. The main project beneficiaries are 3–5-year-olds, and affected groups include their parents, caregivers, and communities from these districts. The project will aim to improve the quality of schools as well as support teachers, principals, VEDCs and Village Health Volunteers; and concerned MoES and relevant Ministry of Health staff through training, capacity-building activities and school management systems. Actions are specified to ensure that the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and engaged specialists take measures to achieve culturally appropriate beneficial results and avoid/mitigate negative impacts.

The report also seeks to inform the likely risks and impacts unable to be determined until program and subproject details have been identified, and to set out procedures for screening, assessment and management of these risks and impacts in the ESMF. This Framework aims to ensure that all proposed project and subproject activities are properly screened and assigned appropriate environmental and social risk classification, and that the environmental and social risks and impacts are properly and sufficiently assessed and monitored. Where impacts and/or potential impacts are identified and if these are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures will be properly planned so as to adequately compensate for residual impacts and to provide for restoration. SAR recommendations aim to: (a) promote inclusive education, addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups (including girls and rural ethnic groups) as students in receipt of benefits of early

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[5] Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private (United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2015). Across the globe, GBV disproportionately affects women and girls (WB 2020).
[6] Child protection refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children, including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/ cutting and child marriage (UNICEF, 2006).

learning activities; (b) identify and promote teachers from vulnerable and marginal backgrounds (women and ethnic groups) to improve their effectiveness and standing; and (c) propose these measures for incorporation into project design and activities.

This SAR will also include measures to be disclosed on the WB and Lao Government websites as well as posted in public places so that the public can access them easily and provide feedback and recommendations, as well as express their concerns through project activity-level grievance mechanisms.

3. Assessment methodology and limitations

This assessment was carried out during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore the scope of assessment and direct contact with stakeholders was limited. The findings in this report are based heavily on desk review. Stakeholder engagement and consultations took place from mid-May to late June 2020, taking much longer and with a narrower scope than anticipated due to significant restrictions on travel and engagement with local communities. Despite these challenges, the assessment managed to include a comprehensive literature review and direct discussions and interviews with different stakeholders, including officials responsible for education sector development and development partners at the national level, as well as school principals, teachers and Village Education Development Committees (VEDCs) via remote digital communication and distribution of questionnaires.

The literature review includes an analysis of previous project documents. These include social assessments, ethnic group development plans and design measures adopted by GPE, Education for All and other entities working in ECE, child rights and development supported not only by WB and the Asian Development Bank but also other international organizations (UNICEF, the European Union, the International Labour Organization, United Nations agencies), NGOs, governments and the private sector. The literature review included analysis of current ECE sector development from an environmental and social perspective, and analysis of student enrolment data and of the current teacher workforce by gender, ethnicity and age, together with available standards applicable to school construction including sanitation facilities and water supply.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated precautionary measures, fieldwork and in person communication with stakeholders – especially community, school and student consultations – were very limited. Field data collection was possible via phone calls and the distribution of questionnaires to 15 schools where representatives of MoES went to three districts of Houaphan Province (Houameung, Khoua, and Sopvao Districts) for their regular annual monitoring. Two sets of questionnaires were also developed: one with a checklist, designed to guide the assessment team for their consultation, and one that was filled in by 15 schools in the aforementioned Houaphan Province (see list of schools attached).

Challenges remain, however, as the assessment team was unable to travel to the targeted poorest districts and meet with various stakeholders, schools, and villages in person and/or observe existing ECE schools and supporting facilities. Due to the social distancing policy and preventive guidelines, the communication and consultation process ran at an extremely slowly pace, especially with various Government departments because they required official permission and clearance from their own senior management to meet the assessment team. As for other development organizations, while Lao national staff are very helpful and spontaneous in communication and discussion, staff in many key positions who oversee education activities are foreigners, and many are currently not physically in Lao PDR due to COVID-19, while some are on leave, thus slowing communication.

4. Legal and institutional framework

National institutional Frameworks

Laos has an exponential body of legislation relevant to the social risks most likely associated with project activities. These provide a comparative legal basis for pursuing the relevant recommendations provided by this social assessment. While the laws cover treatment of vulnerable and marginal groups, the assessments and plans developed for this project are intended to bridge the gap between their implementation and the requirements of the relevant World Bank environmental and social standards. The following legal framework addresses risks and benefits for women and children recognizing for vulnerability associated with ethnicity.

The Constitution of Lao PDR, ratified in 1991 (updated in 2003), uses the term 'citizens of all ethnicity' throughout. It specifically recognizes the need to incorporate the concerns of ethnic groups in developing policy in all sectors, and the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the rights of all ethnic groups in various congresses, conferences, decrees, and laws since the 1980s (Articles 8 and 22). Article 75 of the Constitution states that 'the Lao language and script are the official language and script'. Constitutionally, Lao PDR is recognized as a multi-ethnic society, and Article 8 of the Constitution states, 'All ethnic groups have the right to preserve their own traditions and culture, and those of the nation. Discrimination between ethnic groups is forbidden'. Article 8 also declares that, 'The State pursues the policy of promoting unity and equality among all ethnic groups. All ethnic groups have the rights to protect, preserve and promote the fine customs and cultures of their own tribes and of the nation. All acts of creating division and discrimination among ethnic groups are forbidden. The State implements every measure to gradually develop and upgrade the economic and social level of all ethnic groups.'

The 1992 ethnic group policy, 'Resolution of the Party Central Organization Concerning Ethnic Group Affairs in the New Era', focuses on gradually improving the lives of ethnic groups while promoting their ethnic identity and cultural heritage. It is the cornerstone of the national ethnic group policy. The policy addresses key issues to related national identity and equality between all ethnic groups in Lap PDR, with the objective to increase the level of solidarity among ethnic groups as members of the greater Lao family and improve the living conditions and social welfare of ethnic group women and children step by step.

Article 12 of the **Government Decree on Ethnic Groups No. 207/GoL**, issued on 20 March 2020, addresses education. Article 12, Point 1 requires improvement and development of infrastructure related to education to cover all and allow access by rural, remote communities. Point 2 requires that poor ethnic groups be provided with free access to education so that poor children are able to enter schools. Point 3 requires improvement in teachers' capacity and allocation of suitable teachers to meet the actual needs of ethnic group students in remote locations. It also requires emphasis on ethnic group teachers as well as improvement and adjustment of teachers' knowledge and teaching techniques for both single-class and multi-age/multi-grade classes. This Decree covers all aspects of basic social welfare for ethnic groups. For instance:

- Article 13: Access to health care, Point 3: Free health services for the poor, especially childbirth and for children under 5
- Article 13: Point 5: Help ethnic women and children access full health care
- Article 13: Point 11: Raise awareness in ethnic communities of the negative impact of early marriage
- Article 18: Access to legal information and justice, Point 2: Promote and help poor, vulnerable and disabled ethnic people to access to legal information and justice
- Article 19: Human resources development, Point 5: Promote and support women's and men's knowledge and ability for the development of future generations.

The Law on Hygiene, Prevention and Health Promotion (Amended 2011) focuses on controlling the elements of the environment which are dangerous or may be dangerous to the body, to mental health and social status of human. This law promotes investment in health and hygiene prevention, addresses community health and hygiene, and ensures that all building construction includes hygiene principles. It also requires health and hygiene in the workplace for workers and states that all facilities must put in place wastewater and solid waste management, and anti-fire systems.

The Law on Preventing and Combating VAWC, No. 56/NA 2014 defines the principles, rules and measures for preventing and combating VAWC by prevention, protection, provision of assistance to victims of violence and handling of such violence to protect the rights and legitimate interests of women and children; aims to eliminate all forms of VAWC, uphold the roles and dignity of women and children, achieve gender equality, and contribute to developing society in order to maintain peace, public order, solidarity, justice and civilization, and protect and develop the country. The Law is designed to specifically address VAWC that results in or is likely to result in danger, harm, or physical, psychological, sexual, property or economic suffering by women and children.

The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children No. 05/NA, 2006 defines principles, rules and measures relating to the administration, monitoring and inspection of the implementation of the protection of the rights and interests of multi-ethnic children. These include measures against those committing offenses toward children, in order to ensure that children are whole in body, mind and spirit, so that they have good attitudes, knowledge and ability and are able to live good lives and become good successors of the nation. Article 26 on children's education says that the State has policies to promote and create conditions to ensure that children receive education by expanding formal education, professional training centers and skills training centers provided by both the State and the private sector, and by providing sufficient teachers, textbooks and materials.

The Law on the Development and Protection of Women and Children (2004) is designed to guarantee and promote the roles of women, to define fundamental measures for developing and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of women, and to define the responsibilities of the State, society and family toward women. It has the following aims: promoting the knowledge, capability and revolutionary ethic of women; gender equality; eliminating all forms of discrimination against women; and preventing and combating trafficking in women and children, and domestic VAWC. This is in order to create conducive conditions for women to participate and be a force in national defense and development. The law defines sexual violence as 'an act or attempted act that results in harm to the sexual rights of women and children such as rape, forced sex, any act of obscenity, sexually indecent assault, unwanted sexual comments or sexual touching; or the sending of women or children to another person for sexual purposes'. The law encompasses domestic and public violence, including in educational institutions, workplaces and alternative care settings.

Lao PDR has adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which outlines the fundamental rights of children including the right to be protected from economic exploitation and harmful work, from all forms of SEA, and from physical or mental violence, as well as ensuring that children will not be separated from their family against their will. These rights are further refined by two Optional Protocols, one on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and the other on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Lao PDR adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1981. This testifies to the country's political will to work in partnership with the international community to advance and protect the legitimate interests of Lao women in general and women of all ethnic groups in particular. In conjunction with the protection and promotion of women's rights in political and socioeconomic fields, the Government of Lao PDR has given due attention to establishing a domestic legal system that will gradually meet international standards.

The Family Law (1990) states that 'the husband and wife have equal rights in all aspects within the family. The husband and wife together make decisions on their own family matters, and are mutually obliged to love, show mutual respect and share a joint obligation for child-rearing and education and build a genuine family bond, happiness and advancement' (Article 13). In addition to these laws and regulations, the Government of Lao PDR has expressed its commitment to promoting gender equality in a number of policy documents. It approved the Development Plan for Lao Women (1998–2003), which led to the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children being established in 2003. The plan has been revised every five years and includes goals and programs to promote Lao women's legal awareness; and to improve their education, skill levels, health, nutrition, and income-generating opportunities, as well as to reduce their workload.

The Ethnic Groups Committee under the National Assembly is charged with drafting and evaluating proposed legislation concerning ethnic groups and lobbying for its implementation, as well as the implementation of socioeconomic development plans. Ethnic group research is the responsibility of the Institute for Cultural Research under the Ministry of Information and Culture. The lead institution for ethnic affairs is the mass (political) organization, the Lao National Front for Construction, which has an Ethnic Affairs Department.

World Bank environmental and social standards

WB's new ESF, which was officially endorsed and launched in October 2018, is applied to the proposed project. The ESF objective goes beyond the traditional 'do no harm' approach to maximize development gains. WB's ESSs set out the requirements for its clients relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts associated with projects supported by the Bank through Investment Project Financing. The ESSs are designed to assist WB clients to fulfill the Bank's ESS requirements on the identification and management of environmental and social risks. The ESSs are also designed to support WB clients in their goal to reduce poverty and increase prosperity in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the environment and their citizens, especially in: (i) achieving good international practice relating to environmental and social sustainability; (ii) fulfilling their national and international environmental and social obligations; (c) enhancing non-discrimination, transparency, participation, accountability and governance; and (d) enhancing the sustainable development outcomes of projects through ongoing stakeholder engagement. Where applicable, the following 10 ESSs are applied through the project life cycle:

- ESS 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts
- ESS 2: Labor and Working Conditions
- ESS 3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management
- ESS 4: Community Health and Safety
- ESS 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, and Involuntary Resettlement
- ESS 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources
- ESS 7: Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities
- ESS 8: Cultural Heritage
- ESS 9: Financial Intermediaries
- ESS 10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure.

While some of the ESSs are directly relevant to the project, other ESSs are less relevant and this is largely dependent on the actual implementation of project activities. Nevertheless, where applicable, this social assessment confirms the commitment of the project to comply with the policy principles of the ESSs. This assessment understands the importance of stakeholder consultation and social inclusion because it holds the key to achieving partnership and sustainable development. Social inclusion means engaging and empowering all types of people to participate in, and benefit from, the development process. Inclusion encompasses policies to promote equality and non-discrimination by improving the access of all people, including the poor

and disadvantaged ethnic groups, to services and benefits such as education, health, social protection, infrastructure, affordable energy, employment, financial services, and productive assets. It also embraces actions to remove barriers against those who are often excluded from the development process, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, youth and rural ethnic groups, and to ensure that the voices of all can be heard. This project is committed to firmly follow WB's ESF, protect the poor and vulnerable, and promote sustainable development in order to:

- Avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to people and the environment
- Conserve or rehabilitate biodiversity and natural habitats, and promote the efficient and equitable use of natural resources and ecosystem services
- Promote worker and community health and safety
- Ensure that there is no prejudice or discrimination toward project-affected individuals or communities and give particular consideration to indigenous peoples, minority groups, and those disadvantaged or vulnerable, especially where adverse impacts may arise or development benefits are to be shared
- Address project-level impacts on climate change and consider the impacts of climate change on the selection, siting, planning, design and implementation, and decommissioning of projects
- Maximize stakeholder engagement through enhanced consultation, participation, and accountability.

Key areas of relevance for this project are:
- **ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts:** Applies to all Bank funded projects and is therefore obligatory.
- **ESS2 Labour and Working Conditions:** Applies to the Project in terms of people hired to work directly on the project and community workers engaged on community based construction work. However, government teachers, caregivers, school managers, other school staff and school committee members who may be trained under the Project and be involved in school activities promoted by the Project are Project beneficiaries and are therefore not covered by ESS2.
- **ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management:** Applies to the Project to a limited extent as indicated in the environmental assessment. The Screening tool in the Environmental and Social Code of Practice will identify the risks and establish the required measures.
- **ESS4 Community Health and Safety:** Applies to the Project to some extent. The Screening tool in the Environmental and Social Code of Practice will identify the risks and establish the required measures.
- **ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use, and Involuntary Resettlement:** Not applicable, however the Screening tool in the Environmental and Social Code of Practice includes checks to identify any land acquisition or resettlement issues. If a proposed project activity would involve land acquisition or resettlement, the proposed activity would not be eligible for funding under GPE III.
- **ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources:** Not applicable, however the Screening tool in the Environmental and Social Code of Practice includes checks to identify any biodiversity risks. In addition, the Project will promote biodiversity protection by supporting green, clean and beautiful school activities on caring for the environment, plants and animals.
- **ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities:** Applies to the Project. The Project will prepare and implement guidelines for social inclusion of disadvantaged groups including ethnic groups and women in basic education teaching and learning and develop practical guidelines to enable effective teaching and learning approaches to children of ethnic groups.
- **ESS8 Cultural Heritage:** It is assessed that the minor construction or maintenance work under the Project are unlikely to involve findings of artifacts of archaeological, cultural or historical importance. However, as the construction work will only be determined in the course of the Project, a standard chance find procedure is included in the Environmental and Social Code of Practice
- **ESS9 Financial Intermediaries:** Not applicable.

- **ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure:** Applicable and the Project has developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

5. Project description

The project's main objective is to improve learning outcomes in pre-primary and primary grades and strengthen teacher practices and education sector equity and accountability in Lao PDR. Key expected outcomes and indicators to be monitored during the project period include:

- Increase in the percentage of Grade 4 students[7] who can read a grade-appropriate paragraph, disaggregated by gender and ethnic group [Learning and Equity]
- Reduced student dropout rates in primary education by sub-group [Efficiency and equity]
- Improved teaching practices as measured by *Teach,*[8] with a focus on the gap between target and other districts [Learning and Equity]
- Improved school management as measured through a school management index [Accountability and efficiency]
- Number of direct project beneficiaries (including percentage of females and ethnicity) [Equity].

The proposed project components and activities include:

- **Component One:** 'Prepared Learners' involves activities piloted under a previous GPE project including: (1) continuation of the Community Child Development Group intervention; (2) pre-service and in-service training on multi-age teaching targeted at 3–5-year-olds; (3) development of play-based content and activities for 3–4-year-olds; and (4) the Reading Readiness Program to help 5-year-olds develop key pre-literacy skills (vocabulary, print awareness, phonological awareness, narrative production and comprehension, and emergent literacy) to smooth the transition to Grade 1.

- **Component Two:** 'Prepared Teachers' includes: (1) improving the professional prestige of teaching (teacher standards and performance appraisals for ECE and primary education); and building teachers' intrinsic motivation; (2) improving the quality of teacher preparation and development by strengthening teacher training centers as functional centers for pre-service and in-service training; pedagogic advisor training; and a school-based system for continuous professional development; and (3) ensuring schools have the teachers they need by supporting the design of a teacher allocation plan.

- **Component Three:** 'Effective Leadership, Support and Management' activities include: 1) strengthening school-based management by defining relevant standards and through providing a complete cycle of school-based management training and coaching to school principals, VEDCs, teachers and pedagogical advisors. The training and coaching will include formative student assessment, teaching and learning, and school autonomy and accountability; (2) strengthening institutional capacity in the Provincial Education and Sports Service, District Education and Sports Bureau, and clusters to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability; (3) school block grants to improve school facilities and make them safe through construction and rehabilitation of existing schools; and (4) strong project management (strong monitoring and evaluation, including designing and implementing a harmonized system to measure student learning outcomes at the system level; coordination across MoES departments at the national and subnational levels; fiduciary responsibilities; and managing safeguards and risks).

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[7] Grade 4 was chosen because there is a baseline from the Systems Approach to Better Education Results – Service Delivery survey 2017, with a new round in September 2020. An alternative is to use the Grade 3 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes conducted in 2017, but the data are not publicly available yet, so there is no baseline.

[8] *Teach* is a WB open access classroom observation tool to measure teacher practices. *Coach* is a tool to provide tailored support to teachers based on their areas of difficulty as identified by *Teach*.

6. Baseline data

Scope of the project

The project activities will be dispersed nationwide across all 18 provinces and 148 districts of the country and will focus on districts with poor educational enrolment and performance outcomes. Many of the schools that will be supported by the project are likely to be located in rural districts and comprise students from ethnic populations that speak Lao as a second language. Some of these districts and populations could be more sensitive to adverse impacts or inability to receive the benefits of the project than others, so the social assessment pays special attention to likely impacts, both positive and negative, on these ethnic group populations.

Since the project covers all 18 provinces, all of the ethnic groups in Lao PDR listed in Table 1 are expected to be affected by the project. Therefore, this SAR suggests that all other associated implementation plans (SEP, ESMP, EMCP) must ensure that participating communities, regardless of their ethnic background, are properly consulted, understand how to engage in relevant project benefits, and that their concerns are incorporated and addressed during project implementation.

Lao PDR is a multi-ethnic society, and officially there are 50 ethnic groups in Lao PDR. The National Assembly's Agreement No. 213 of 24 November 2008 states that regardless of ethnic background, all 50 different ethnic groups are Lao citizens. The National Assembly has declared that all ethnic groups are equal by law in terms of dignity and rights. It is for this reason that all ethnic groups should be treated equally and that ethnic groups' social structure gaps, customary/culture dimensions and ways of life are often overlooked. The promotion of the equality of all Lao citizens discouraged the term 'ethnic minority', even though Lao-Tai is the majority group. The term 'ethnic group' has been officially accepted instead.

Most Lao people who belong to different non-Lao ethnic groups (ethnic groups hereafter) are tied to their ancestors' land and forest spirits. For this reason – and because their livelihoods are heavily dependent on the land, forests and rivers – their villages are often small and isolated from one another, making it harder for the Government to provide services. Under the ethnic groups equality policy, all ethnic groups are required to:

(i)   Practice stable agriculture, especially expansion of paddy fields and stable crops (slash-and-burn practices are discouraged);

(ii)   Learn and study Lao language for the purpose of unifying the nation (as Lao language is the official spoken and written national language, it is the most widely shared tongue among all of Lao PDR's ethnic groups); and

(iii)   Merge village administrations, especially forming a cluster of villages and/or merging smaller villages into a bigger village so that the Government can more effectively deliver public services, and to ease implementation of public administration.

Although the Government has made efforts to promote equality among Lao citizens, most ethnic groups experience perpetual poverty and lack infrastructure and Government services. This is partly because they are mostly living in the most remote and least accessible areas of the country. These factors create elements of structural marginalization associated with a lack of basic public services including roads, education and healthcare; and a lack of political participation and representation. The social assessment revealed that despite rapid economic development at the national and provincial levels, many ethnic groups in rural villages continue to have limited exposure to most public facilities and face a high risk of being trapped in poverty.

In order to tackle these challenges, the drivers of structural marginalization need to be well understood and incorporated into socioeconomic development plans. The Government is officially committed to embracing a

multi-ethnic dimension in development issues and improving people's living conditions, as well as continuing to promote the equality of all Lao people in the country.

Table 1: List of ethnic groups in Lao PDR by linguistic group

Lao-Tai	Mon-Khmer				Hmong-Mien	Chinese-Tibetan (Sino-Tibetan)
1. Lao	9. Khmou/Khmu	18. Khmer	26. Oy	34. Ta Oy	42. Hmong	44. Akha or Ko
2. Leu	10. Pray	19. Moy	27. Sadang	35. Katu	43. Iu-mien	45. Singsily/ Phounoy
3. Xaek	11. Xingmoon	20. Phong	28. Lavy	36. Kriang		46. Sila
4. Tai	12. Katang	21. Thaen	29. Toum	37. Xuay		47. Hor
5. Nhuane	13. Yru	22. Eudou	30. Kree	38. Pako		48. Lahou
6. Tai Neua	14. Yae	23. Makong	31. Bid	39. Nguane		49. Hayi
7. Phutai	15. Harak	24. Triang	32. Lamed	40. Tri		50. Lolo
8. Yang	16. Cheng	25. Brao	33. Samtao	41. Bru		
	17. Nhaheun					

Source: National Assembly, 2008.

Ethnic groups have diverse social structures and cultures, but they all share a common socioeconomic base: that is, they rely heavily on primary agricultural activities and natural resources for their livelihoods. Their levels of access to modern socioeconomic development vary from one location to another depending on how the Government allocates common resources and provides support to such areas. Each ethnic group has its own dialect, customs and cultural characteristics, but not one of these groups has its own territory within the country. Instead, all ethnic groups share common territory and have lived together peacefully for many generations. Each of the groups is distinctive in ways that are sometimes readily apparent, such as the brightly colored costumes of the Hmong, Akha, Khmu and the Yao. Other ethnic groups, such as the Tai, are not as obviously identifiable.

It is also important to recognize that each ethnic group may also have its own distinctive way of conceptualizing notions of education. Such notions may be sets of presuppositions, assumptions and associations, or beliefs about the world, resulting in local ecological knowledge that has survival value for the group as a whole. The introduction of formal education as well as a modern school management system, where parents have to leave their children with teachers who do not speak the same language and/or share common ethnic group knowledge, may be a challenge if language and cultural sensitivity is not taken into account.

Education sector development: Early childhood education

The Government of Lao PDR recognizes education's key role in promoting inclusive growth and poverty reduction. The second output of the Eighth National Socioeconomic Development Plan 2016–2020 focuses on human resource development and upgraded capacities, reduced poverty, access to quality education and health services for all ethnic groups and genders, justice, and transparency. Its Education Sector Strategy 2030 has the aim that 'Human resources development meets regional and international standards that they become a strong production power and thus capable to contribute more in socioeconomic development, the people have at least upper secondary education and have access to quality health services, and average life span is over 75 years old'.

The Eighth National Socioeconomic Development Plan (2016–2020) aims to:

(i) Continue to expand implementation of the National Education System Reform Strategy to become stronger at all levels, and at post-basic education level to better respond to the demands of socioeconomic development – particularly in remote areas – through improved infrastructure, updated curricula and improved quality of teaching and learning;

(ii) Fulfill the policy on compulsory education at primary level and then at the lower secondary level as a foundation for the development and upgrading of labor skills and quality, ensuring incentives are applied to attract more students to vocational education, particularly to produce graduates in the fields of electrical, mining, processing, handicrafts, mechanics and services, to ensure a sufficient labor force for the production and services sectors in supporting future national development and enhance the capacity to integrate and compete at regional and international levels; and

(iii) Develop capacity for athletes to become professionals and gradually reach regional and international standards, and to encourage all people to play sports, promoting and developing indigenous sports.

Lessons learned from the current Education and Sports Sector Development Plan for 2016–2020 (ESSDP 2016–2020) are being incorporated in the development of the ESSDP 2021–2025. The ESSDP 2021–2025 is being developed and its proposed overall priorities are to:

(i) Consolidate and deepen the analysis of data on education (e.g. disaggregated (including by gender, ethnicity and disability) analysis of enrolment, completion, dropout and transition rates and quality indictors – literacy and numeracy levels)

(ii) Strengthen the links between education, employment, and other socioeconomic dimensions to guide evidence-based planning

(iii) Improve the efficiency of teacher deployment and placement

(iv) Develop a strategy for non-wage budget allocation, with addressing key identified challenges the priority.

In the next five years, the ESSDP will also focus on the following five areas:

(i) Improve the quality of learners in both formal and non-formal systems so that they have the morality, knowledge and ability to continue studying at vocational and higher education levels

(ii) Improve the quality of teachers by upgrading training comprehensively

(iii) Develop and train the workforce to respond to the growing needs of society and the economy

(iv) Improve education administration and management systems at all levels

(v) Improve sports and physical activities.

The specific ECE strategy under the ESSDP 2021–2025 is to increase the number of ECE graduates with improved learning outcomes, particularly literacy and numeracy skills, with a special focus on disadvantage and gender equity. It also aims to improve the knowledge and competency of teachers and principals to meet the teaching standards that are used to inform their professional development with regular performance assessments. Another aim is to ensure that all schools have the financial and human resources to function effectively and efficiently, alongside strengthened school management capacity and active VEDC support to meet fundamental quality standards and enable improved student learning outcomes.

MoES is also developing an ECE Sub-Sector Plan 2021–2025 that aims to promote children's physical, intellectual, mental and social development and to prepare children for entry into primary education Grade 1. ECE was recently formally incorporated into the education system and is thus very new to Lao PDR, especially for those who live in rural areas. Children who have experience in ECE do better in school. The Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey)[9] reported that only 12% of children not attending ECE are on track in terms of literacy and numeracy, a figure that lifts to 53% for those do attend. Although it is universally recognized that pre-primary education provides the highest return on investment of all education

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[9] Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Available from www.unicef.org/laos/sites/unicef.org.laos/files/2020-03/March%202020_MICS-EAGLE%20LAOS%20Country%20report%20-%20FINAL%20-_0.pdf.

sub-sectors, it receives the smallest share of Government expenditure compared with primary, secondary and tertiary education.

In the next five years, MoES will also aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Provincial and District Education Departments, clusters and schools. It will address their quality, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability through realigning their mandates, roles and responsibilities; clarifying job descriptions and specifications; and establishing systems to allocate human and financial resources according to needs. GPE III will help enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities through more effective and efficient management of resources by targeting improved early education performance, especially targeting the 40 most disadvantaged districts, equipping them with better school infrastructure, and providing teaching/learning and play materials in ECE learning facilities.

Current WB-supported activities related to ECE and GPE II

The most recent WB-supported education projects, ECE and GPE II, provide an excellent overview of the issues of social inclusion, especially for women, girls, and ethnic groups. Effective from 2015, the ECE project presently supports the expansion of quality ECE services, with the objective of improving the overall development and school readiness of children in disadvantaged communities. ECE interventions have been shown to decrease dropout and repetition rates, increase graduation rates in post-secondary education, and improve both the labor force's productivity and its ability to earn higher wages.

In addition, programs that combine education, parental education and nutrition interventions have shown the largest positive impacts, particularly for children from low-income families. By intervening in the early stages of children's learning and development, the project worked on strengthening the foundations for the healthy physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of children. This project promoted coordination and managed to established collaboration among Government departments, especially related to health and nutrition; other development partners (World Food Programme, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International); and the community, especially the involvement of VEDCs and the private sector. The project has given communities an understanding of the importance of early childhood development (National School Meal Program) and education (ECE), particularly pre-primary education, and promoted the development of community pre-primary education. Furthermore, the ECE project continues to promote access to pre-primary education for 3–5-year-olds by establishing children's playrooms and/or a classrooms for pre-primary children and/or community-based school readiness programs to prepare them for Grade 1, particularly targeting ethnic groups, girls and children from the poorest families.

Implemented in parallel with the ECE project, the GPE II project built on the Government's education policy and plays a vital role in supporting implementation of the Government's education sector and human development objectives. This underlines the important progress that has been made in improving access to education and also the remaining challenges in the education sector, including low levels of educational attainment. The objective of the GPE II project is to support the Government of Lao PDR in improving the quality of pre-primary and primary education by: (i) providing additional funding at school, district and provincial levels, as well as strengthening the overall capacity to manage these resources to achieve minimum education quality standards; and (ii) enhancing the teaching and learning environment in schools through improved teaching practices, instructional resources and analytical products to support early-grade literacy. The project consists of three components. Component 1: Strengthening School-Based Management; Component 2: Improving Reading Outcomes and Assessment Capacity (including Lao language instruction for ethnic students); and Component 3: Capacity-Building and Project Management.

Current ECE/pre-primary achievements

Overall, Lao PDR has made important strides in building its human capital base by improving access to ECE and nearly achieving universal basic education. The literacy rate for men is 90% and women 80%.[10] The number of students able to access and finish the primary cycle has continued to grow, and is gender-equitable. In 2015 a total of 141,322 students successfully graduated from primary school; up from 130,871 in 2011. Preschool enrolment rates increased from 39.1% (2013/14) to 58.8% (2018/19).[11] Net primary enrolment was 99% in 2018/19, with gender parity. The sex ratio in literacy also improved significantly from 2005 to 2015.[12] The literacy rate has increased by 16% for women and by 7% for men, indicating that the number of females entering school has also increased significantly in the past 10 years.

In recent years, ECE in Lao PDR has developed and expanded in terms of quality and quantity: building basic infrastructure; water, sanitation and hygiene; teacher supply; teaching materials; inside and outside classroom play materials; a national policy and strategy developed; and legislation for both public and private ECE institutions. Along with the mother and child health and nutrition program, attention has been paid to developing a childcare and education plan for children aged 3–36 months, including a curriculum, experience orientation for kindergarten teachers, teacher manuals, academic advisor assessment instruments, teachers' academic titles and monitoring guidelines. Table 2 shows the number of preschool classrooms/attached classrooms has increased significantly, while the number of children attending preschool in the past five years has moderately increased. The enrolment rate of 3–5-year-olds is 61% and that of 5-year-olds (pre-primary class) reached 82.5% on average.

However, when looking into the 40 poorer districts which the project will pay more attention to, the enrolment rate decreases to 76.5%. Based on this baseline, the ESSDP 2021–2025 aims to increase the enrolment rate of 5-year-olds from the current 82.5% to 86% by 2025.[13] An interesting observation in Table 2 is that while the number of female teachers hired by the Government increased significantly from 8,648 to 10,302 in the school years 2015/16 to 2018/19, the number dropped to 9,991 in 2019/20, indicating a cut of more than 300 female teachers. The number of male teachers hired by the Government also decreased, from 116 in 2015/16 to 105 in 2019/20. Meanwhile, the number of both female and male students as well as school classrooms have steadily increased.

Table 2: Comparison of preschool indicators from 2015/16 to 2019/20

Indicators		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total schools/attached classrooms		2,807	3,056	3,211	3,432	3,496
Total students (public and private)	Female	92,947	99,539	106,789	111,997	121,842
	Male	93,674	100,908	108,352	113,179	124,007
Teachers (public)	Female	8,648	9,355	9,933	10,302	9,991
	Male	116	109	99	111	105
Enrolment rate of 3–4-year-olds	Female	37.7	41.8	45.2	48.2	50.0
	Male	36.9	41.0	44.7	47.5	49.7
Enrolment rate of 3–5-year-olds	Female	49.2	52.8	56.26	59.1	61.3
	Male	48.9	52.5	56.12	58.8	61.3
Enrolment rate of 5-year-olds and Gender Parity Index (GPI)	Female	70.7	74.2	77.0	79.5	82.4
	Male	71.0	74.6	77.2	79.4	82.6
	GPI	1.00	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00

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[10] Lao Census, 2015.
[11] Lao PDR EMIS, 2020.
[12] Lao Census, 2015.
[13] Draft ESSDP 2021–2025, 2020.

Enrolment rate of 5-year-olds in 40 priority districts	Female	55.6	60.1	62.6	68.0	76.5
	Male	56.0	60.1	61.8	65.9	76.6
	GPI	0.99	1.00	1.01	1.03	1.00
Percentage of Grade 1 students who have ECE experience	Female	57.0	62.4	65.5	66.4	70.6
	Male	55.4	61.0	63.7	65.1	69

Source: MoES Education Management Information System (EMIS), 2019.

7. Environmental and social risks and assessment results

The overall assessment suggested that environmental and social risks associated with the project are likely to be moderate as the nature of physical activities (construction activities associated with block grants) is minor. Land acquisition is not expected as all construction activities will involve repairing, expanding classrooms and/or building of health and sanitation facilities within the school compound. The project is likely to involve mostly positive impacts and improvement in ECE because its activities involve not only improving the quality of education for young children aged 3–5 years old in the formal/public sector, but also planning to equip their teachers with skills and knowledge to perform their roles in teaching and management effectively via capacity-building activities, together with improving school facilities. This section highlights challenges associated with ECE as it seeks to provide effective mitigation measures during project implementation.

Challenges facing ECE and primary education
In general, Lao PDR has made significant improvements in education. However, more improvement has occurred in urban areas with better public infrastructure and economic opportunities, and among the Lao-Tai groups and not those who live in rural districts/villages or who belong to other ethnic groups. The literature review as well as phone interviews with school principals, teachers, VEDCs, line departments within MoES and international organizations revealed that issues related to ECE – especially at province, district and village levels – are similar to the issues identified in ECE assessments in 2003,[14] 2013–2014[15] and 2019.[16] Interviews with school principals, teachers, and VEDCs in Houamuang, Khoua and Shopvao Districts, Houaphan Province suggest that most of the issues raised were discussed and planned to be addressed in the previously mentioned assessments. Persistent issues include but are not limited to: (i) rural ethnic group communities/villages, both teachers and students, especially issues around language, culture, quality education, remoteness and poverty; (ii) school infrastructure, classroom conditions and supporting facilities such as water supply, sanitation systems, rest areas for teachers and play areas for students; and (iii) issues related to teachers/caregivers, including the limited number of suitable teachers in rural schools, their teaching capacity, management skills and performance. To better understand these issues, this assessment explains each of the issues in detail.

Ethnic groups' education
In general, ethnic groups are poorly represented in the education system as a whole. There are several associated issues, including that fact that most ethnic groups reside in remote areas. The urban-rural gap has played a critical role in shaping the education level of ethnic groups. The main Lao-Tai groups are mostly found in urban areas. They often enjoy better public services and opportunities for socioeconomic development (including education) offered by the Government and private investment. In addition, the ethnic groups often speak their own languages/dialects which are different from the Lao language used to teach at school, and many of them have several cultural barriers which often prevent them from being able to fully gain benefits

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[14] WB's Second Education Development Project, 2003.
[15] WB's Early Childhood Education Project, 2014.
[16] Asian Development Bank's Lao PDR: Education for Employment Sector Development Program, 2019.

from development projects. The Lao census (2015) states that the highest literacy rates occur in areas where people speak languages similar to Lao, such as Lao-Tai groups (95% male and 92% female literacy), while lower literacy rates occur in rural remote areas where non-Lao ethnic groups reside (57% male and 47% female literacy). Also, literacy rates are much higher in urban areas (above 90%) in both females and males; however, in rural areas only 62% of women 81% of men can read and write.

At the school level, data show that similar numbers of girls and boys attend pre-primary, primary and lower secondary school across the country. However, this gap widens and the overall number of students attending school decreases significantly for ethnic group students, especially as they move up to the higher grades and on to upper secondary school. This assessment found that low school attendance can be attributed to factors such as poverty, poor infrastructure, and hunger, as children are embarrassed by being poor and having no food to bring to school and/or being poorly nourished and hungry. This issue is often found in villages which are located far from the main center/city and along the Vietnamese, Chinese and Burmese borders. Other factors include the parents' education level; labor demands in assisting the family according to gender roles; and that children, especially girls, are required to assist their mothers to take care of their younger siblings during the day. The actual quality of the school and the existence of a language barrier at a very early school age are also factors that cause lower attendance rates, and prompt families to prioritize livelihood activities especially during planting and harvest seasons. In many ethnic group villages, children are required to work as laborers during the harvesting of rice and other crops.

According to the National Statistics Policy Brief in 2013, overall about 22% of the Lao-Tai are considered poor, while the percentage is nearly 60% for other ethnic groups' households.[17] Poverty plays a significant role in affecting ethnic groups' education and it has been highlighted as one of the main barriers to ethnic group children attending school. As well as experiencing food shortages, they lack other basic household goods such as cleaning and personal hygiene products, as well as clothing. According to the assessment conducted in northern provinces (Luang Namtha and Oudomxay) for the Education for Employment Sector Development Program, 2019, villagers from the Akha, Khmu and Hmong ethnic groups frequently reported that the main reasons for not attending school are: (i) lack of money to buy school materials, (ii) not owning school uniforms or shoes, (iii) the obligation to help parents gather their daily meal from the fields and forest, and (iv) children's lack of motivation and refusal to go to school because they are not sure what they will do for a living after completing school.

In the central and southern provinces (Bolikhamxay, Saravan and Sekong), the issues ethnic groups need to contend with are very similar to those in other parts of the country. Poverty and hunger are once again the main causes of low school attendance among ethnic children. Parents often take their children with them to work in agricultural fields or in other cities. By the time the season is over and/or when they return to their hometown, the children have missed so many classes that they are unable to catch up with the other students. They thus drop out of school altogether and continue to work as laborers with their parents and other family members.

Student dropout

MoES does not have sufficient data to show the dropout rate for ECE; however, dropout rates at the primary level are still high (only 79% of pupils who start Grade 1 reach Grade 5).[18] Dropout rates vary from province to province. Southern provinces such Khammouane, Savannakhet, Saravan, Sekong, and Attapeu share a much higher percentage of dropout at Grade 1 and primary school, while the northern provinces Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Sayabouly, Xiengkhouang and Vientiane Capital share lower percentages for both Grade 1 and

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[17] Policy Brief Targeting Poverty in the Lao PDR, 2013. Available from www.decide.la/en/downloads/index/Policy-Brief_01.pdf.
[18] Ibid. Lao Social Indicator Survey data, however, suggest higher dropout rates.

primary students. On average the dropout rate for first year students is 6.4% and for all of primary school it is 4.3% (see Table 3).

Table 3: Grade 1 and primary dropout rate by province

		Dropout rate Grade 1 (%)			Dropout rate primary school (%)		
		Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
1	Vientiane Capital	3.6	2.0	5.0	1.5	1.2	1.8
2	Phongsaly	5.8	5.8	5.9	4.0	4.3	3.7
3	Luangnamtha	5.5	5.6	5.4	2.8	2.7	2.9
4	Oudomxay	7.3	6.4	8.0	4.4	4.2	4.6
5	Bokeo	1.4	1.0	1.7	4.2	3.6	4.8
6	Luang Prabang	5.2	4.0	6.3	2.7	2.1	3.2
7	Houaphan	5.8	5.1	6.5	3.2	3.2	3.2
8	Sayabouly	2.1	1.5	2.6	1.5	1.2	1.8
9	Xiengkhouang	4.1	3.3	4.8	2.0	1.6	2.4
10	Vientiane	5.3	4.7	5.8	2.6	2.1	3.0
11	Bolikhamxay	4.0	2.6	5.3	2.6	2.0	3.1
12	Khammouane	10.3	9.2	11.2	5.4	5.1	5.7
13	Savannakhet	10.1	9.4	10.8	7.8	6.9	8.7
14	Saravan	7.7	6.4	8.9	7.6	6.9	8.2
15	Sekong	8.8	7.4	10.0	6.8	5.8	7.7
16	Champasack	6.5	4.6	8.1	5.4	3.9	6.8
17	Attapeu	7.2	6.5	7.8	5.6	4.4	6.8
18	Saisomboun	6.3	5.7	6.9	2.7	2.7	2.8
Grand total		6.4	5.3	7.3	4.3	3.7	4.9

From the students' point of view, the assessment for the Education for Employment Sector Development Program, 2019 found the same: that poverty, school location/distance from a village, and cost of schooling are the main reasons for dropping out of schooling. Many interviews with Grade 5 primary students revealed that lack of money to buy school supplies, transportation (mostly motorbikes) and hunger are the main reasons for them to discontinue going to school. The distance to the school and the costs associated with education were common causes of dropout cited by both students and villagers. There are total of 3,496 pre-primary classrooms[19] and 8,823 primary schools in the country. Of the 8,823 schools, only 7,256 take students from Grades 1 to 5 (complete primary schools), indicating that 1,567[20] recorded primary schools only cater for Grades 1 to 3 (incomplete primary schools), so students who are in Grades 4 or 5 often need to walk a few kilometers to the next village's school. According to the Lao census (2015), in 45% of villages the nearest school is 30 minutes away, 15% of all primary students need to travel about 90 minutes to the nearest school and almost 8% need to travel up to two hours.

Language barrier
The language barrier in ECE was frequently raised in previous assessments and was still raised by informants in Houaphan Province as one of the major concerns today. They explained that almost all rural children in kindergarten Grades 1 to 3 (aged 3–5) do not speak or understand Lao but they must start to communicate in Lao language at school. When a Lao-speaking teacher and/or different ethnic group teacher who does not speak the same language is assigned, the learning process runs at a very slow pace as both teacher and students need to be able to communicate in a mutual Lao language. Some informants explained that very often if an ethnic group teacher/caregiver cannot master Lao language properly, their dialect/accent can also cause confusion/misunderstanding and slow the learning process. This issue might be seen as minor, but for

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[19] This includes a standalone kindergarten and an attached pre-primary classroom.
[20] Lao EMIS, 2020.

young children aged 3–5 years who start learning Lao, this can have a significant impact on their learning abilities.

A WB Review Mission in May 2018 reported that the language barrier remains a major issue with very young children. A class that is being taught by a Lao-speaking teacher (either Tai Deng or Lao Lum) tends to experience more difficulties because the teacher is unable to effectively communicate with the children and must rely heavily on other teachers (often primary teachers from a higher grade). Wherever caregivers/teachers are members of particular ethnic groups, there is a visibly closer relationship between the teachers and children. In contrast, wherever the teachers do not come from the same ethnic group, the children tend to play among themselves rather than demand the attention of the teacher.

Although Lao language is taught as soon as children enter school, many of the ethnic groups' villages are characterized by very poor Lao language skills (especially in the Akha ethnic group in Sing District and Ta Lieng, Ka Tu and Ta Oi in Dak Chueng and Ta Oi Districts). Children who attended lower and upper secondary could answer questions in Lao language, but their parents still had to use interpreters and if a teacher sends a permission slip for parents to sign, most cannot read it and must seek help from older students or village committee members. Their literacy rates are surprisingly low and this even applies to children in primary school who have no experience communicating with students of other ethnic groups. In many rural pre-primary and primary schools, teachers still have to explain lessons in their own dialects as well as explain in Lao language.

In conclusion, the language barrier remains a major issue not only for ECE but also for primary schools attended by rural ethnic group children. This issue is slowing down the learning process and preventing them from effectively absorbing knowledge and skills. If this issue is not properly addressed, it is likely that the language barrier will continue to inhibit members of these ethnic groups from understanding the continuous rapid socioeconomic development that is taking place around them.

Quality of education

Low-quality education in Lao PDR has been identified by previous assessments, and the recent interviews with school principals and teachers in three districts of Houaphan in early June 2020 reported that about 30% to 50% of students in Grades 4 and 5 at primary school, especially those from ethnic groups, are unable to read basic words. Although this figure is reported from one province and might not apply to the entire country, WB (2018) also reported that student learning levels are low and that over 25% of fourth graders cannot read even three words of Lao correctly.[21] At the ECE level, or for children 3–5 years old, teachers/caregivers mostly address physical activities and only expose them to basic alphabets and numbers. Most are unable to read or count by the time they reach the third year of kindergarten. Education quality outcomes are the lowest among children living in rural areas, children in the poorest quintile and children of mothers with no education.

The WB *Development Report on Expanding Productive Employment for Growth* (2014) states that the quality of education in Lao PDR is very poor and that the skills problem is even deeper and more severe than is generally recognized, being a problem not simply of vocational skills but of basic reading and numeracy skills. This information is consistent with analysis of the Early Grade Reading Assessment conducted in October 2012, which found that many primary students cannot read correctly and that the problem is even worse among children who do not speak Lao language at home. It states that the overall dropout rate for Grade 1 was 11% and that 30% of Grade 2 students who speak Lao at home could not read one word. This proportion was 54% for students who do not speak Lao at home.[22] This was also confirmed by the social assessments conducted for

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[21] World Bank. 2018. Delivery of Education Services in Lao PDR. Systems Approach to Better Education Results - Service Delivery Indicators.
[22] Early Grade Reading Assessment, 2012.

the Education for All project in 2014 and the Education for Employment Sector Development Program in 2019,[23] which suggested that many non-Lao-speaking students had not achieved basic reading fluency when they completed Grade 5 prior to entering secondary school.

There are many different factors contributing to low learning levels. However, a large portion of the explanation rests on poverty and food security. A large number of children do not receive adequate nutrition and stimulation during the early years, the period when the brain develops the fastest. According to the World Food Programme Lao Country Strategy 2011–2015, the stunting rate is extremely high in most parts of the country. The national average is 40%, while the percentage is much higher among ethnic groups: it was 58% for the northern provinces, 55% for the southern provinces and 61.9% for Sino-Tibetan ethnic groups in Luangnamtha and Phongsaly Provinces.

Another explanation is that most students have limited access/exposure to textbooks, and many schools struggle to fully deliver the curriculum and equip youth with science, math, critical thinking, communication, and other creative skills needed for child development, particularly in poor rural areas. In addition, teachers/caregivers remain ill-equipped to teach. A recent study found that only 2.4% of Grade 4 teachers were proficient in Grade 4 math and Lao.[24] If and when children in Lao PDR attend preschool, they are attended to by poorly trained caregivers and teachers, with few age-appropriate developmental resources.

Quality of education of teachers

Teachers reported during the interviews that the situation has not improved for them in recent years. They recognized that the major challenges related to quality education are their personal knowledge levels, limited teaching/learning materials, and limited financial resources. Some ECE teachers/caregivers reported they had only had two sets of two weeks' training, while primary teachers reported that they had only completed basic teacher training and have had no further opportunities to improve their teaching ability or to continue their studies at a higher level. Many teachers teach multiple classes and/or multiple grades in one classroom. This is due to the limited number of both teachers and classrooms at the provincial and district levels, and the high number of students in different grades. Most of these rural pre-primary school teachers not only have a lower level of education but they are also young, 99% female (see Table 4), and often inexperienced. Some have not received training in taking care of early learners. Some teachers stated that they need to alternate between their own classes and pre-primary classes just to interpret for teachers and their early learners who do not share a language.

It is interesting that the number of teachers and the number of schools and to some extent the number of students do not correspond to the dropout rates and learning outcomes of students. On average, there are only about four teachers per school in both pre-primary and primary education. Some provinces, such as Vientiane Capital and Oudomxay, have a higher number of teachers, with an average of more than seven teachers per pre-primary school. Saravan, Luang Prabang and Attapeu have an average of six teachers per primary school but they also have higher Grade 1 dropout rates, while Bokeo and Sayabouly have only 2.3 and 3.7 teachers per school respectively and yet they share the lowest Grade 1 dropout rate in the entire country. Houaphan Province, where this assessment took place, only has an average of 1.6 teachers per school.

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[23] There were alarming verbal reports by primary teachers in June 2019 that up to 50% of ethnic group students are unable to properly read and write when they have completed primary school.

[24] World Bank. 2018. Delivery of Education Services in Lao PDR. Systems Approach to Better Education Results - Service Delivery Indicators.

Table 4: Number of schools and teachers in ECE and primary school (2019–2020) in Lao PDR by province (including both public and private/volunteers)

Provinces		Total Preschools	No. of Teachers			Total Primary Schools		No. of Teachers		
			Total	Female 9%	Male 1%	Total	Complete (Grade 5)	Total	Female 53.8%	Male 46.2%
1	Vientiane Capital	410	3,041	3,012	29	534	489	3,436	2,562	874
2	Phongsaly	144	424	421	3	484	289	1,312	874	438
3	Luangnamtha	208	436	436	0	355	269	1,179	673	506
4	Oudomxay	83	624	613	11	494	418	2,074	796	1,278
5	Bokeo	186	432	429	3	223	200	965	406	559
6	Luang Prabang	196	1,176	1,172	4	721	636	2,568	1,176	1,392
7	Houaphan	372	631	626	5	719	541	1,908	664	1,244
8	Sayabouly	311	1,161	1,153	8	398	390	2,147	1,063	1,084
9	Xiengkhouang	90	544	542	2	417	337	1,894	935	959
10	Vientiane	212	888	875	13	418	356	2,277	1,130	1,147
11	Bolikhamxay	80	575	567	8	318	278	1,455	826	629
12	Khammouane	207	604	594	10	649	496	1,929	1,042	887
13	Savannakhet	534	1,446	1,423	23	1,237	1,053	4,360	2,585	1,775
14	Saravan	90	540	533	7	604	462	1,910	925	985
15	Sekong	31	291	291	0	220	207	781	338	443
16	Champasack	273	898	884	14	748	594	3,041	1,982	1,059
17	Attapeu	44	270	269	1	187	157	785	409	376
18	Saisomboun	25	212	209	3	97	84	722	276	446
Grand total		3,496	14,193	14,049	144	8,823	7,256	34,743	18,662	16,081

Source: MoES EMIS, 2020.

Working to improve the quality of education, WB supported GPE II and has provided ECE teacher training. The training courses were provided for community schools. Training included teaching techniques and application of teaching materials for very young children as well as VEDC supervision/school management. The latter aims to address information dissemination regarding methods of encouraging rural ethnic group parents to send their children to school as well techniques to involve the community in monitoring and maintaining the school in a better condition. Ethnic groups' teachers were specifically targeted by the project. For instance, a total of 58 child carers/teachers were trained specifically for the children's playrooms in Oudomxay province. These teachers are currently being employed by the project and are actively working with children. Teachers contacted by phone interview proposed that more funding should be made available to support teacher training programs, which would directly improve their teaching skills and ultimately be reflected in their students' learning outcomes.

This assessment found that the low level of literacy in Lao PDR is persisting, which is particularly troubling because that skill is the foundation upon which other skills are developed. Without it, most teachers are unable to effectively perform their tasks of passing on basic skills and knowledge. Children who do not learn to read in the early grades risk falling behind in later grades and often drop out of school. They also have difficulty attaining more critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills and technical skills, because learning them

involves some degree of ability to absorb written information. Failure to master basic foundational skills can thus undermine an individual's future employment prospects and productivity.

In an attempt to solve the issue, MoES initiated reforms addressing the quality of education, especially aiming at building core skills such as reading, writing, and numeracy as well as basic analytical skills, which will prepare students for further studies and career opportunities. However, as this has recently been introduced, teachers from the consulted schools and villages had rarely been trained or given access to new textbooks and teacher guides to complement this reform. Students also have limited access/ exposure to textbooks, and many schools struggle to fully deliver the curriculum and equip children with basic science, math, critical thinking, communication, and other soft skills needed in a modern economy, particularly in poor rural areas.

Schools, classroom conditions and supporting facilities

School buildings, classrooms and other supporting facilities were also frequently raised by informants from central down to village level. Schools are poorly managed. Most attached classrooms and/or community childcare rooms/playrooms do not have proper doors on them, allowing animals such as cows and goats to use them as shelters after school hours. Principals are overburdened with tasks unrelated to management, and with limited budget: nearly half reported the school management committees of their school are dysfunctional. Pre-primary classrooms and primary schools in rural areas are often in much poorer condition than those in urban areas. While some schools are constructed from concrete pillars and cement walls, many are constructed from wood pillars, bamboo, and thatched roofing panels, and are often not well protected from heavy rain and summer storms. The classrooms are often too small and equipped with only a few tables and chairs made by the villagers. There is usually not enough space to accommodate the increasing number of students. Some of these poor-quality classrooms are extensions built to accommodate an increased number of students and are often located outside the main concrete school building.

In the recently observed schools[25], children's playrooms and/or attached classrooms are temporary, often poorly maintained and lack basic facilities such as water supply, electricity, toilets or a proper cleaning area, and waste disposal. Senior officials from MoES also reported that pre-primary classrooms are in very poor condition, while the classrooms of the higher grades, and secondary school and above , are in better condition. This is due to the fact that investment and efforts put into primary and secondary schools are much greater and more attention has been paid to them by different development organizations. ECE on the other hand has only recently been established by schools and communities and has not yet received much support and attention.

Table 5: Total number of schools and supporting facilities for ECE and primary schools in Lao PDR

Education Level	No. of Schools	Toilet		Water		Electricity	
		With water	No water	Yes	No	Yes	No
Preschool/ kindergarten	3,496	2,844	2,615	2,883	600	2,296	1,242
Primary school	8,823	7,207	6,437	7,020	1,800	4,769	4,154

Source: MoES EMIS, 2020.

The management and maintenance of school buildings are mainly the responsibility of the Education Department and teachers at the school. Communities' contributions are limited to material donations and labor, which are provided according to need as a school is being constructed, and in September at the beginning of the new school year. At many of the schools, community members and students repair and sometimes rebuild schools using wood and bamboo before school starts every year.

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[25] WB Mission, May 2018 to Odomxay, Houaphan and Phonsagy Provinces

Informants reported that the school block grant provided is too small and inadequate for larger repairs. The grant can only cover smaller repairs such as to tables, chairs and writing boards. Most pre-primary classrooms are in a poor state and need a much larger budget to improve their current condition. The Government's annual budget allocation for primary schools is severely limited and inadequate to cover the cost of improving school buildings. Some rural schools, therefore, rely heavily on the local community's contribution as well as other donations to improve school buildings and provide equipment such as tables and chairs as well as teaching and learning materials.

Health, sanitation and water supply

The ECE and primary school curriculum includes a basic health and sanitation component (handwashing with soap and clean drinking water). Table 5 shows that of the 3,496 pre-primary schools, only 2,844, 2,883 and 2,296 have toilets, water and electricity respectively. Although more than 80% of schools have toilets, they are universally in poor condition, many are not functioning, and they only consist of one or two rooms, which is not enough to serve hundreds of students. Many of the existing toilets also do not have a water supply, so teachers and students have to collect water from elsewhere in order to fill water containers or small tanks.

Where Community Child Development Groups are supported, two additional toilets have been built for the school. Issues remain, however, and are related to the availability of water and the distance of the toilet from the classroom for very young children. Water shortages are a major issue in almost all schools. The period of water scarcity is between late January and early June, which means that some schools have no water for between two and six months. During this period, the community often decides to allocate water to households instead of schools, and therefore the toilets are closed and are not used during this time. Some schools have toilets and water supply points located far from the project-provided classrooms, making it difficult for both carers and children to get water and go to the toilet. Very young children need an adult to help them go to the toilet, so when the toilet is far away and there is only one caregiver/ teacher, the other children have to be left alone in the classroom.

The National School Meals Program

Almost all of the interviewed schools have school lunch provided. However, since schools are closed due to COVID-19, most lunch programs had been discontinued during the assessment and therefore the question was raised of whether they will continue. A previous assessment recorded that school meals are provided when there is enough budget and with smooth transfer of cash but discontinued as soon as there are issues with cash transfers. Due to a shortfall in budget (550 kip per student), the meals were prepared by assigned village members and in most schools meals are only prepared three days a week instead of five days a week. Since the budget is low, some schools are unable to identify a person who would be willing to cook for the children without payment because community members need to time to work in the fields. If they are preparing food, it takes them all day because they are required to prepare and serve the food as well as clean up after the children once they have finished their meal.

School playgrounds and teaching material

School playgrounds are rarely found at the community/village level; however, most informants expressed their desire for one and mentioned the usefulness of having a school playground. They believe that a school playground can encourage children's attendance and lower the dropout rate. They also believe that a school playground will promote both children's physical development and their mental wellbeing. As for play materials (children's toys for the 3–5 age group) for ECE teaching, almost all informants in Houaphan Province said that there are not enough teaching materials and toys for the children to play with. Some of the schools are only using a photocopied version of the teaching materials instead of the original books and/or the children's teaching posters/pictures. The limited number of toys often causes children to fight over their preferred toys (Play-Doh and Lego) and as the number of children attending the playroom increases, the problem intensifies.

School/Village Checklist

Associated social challenges

Gender-related issues

Promoting gender equality is a core development objective for Lao PDR, especially by encouraging men and women to play an equal role in socioeconomic development and managing natural resources. As Lao PDR continues on its development path, the empowerment of women and girls, in urban and rural areas alike, is one of the key ways to translate the country's economic growth and the energies of its young people into equity growth and improved living standards that benefit both men and women. However, despite the gender neutrality in the legal framework, men and women do not enjoy the same equality in reality. Gender disparities in social, political and economic opportunities have been identified and discussed in all documents consulted.

Similarly, at the school level, legally, boys and girls have equal rights and opportunities to attend school. Interviewed parents, students and teachers all suggested that both boys and girls are encouraged to attend school. Parents sent all of their children to attend primary and, where possible, secondary school. The assessment also found that although children attend school, both boys and girls are required to assist their parents during certain cultivation periods which require intensive labor inputs, especially during planting and harvesting.

As mentioned, although Lao PDR has been promoting gender equality for decades, gaps still exist between men and women in all areas of social and economic development. At the national level, the National Statistics Centre reported in 2015 that the literacy rate for men in Lao PDR is 90% while it is only 80% for women. The literacy rate varies between different age groups, ethnic groups and locations. For example, in the 15–24 age group, 77% of men are literate, compared with only 68% of women; the literacy rate for urban men is 95% and for urban women is 92%; while in rural areas the literacy rate for men is 81% and 62% for women. The literacy rate among ethnic groups is low, and even lower in the Sino-Tibetan group where it is only 57% for men and 47% for women. These differences across gender are still quite large and this is particularly the case among some ethnic groups where some villages still have a strong social and cultural bias against girls attending school.

Table 4 showed that of the total 14,193 pre-primary teachers in Lao PDR, 14,049 are women and only 144 (about 1%) are men. This indicates that the project will be working directly with some, if not most, of these women during project implementation. The data show that 99% of ECE teachers and well above 54% of primary teachers are females, indicating that women play a crucial role in children's lives not only at the household level but also in their early educational development. Discussions with key senior education officials at the national level suggested that women, especially ethnic group women, are preferred and often targeted/appointed as ECE teachers and/or caregivers. At the rural village level, young ethnic girls are also often appointed and trained to look after young students. However, as this assessment reveals, while women are preferred for teaching/coaching young children, their literacy rate is lower compared to that of men and much lower among rural and ethnic group women.

It is likely that more men are employed at administrative and management levels, as reflected in the fact that most of the principals interviewed by this assessment were men, while ECE and primary teachers were women. Both women and men informants at the school level reported they neither have issues nor have heard reports of VAWC at school. There were a few complaints from teachers but most were related to long hours teaching, multiple-age/multi-class teaching and other issues related to teaching and not sexual violence and/or child abuse.

Child abuse and protection

Lao PDR has a policy to create child-friendly schools that are popular for children and attract them to learn. The child protection law promotes a good environment for children's learning where they can receive attention, counseling and assistance from teachers, with friendly solidarity among students. It also promotes free learning and providing necessary school materials, assistance and exemptions of fees to support disadvantaged children, children in remote areas, and children from poor families in order for them to have the basics required to complete at least primary education. As for children with disabilities, Lao PDR promotes, creates conditions and encourages all sectors and various organizations, both domestic and foreign, to assist in the education of disabled children.

The legal framework also includes statements aimed at protecting children from the use of violence, physical punishment or inappropriate words or acts that affect the dignity of children, and from discrimination or bias, and work that exceeds their abilities. However, child protection in Lao PDR faces different challenges. There are limited data, especially at the school level and at early ages. Certain forms of abuse are still regarded as family/domestic issues and therefore there are only a few child protection services to assist children at risk or in situations of harm.[26] Violence, abuse and exploitation of children are difficult to measure, as they are often hidden within the family and community, and exacerbated by gender inequity and marginalization of the poor and ethnic groups, in both urban and rural environments. Having said that, the Lao Social Indicator Survey 2017 posted on the UNICEF website shows that:

- 69% of children aged 1–14 had experienced some form of violent discipline during the last month
- 25.4% of Lao mothers/caretakers of children aged 1–14 believe that physical punishment is necessary
- 73% of children under 5 years of age are registered with civil authorities
- 32.7% of women aged 20–49 are married before they reach the age of 18.[27]

In addition, UNICEF Laos reported that about 42% of all children aged between 5 and 17 years work in conditions that are not appropriate for their age. Children from rural areas and those belonging to non-Lao-Tai groups are more likely to be engaged in child labor, ranging from 45% to 54%. Children with poorly educated mothers are also more likely to be working than those whose mothers have completed secondary or tertiary education. In contrast with what would be expected from education indicators, data show that there are fewer children working in the southern provinces, where attendance and completion rates are lower.[28]

UNICEF also reported that, overall, child labor increases with age, to reach half of all children aged between 12 and 17 years. This is due in part to an increase in the number of children engaging in work under hazardous conditions, which involves 16% of children under 11 but 48% of those between 15 and 17 years old.

Interviews with school principals, teachers and community members suggest that their level of understanding of the concept of child rights and child abuse is limited. Almost all of the informants state that there is no child abuse at the school with few suggested that soft punishment at school if a child is 'naughty' is normal, while other teachers described their students who constantly lagged behind as 'stupid', not clever enough to keep up with others, without knowing the real reason why a child is lagging behind. While one may argue that this is a form of emotional abuse, others might accept this kind of treatment. A study on violence against very young adolescents conducted in Luang Prabang province by Save the Children (2018) suggested that a good 55% of adult survey respondents felt that physical punishment of young adolescents was acceptable under at least one or more circumstances. It also found relatively high acceptance of emotional and physical punishment of children by parents or family members. The assessment found it very interesting that all informants thought

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[26] Save the Children Lao, 2018.
[27] UNCEF, 2020. Available from www.unicef.org/laos/child-protection.
[28] Ibid.

that gifts from students and/or parents are acceptable and that it is normal for teachers to receive gifts. In some community schools or playrooms parents and/or community members give cash or kind (rice, vegetables, meat, etc.) to teachers/caregivers as a way to express their appreciation.

Another issue discussed during stakeholder interviews was negligence. VEDCs and teachers reported that in some schools teachers sometimes failed to fully pay attention to students and very young children, especially those in kindergarten (children 2, 3 or 4 years old) when there is only one teacher trying to taking care of multiple age groups. When a child is in need of attention, a teacher must leave other students for a period of time without any care from an adult. Some teachers and VEDCs said that some teachers, after assigning a task for their students, leave the teaching room and play with their phones while the children are inside the classroom. In addition, in many rural villages, many parents face the very difficult decision of whether to leave their children at home, send them to school or take them to the farm or rice fields. The assessment found that while some parents left young children with grandparents or siblings, most usually take young children with them and leave them in a hut/shed. The informants reported that classes often run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., which means that parents and carers need to be ready to drop off the children at around 7 a.m. and receive them after 4 p.m. Some teachers reported that on some days they cannot leave until between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., after all children have been collected and they have had the opportunity to do some cleaning.

There are some organizations working on ensuring that children are protected from violence, neglect and exploitation. UNICEF, for instance, has established a child protection program aimed at strengthening policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, and improving access to and delivery of family support and community-based child protection services. The program has made a strategic shift toward policy implementation, while also keeping attention on service delivery to ensure balanced child protection system development. Save the Children established a program called Strengthening Child Protection Systems to Keep Children Safe, with the objective to ensure that children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence through appropriate preventive and remedial interventions. Interventions at the village, district and provincial levels are designed to contribute to the development of an effective and functioning provincial child protection system. Together with other organizations, they work with the Lao Women's Union and Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare at the central level on developing a social workforce and institutionalizing training on child rights for judges, prosecutors and the police to strengthen their awareness of and skills in child protection, as well as providing preventive and response services for violence against children, and parenting education to better respond to the needs of victims of violence and human trafficking.

At the community level, UNICEF has piloted a legal and social assistance programme for children in contact with the law in 15 villages in Saythany District, Vientiane Capital; trained provincial and district social welfare staff in Savannakhet and Xiengkhouang Provinces; and established a community-based diversion programme for children in conflict with the law in Saythany and Saysetha Districts in Vientiane Capital and in Kaysone Phomvihan and Sayphouthong Districts in Savannakhet Province. UNICEF continues to strengthen Child Protection and Assistance Committees at the central, provincial and district levels and Child Protection Networks at the village level. Similarly, Save the Children establishes and trains province, district and village level Child Protection and Assistance Network members to support the development of response and referral mechanisms for child protection at all levels.

Gender-based violence and sexual exploitation of women and children
Lao PDR also has good legal frameworks to safeguard the rights and interests of women and children. Article 40 of the Law on VAWC outlines education and vocational training assistance for child victims and women victims who are still in education. The law also says that children accompanying their mother who is a victim shall receive opportunities to continue their education in schools or in educational institutes, and that MoES and other concerned organizations shall facilitate and provide assistance according to the actual situation. Victims who do not have the opportunity to continue their education have the right to receive vocational

training in order to get a job, earn an income and be able to improve their living conditions. Article 62 promotes research and data analysis related to VAWC. Where needed, activities to promote gender equality and uphold women's and children's rights in families and society should be created, and mechanisms and coordination systems to provide timely assistance, counseling and protection to women victims should be established in order that women and children receive assistance and know how to access the justice process.

At the ECE and primary school levels, GBV is not commonly discussed and/or raised and GBV and SEA are only vaguely understood in Lao PDR. There have been some GBV-related studies conducted recently but data remain very limited. A discussion with senior officials at the central level reveals that on one hand the level of understanding on the concepts, meanings and differentiation of GBV, SEA and VAWC is limited; while on the other hand the level of acceptance by using cultural norms and practices to justify GBV, SEA, abuse and violence is very high. They also explain that commenting on body shape and size as well as hitting young children is common in Lao culture and that different groups of people have different perceptions of GBV/SEA/VAWC, and it is not clear to them what is and what is not related to VAWC.

WB recently supported a Lao PDR GBV Institutional Mapping Assessment,[29] while the most recent data was collected by the Lao Statistics Bureau and the National Commission for the Advancement of Women using standardized World Health Organization methodology. The study is the country's first-ever national survey on violence against women, and provides national-level prevalence data, with some specific information on rural and remote areas. The study presents violence against women from their partners and non-partners.

- The prevalence of the overlap of physical, sexual and/or emotional violence is 30.2%, indicating that women experience multiple acts of violence from their partner.
- The prevalence of the overlap of partner and non-partner violence, with physical violence accounting for 14.4 %, sexual violence 10.9% and physical and/or sexual violence 20.2%.
- 26.2% of ever-partnered women have experienced emotional violence in their lifetime, and 10.5% of them have experienced it in the past 12 months.
- 34.8% of ever-partnered women have experienced controlling behaviors by their partners in their lifetime, and 6.8% of them have experienced economic abuse in their lifetime.
- The prevalence of women who experienced sexual abuse during childhood varied depending on the different styles of questions.

As Lao society is still relaxed on the issue of VAWC so are societal attitudes. As mentioned earlier, a survey in Luang Prabang province revealed that 55% of survey respondents felt that emotional and physical punishment of children by parents or family members is acceptable under at least one or more circumstances. Similarly, the Lao PDR Social Indicator Survey 2012 found that 58% of women and 49% of men felt that violence against women is justified. Some 45% of women interviewed agreed that a husband can hit his wife if he finds out she has been unfaithful. A total of 35.6% of women interviewed mentioned that a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees, 22.9% thought a man should show his masculinity (being boss), and 29.4% agreed with a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband, particularly in rural areas and the northern region. Women in rural areas tend to agree with this more (38.9%).

Lao PDR has the highest rate of early marriage and adolescent pregnancies in Asia. In 2012, 36% of Lao girls were married by age 18, compared with 9% in Vietnam and 18% in Cambodia. Early marriage and child-bearing are highest in rural areas, with 43% of all rural women married before age 18, compared with just 23% in urban areas. Early marriage is particularly high for girls and particularly among ethnic group communities. However, this is not necessarily viewed as a concern by ethnic community members. For instance, a survey conducted by Save the Children Laos in 2018 showed 70% of the survey informants stating that the suitable

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[29] WB, Lao PDR Gender-Based Violence Institutional Mapping Report, 2020.

age for marriage for girls was between 12 and 17 years old, compared with 40% saying the same for boys. Rates of acceptance were higher among Hmong respondents compared with Khmu or Lao-Tai respondents, with the most commonly cited appropriate age for girls to marry being 15 (against 18 for boys).

Sexual exploitation and trafficking of children is commonly found in Lao PDR; however, efforts to combat the sale and sexual exploitation of children have been limited by lack of funding, resources and data, and the current impunity for people trafficking or exploiting children, sometimes with the complicity of officials. Some young girls are being forced into prostitution, including in karaoke bars in cities and casinos in Special Economic Zones. Child and forced marriages were a particular issue among some ethnic groups in the northern provinces bordering China, with girls either sold by their families or otherwise convinced to marry across the border. According to the WB Lao GBV assessment of 2020, in 2013 there were an estimated 11,000 women, of which 47.4% were young girls, involved in the sex trade, which happens mostly in bars. Some 60% of trafficked children are girls aged 12–18, and recently there has been an increase in reported cases of children being sold as brides in China.

Large-scale infrastructure construction projects including hydropower, mining, and transport such as roads and railways requiring an influx of male labor into poor remote communities creates a demand for local sex workers. Parents often push their young daughters into this, leading to sexual exploitation, GBV and HIV. This issue was confirmed when a study in Luang Prabang stated that district authorities interviewed in Viengkham and Ngoi Districts listed human trafficking as one of the main issues, particularly in Khmu ethnic communities. Girls were told that they would work in a factory and/or weaving but instead they ended up being forced to work as prostitutes in urban areas near Luang Prabang, in Vientiane, Pakse and also in Thailand and even Malaysia. This survey also states that some parents (in Khmu villages) agree to let girls go to work in other places in order to contribute to the household income.[30] According to the survey, about 32% of the respondents said they are aware of child trafficking in their community, but when asked whether they have access to information, only 42% of Lao, 34% of Khmu and of 28% of Hmong communities said they have access to information related to trafficking.

Despite the GBV Law endorsed in 2014, justice and law enforcement authorities are still not well informed and able to enforce the law. There is a lack of information on how line Government agencies coordinate to work on these issues. However, there is a Gender Network that includes civil society organizations and United Nations agencies, a CEDAW Task Force, and the Civil Society GBV Task Force which is supported by INGOs and consists mainly of local civil society organizations with no Government representation. They meet quarterly, and the chair and co-chair functions are rotated among members. The Anti-Human Trafficking Working Group is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Population Fund. It meets quarterly and includes government and international development partners.

While GBV, sexual exploitation and child abuse are not commonly discussed at the early childhood and primary school levels, the assessment raises several key concerns: (i) both urban and rural communities, more so among women and ethnic group communities, accept and justify certain forms of violence; (ii) quite a high prevalence of physical, emotional and sexual violence was reported and recorded in recent surveys; (iii) despite Lao PDR having substantial legal frameworks to safeguard the rights and interests of women and children, services and help systems are limited; and (iv) the issue is only vaguely understood at all administrative levels and at the individual level. This assessment raises a flag that basic understanding on the concepts, degree and issues of GBV, SEA/child rights should be made available to responsible school officers, principals, teachers and project staff. A clear, concise code of conduct which lays out policy principles and requirements that meet the objectives of laws and regulations on VAWC and ESS4 on community health and safety should be made available at the project level and implemented at the subproject level. Information,

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[30] Study on Violence against Very Young Adolescents, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, 2018.

training and dissemination of information on child protection, GBV and SEA should be designed, incorporated in project planning, and implemented prior to the commencement of each subproject activity.

In additional, the project may work in partnership with BEQUAL Phase II to support curricular reform to update textbooks with content that promotes gender-equitable norms, eliminates gender stereotypes, and promotes nonviolence among learners and educators. This may be done through picture demonstrations/illustrations of gender equality and ethnic groups diversity of Lao PDR, and emphasize that women, girls, men, and boys have a universal right to live free of violence under all circumstances.

Same as other types education, Lao PDR should engage boys and girls in understanding GBV risks as early a possible. Challenge that GBV is not acceptable and should not be viewed as part of the culture. Raising awareness on gender equality, cultural diversity, individual rights and respect people's rights meanwhile provide safe space for learners and teachers at school. Project targeted school should include a system to support children, women and teachers who experience violence, including through trained counsellors and peer supports, which could be pathways to child protection/GBV service providers, as well as include measures to reduce risks of GBV/VAC both against students and teachers (in transit and in schools)

Potential external impacts which could be a project risk

Some external risks could be a driving factor to trigger project risks if they are not carefully analyzed and planned for. Most of ethnic groups in Lao PDR live in the rural remote locations, if/when the project creates better schools and supporting facilities, this may trigger project impacts if these improved facilities are located far from ethnic groups' villages. Better school facilities could intensify pressure on ethnic groups to relocate or merge villages in line with the government's consolidation and relocation policy, which targets people living in smaller villages to merge with others to form bigger villages that are located near public facilities. This could become a very sensitive issue if livelihoods resources, such as land and forests, are not allocated and planned for as part of the merger or relocation.

While there are positive national development imperatives behind the wish to consolidate and relocate village communities in order to be closer to transportation infrastructure, markets and services, there have been notable negative effects on the social solidarity of the affected groups. Traditional ethnic group structures may no longer be applicable in situations where there are several ethnic groups residing together, as very often the Lao-Tai ethnic group is appointed to oversee the official administration of these new villages. The reason for appointing Lao-Tai people is mostly because members of non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups often have limited education, are unfamiliar with official administrative procedures and also have difficulties or lack confidence in dealing with official matters.

State-sponsored structures such as appointing Lao-Tai people to lead village management units may not always be a suitable replacement for the traditional structures of ethnic groups and their forms of dispute resolution. Decision-making related to ethnic groups' social hierarchy may lose its importance with the demise of a self-determined ethnic group's knowledge and cultural systems, and this also may disempower traditional leadership. This, in turn, may have serious social repercussions in villages with fewer effective social controls and could lead to a breakdown of the traditional cultures of different ethnic groups.

Complaints and grievance redress mechanism

All of the informants at the central and school levels, and villagers and school teachers consulted shared the same view that they do not have issues with disagreements and/or complaints from students, teachers, the school and/or community. Discussion with senior officials responsible for hotlines, complaints and grievance redress mechanisms based in MoES indicated that if/when issues are raised, they would be dealt with at the

local level directly. Issues and complaints do not reach national level. In the past few years, MoES has had only a few complaint cases and they were related to land conflicts (e.g. a school is built on the land of a person who left the country in the 1970s as a refugee). Some consulted teachers explained that when they have an issue, mostly related to administrative procedures, payment, or overwork/number of students, they would only verbally report it to their own reporting line, i.e. their own school principals.

Normally, at the community level, if any issues arise, whether they are related to the school or any other social and environmental concerns, the villagers will firstly consider among themselves whether the issue can be resolved internally. This first stage of mediation is preferred by all so as to avoid complications and not raise issues unnecessarily. If the issue cannot be dealt with internally, they will then raise it verbally with the village authorities. The village authorities often seek the advice of village elders and call for a meeting which includes the complainants, and elders as mediators. If the issue cannot be resolved then the next formal step involves the village authority either assisting in drafting a written complaint or the complainant being asked to draft the complaint by themselves. It will then go through the village authorities for comments and a referral letter will subsequently be sent to the district authorities. The district authorities will then take up the case, investigate, and mediate with the complainants and village authorities. If the issue still cannot be resolved then the same steps will be taken at the provincial level. If the provincial authorities cannot resolve the issue, it will be referred to the provincial courts.

8. Key mitigation measures and recommendations

The project is expected to bring positive outcomes to the targeted schools and beneficiaries through the improvement of learners, teachers, school facilities and the ECE system as a whole. The result of the assessment suggests that issues with education, especially in the rural ethnic groups context the project emphasizes, is complex and involves far more than the urban-rural gap, geography, ethnicity, poverty/food and associated costs. The issues do not rest solely on providing access to education and other basic public facilities and infrastructure development, but also involve livelihood improvement, economic development, recognition of social and cultural challenges, allocation of resources and sharing benefits equitably. Accordingly, incorporating cross-cutting development provisions that include the provision of livelihood/economic activities, employment opportunities, healthcare and sanitation, and public infrastructure expansion together with the provision of education would be more suitable to address persistent challenges identified in this assessment. It is also important to develop a multisectoral and holistic early childhood development policy, as well as undertaking more research on cost-effective options to expand access to and improve the quality of ECE services and livelihoods, while also supporting the smooth transition of children from ECE to the early grades of primary education.

Within the scope of the project, this assessment found that while there are many associated challenges, the project-caused impact is expected to be minimal. This SAR is designed to provide a practical plan to manage any potential unintended negative impacts associated with project activities, as well as to allow for meaningful and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations and engagement throughout the life cycle of the project. This particularly takes into account the circumstances of rural ethnic groups, vulnerable and marginalized individuals; and GBV, SEA and child protection issues that may be affected or potentially triggered by the project's activities.

The project will design measures to tailor project materials and training activities so as to mitigate social risks. It will also ensure that all activities proposed under the project/subproject are properly screened, assigned appropriate environmental and social risk categories, and that the environmental and social risks and impacts are properly and sufficiently assessed and addressed. Where impacts and potential impacts are identified and if these are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures will be properly planned so as to adequately address

the impacts and provide for restoration where needed. The project will provide appropriate social inclusion measures incorporated into the design of project activities, which will directly address identified issues of ethnic groups regarding underrepresentation and under-enrolment in school of vulnerable and marginal groups in rural villages.

Ethnic group children typically spend the first year of schooling learning the Lao Language and may repeat the grade the following year. This may result in higher levels of repetition, discouragement, and cost which place them at a higher risk of dropping out. The number of ethnic teachers in the system that can navigate the challenges of teaching Lao as a second language and provide role models to ethnic children is low. The project therefore will design measures to allocate suitable teachers to districts/villages in greater need.

In addition, the project will provide measures to tailor project materials to be suitable for ethnic children to promote retention, and measures to tailor training and mentorships to promote an increase in ethnic group teachers who could serve as role models in local areas. Measures to prevent violence against children and options for teachers to seek recourse to third party counseling service providers will also be included in project design and activities. The project will also consider including measures to address environmental management, such as the Green, Clean and Beautiful concept in curriculum and training programs supported under the project. Specific social risk management are outlined below.

ESMF and SEP management: Recruitment of a social development/ethnic groups expert

In order to effectively manage and oversee social and ethnic group challenges, a social development specialist who is also specialized in gender and ethnic groups development will be recruited by the project and will work part-time throughout the life cycle of the project. The social development expert/ethnic groups specialist will be required to have good local knowledge, especially in the context of ethnic cultural diversity in Lao PDR, and have balanced knowledge of economic development, social/cultural integrity and the education system in Lao PDR. In addition to social and gender-related tasks, the social development expert is expected to carry out the following tasks.

- Conduct social risk screening for each new proposed subproject site.
- Develop social risk management indicators that reflect ESS 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 10 requirements. The main indicators should include but not be limited to the following: (a) develop a communication strategy[31] to ensure ethnic groups' engagement; (b) consultation and communication in a language that the ethnic group understands; (c) ensure active participation by ethnic groups in project activities and in gaining project benefits; and (d) implement special measures so the poor and vulnerable will access/gain project benefits.
- Ensure records are kept of all village interactions and all district and provincial meetings, including breakdowns by ethnicity and gender.
- Review and adjudicate upon grievances submitted by any individual. Ensure all grievances related to any aspect of the project or sub-project are handled by the project through consultations conducted in a transparent manner and aimed at resolving matters through consensus at the project level before complainants forward these to higher level, if/when needed. Ensure all complaints and associated processes are record and stored.
- Conduct meaningful consultations[32] at school and village levels to enable participants to accept or opt out of project activities.

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[31] All project activities must consider the gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors that can limit participation at local level. This could result in separate meetings for men and women, or smaller village groups with different language speakers, or specifically targeting the poorest households.

[32] Meaningful consultation at village level is the only effective means of engaging with communities to ensure sustainable participation. Meaningful consultation is a process that follows and continues the work begun by free, prior, informed consent. As such, it: (i) begins early in the project preparation stage and is carried out on an ongoing basis throughout the project cycle; (ii) provides timely disclosure

- Conduct small group meetings at village level using appropriate translators or ethnic language speakers, with village groups split by gender, to discuss the potential impacts of project activities, both positive and negative, before the commencement of any school-related rehabilitation/ construction activities. Clear records must be kept demonstrating that this consultation has taken place.
- Collect gender- and ethnicity-disaggregated information and data on gender and ethnicity relevant to aspects of teacher training related to ECE supported by the project (for baseline and periodically during implementation).
- Assist MoES in implementing the SEP and ESMF, and related ESS documents.
- Develop a training of trainers manual, if necessary, to facilitate delivery of gender/SEA/VAWC training, addressing risk management and awareness raising.
- Develop a gender checklist for each project output which can be used by national and provincial project staff during project implementation.
- Develop a social monitoring and reporting system and provide training of key project personnel to facilitate overall monitoring of SEP and ESMF implementation and its reporting in quarterly and annual progress reports to WB and the Government.

Communication and language barriers
- All project activities must provide access to information in appropriate ethnic languages by providing a translator for meetings.
- Any information dissemination must be clear and in simple local language, to support comprehension by those who are less literate.
- Ethnic group interpreters will be used to address the language barrier to avoid misunderstandings and enhance cooperation and participation in activities. Therefore, at least one ethnic group interpreter will be used in each consultation and communication with ethnic group villages, regardless of where the village is located, to ensure that all villagers, especially the elderly and children, who often do not speak Lao, are able to understand information provided by the project.
- Because ethnic group populations have lower literacy rates and often face language barrier issues, MoES may introduce **Talking Book/Talking Box** for communication purposes as well as incorporate it into the curriculum. Talking Book offers audio recordings on topics to encourage the traditional literacy skills of reading and writing, as well as a range of digital literacies as it combines audio, visual, animation, multimedia and more.

Consultation
- The project will ensure meaningful consultation and quality of engagement at all levels during project preparation and other project activities.
- A Social Development/Ethnic Groups Expert is required to develop and implement a community consultation strategy that incorporates ethnic group sensitivity/culturally responsive methodology, conduct meaningful consultation, and ensure transparency in promoting quality education.
- The project will provide adequate information as well as engage with and seek the support of those who could be affected by project activities – including the improvement of schools and other related facilities, and selection of community teachers/caregivers – prior to decisions being taken, and respond to any contributions made. This should include taking into consideration existing traditional knowledge offered by the different ethnic groups and villagers; and ensuring active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation of individuals and groups in school improvement processes.

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of relevant and adequate information that is understandable and readily accessible to affected people; (iii) is undertaken in an atmosphere free of intimidation or coercion; (iv) is gender inclusive and responsive, and tailored to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; and (v) enables the incorporation of all relevant views of affected people and other stakeholders into decision-making on aspects such as project design, mitigation measures, the sharing of development benefits and opportunities, and implementation issues.

- The project will inform communities in project areas about SEA/sexual harm risks, child abuse/child protection and reporting mechanisms.
- The project will also ensure equal rights for all different ethnic groups, women, and men, while acknowledging differences between women and men and taking specific measures aimed at accelerating equality when necessary.

Rehabilitation/construction of school classrooms

- Whenever there is a rehabilitation and/or construction activity, the social development expert is required to ensure that the there is no private land acquisition and that the school is not close to a protected forest area; the construction does not prevent villagers from carrying out their routine activities; and ensures continued access to land, forest and natural resources to avoid income loss and to ensure food and nutrition security.
- Where possible, provide separate toilets for boys and girls and incorporate design that can increase safety.

Respect and recognize the rights of ethnic groups

- The social/ethnic group expert is to implement a communication strategy to ensure ethnic groups' engagement. The strategy can be a field guide that incorporates the concept of sensitivity to ethnic groups (cultural responsiveness) and inclusive consultation/social inclusion.
- The expert (possibly outsourced) will train project staff on the ethnic group communication strategy so they know how to be culturally sensitive during project construction activities and when communicating with different ethnic groups' youth, elderly, children, men and women.
- Pay special attention to ethnic and gender sensitivity, taking into account ethnic groups' gender perspectives and incorporating them into the communication strategy. All management strategies, including Codes of Conduct (CoCs) and training material development, must include consultation and engagement with ethnic groups and with men's and women's viewpoints.

Respect the ancestral and spiritual land and forest use of ethnic groups

- At all times, the social development expert is to ensure that the project and its staff and subcontractors respect ancestral and spiritual land and forest use and remain sensitive to customary use of land by the community, especially ethnic groups. The social development expert must also ensure that ethnic groups' rights to conduct ritual ceremonies remain intact, as well as promoting cultural preservation of indigenous knowledge, including traditional knowledge and schooling systems.

Ensure fair distribution of knowledge and project benefits

- Ensure all ethnic groups have equal access to project benefits. Where ethnic and gender gaps are identified (e.g. language, culture, social structure, geographic isolation, infrastructure), provide special mitigation measure to close those gaps. Special measures may include extra effort and budget. Risks of inequitable participation and benefits can be neutralized when all ethnic group students have equitable access to and benefit from the project's school improvement activities. Poor families/students are among the most risk averse, have less threshold for trialing new activities, and are more likely to be disadvantaged in terms of access to Government or project services due to access issues (distance, poverty, language, educational attainment).
- Ensure fair distribution of knowledge and improve inclusion through an engagement strategy that incorporates special measures for poorer and more vulnerable families in the implementation plan to ensure equal access to project benefits.
- Ensure fair representation of ethnic groups, women, and men in the processes of promoting better school systems and school management.

Teacher counseling services

The Government is presently planning to have a cluster school management system where they can oversee several schools from one administrative office (School Cluster Office?). The project will seek opportunities to provide platforms where both students and teachers can have access to information as well as teacher-focused counseling services. This can initially be done by linking teacher counseling services that have experienced and trained on GBV & child protection to a trained social protection consultant or organization operating in-country to address the SEA/VAWC risk. Eventually, the counseling services can be offered either at the school or cluster level. Teacher-focused counseling services can also be used to facilitate other services such as teacher networking, sharing teaching techniques and experiences, and teacher support teachers. And since the assessment revealed that 99% of the ECE/preprimary school are females, the counselling services can design to address specific women' needs.

Promote community incentives to send children to school

- Implement Government Decree on Ethnic Groups No 207/GoL, issued on 20 March 2020, especially Article 12 that directly addresses issues related to ethnic group education and includes pro-poor policies, and subsidize school fees and costs for the extremely poor in the village.
- Through Community Child Development Groups and VEDCs, establish **children's group walks** from home to school for child safety reason and reduce GBV/SEA/VAC risks. These are enjoyable for very young children and will discourage parents from taking very young children to the field.
- Through VEDCs, promote information sharing and link school projects to other livelihood development projects in the area to improve children's nutrition, especially cash crop production, grants and other microfinance interventions to promote income generation for parents.
- Continue to promote and implement the National School Meals Program.
- Promote a community awareness campaign on the importance of ECE through parenting education.

School and classroom health and sanitation

- Where appropriate, provide better preschool facilities, teaching quality and a safe environment. This is not only to provide health and safety to the children, but also so that parents and the community are confident leaving their children at school.
- Ensure schools have basic supporting facilities, especially ensuring that these toilets are separated by sex, have doors that can be locked, handwashing areas, toilets, and water supply to meet the requirement under Law on Hygiene, Prevention and Health Promotion (2011).

Children's health and safety

- Provide a simple code of conduct for basic health and safety at school for each project-funded school.
- Incorporate road and river safety awareness at schools and villages to avoid risks and fear of accidents while children are walking to school and playing unattended.

Promote self-confidence in ethnic group teachers

- Apart from ethnic group teacher training under project components, promote ethnic groups' traditional culture so that ethnic teachers (and ethnic groups students) can feel more confident of who they are as an ethnic group person, be proud of their traditional cultural practices, and avoid misconceptions and poor treatment by the Lao.
- Promote creative ethnic group teaching and learning materials through school material development programmes.
- Engage ethnic group teachers in teacher counselling services.
- Ensure ethnic group teachers are engaged in training (gender and ethnic groups sensitivity, GBV/SEA/VAWC, etc.).

Child protection

- The project will develop a CoC for Child Protection and provide training on how to implement the CoC. The CoC will provide a practical guide to prevent child abuse from occurring within the operation of the project period and incorporate risk management strategies. The CoC is to be communicated with and agreed to by all stakeholders, including contractors, school managers/officers, teachers, and all volunteers and community members who are part of project implementation activities. The key principles for this Child Protection CoC include:

  - ✓ Promoting and protecting the best interests of children at all times, as stated in the Law on Preventing and Combating VAWC and the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children
  - ✓ Zero tolerance of child abuse – mandatory reporting of confirmed or suspected child abuse
  - ✓ Child protection is a shared responsibility between the project, implementation agency (MoES) contractors, school principals and teachers, and the communities
  - ✓ The views of children and young people will be used to inform child protection policy and program development.

- The project will collaborate with other agencies such as UNICEF on child protection, especially on improving access to and delivery of family support and community-based child protection services.

GBV, SEA, VAWC

- The social development/ethnic expert will assist MoES in identifying risks of GBV (using WB's Good Practice Note and GBV Risk Assessment Screening Tool), particularly SEA and sexual harassment that can emerge during the implementation of project activities, especially with works contracts.
- The project will incorporate GBV/SEA/VAWC and child protection in its reporting system and grievance redress mechanisms.
- The project will collaborate with the aforementioned existing Task Force (the optimal Government agency if they can do it) to sensitize staff on the importance of addressing risks of GBV/SEA/VAWC and child protection issues.
- GBV/SEA/VAWC and child protection trainings will be provided for project staff, school principals, teachers and VEDCs with the objective of raising awareness of existing and potential GBV/SEA/VAWC risks.

Grievance redress mechanism

A grievance redress mechanism will be developed specifically for the Project. It will be used by the project and subproject activities through the project life cycle. During the rehabilitation/construction of schools, classroom expansion and other construction activities, the project will provide the school and the VEDC with an environmental management plan that includes instructions on how to minimize the impact of school-related construction. In the event that there is a complaint related to project activities, the villagers will be able to file their complaints either directly with the project, with the Department of Education or through their own school principal or preferred village mechanism for conflict resolution.

8. Actions for the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan

Table 6: Actions for the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan

Environmental and Social Commitment Plan action items	Relevant ESS
1 Recruit a social development/ethnic groups expert	ESS1

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2	Develop a project-level communication strategy that incorporates gender, culture and ethnic group sensitivities; addresses strengthening relationships among project staff, teachers, principals and the community, Community Child Development Groups and VEDCS, etc.	ESS1,7 & 10
3	Explore the potential and possibility of Talking Book being incorporated in the teaching curriculum	ESS1,7 & 10
4	Establish children's group walks	ESS4
5	Establish teacher counseling services	ESS1, 4,7 & 10

6	Develop and deliver trainings and CoCs/codes of practice:
	   1. Codes of Conduct
	      ▪ Child protection
	      ▪ Health and safety
	      ▪ Environmental safety
	      ▪ GBV/SEA/VAWC
	   2. Training materials/manuals/tools
	      ▪ Child protection
	      ▪ GBV/SEA/VAWC
	      ▪ Gender, culture, ethnic sensitivity
	      ▪ GRM
	   3. Record of beneficiaries (including number of participants and training provided)
	      ▪ Project staff and stakeholders
	      ▪ Schools
	      ▪ Teachers/principals
	      ▪ Provinces/District
	      ▪ Community/village/ Community Child Development Groups/ VEDCs
		ESS1, 2, 4,7 & 10

7	Develop a project-level GRM: The implementation, including training on how to use GRM and reporting will be done at the subproject level.	ESS10

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Annex1: List of 40 poorest districts, which are priority for education improvement

ໂຄງການຍົກສູງຄຸນະພາບການສຶກສາ ແລະ ກິລາ ຢູ່ເຂດຕ່າງໆໄກສອກຫຼີກໃນ 40 ເມືອງ

ລ/ດ No	ຊື່ແຂວງ Province [18]	ຊື່ເມືອງ District [40]
1	ຜົ້ງສາລີ Phongsaly	ສຳພັນ [1] Samphan
2	ຫຼວງນ້ຳທາ Luang Namtha	ລອງ [1] Long
3	ບໍ່ແກ້ວ Borkeo	ເມິງ [1] Meung
4	ອຸດົມໄຊ Odomxay	ງາ, ຮຸນ, ປາກແບງ [3] Nga, Houn, Pakbang
5	ຫຼວງພະບາງ Luang Prabang	ໂພນທອງ, ປາກອູ [2] Phongthong, Pakou
6	ໄຊຍະບູລີ Xayabouly	ໄຊສະຖານ [1] Xaysathane
7	ຊຽງຂວາງ Xiengkhuang	ໜອງແ� [1] Nongheth
8	ຫົວພັນ Huaophan	ກວນ, ຫົວເມືອງ, ຊຳໃຕ້ [3] Khouan, Houameung, Sam Tai
9	ວຽງຈັນ Vientiane	ເຟືອງ [1] Fueng
10	ໄຊສົມບູນ Xaysomboune	ລ່ອງແຈ້ງ [1] Longcheng
11	ບໍລິຄຳໄຊ Bolikhamxay	ໄຊຈຳພອນ [1] Xaychamphone
12	ນະຄອນຫຼວງວຽງຈັນ Vientiane Capital	ສັງທອງ [1] Sangthong
13	ຄຳມ່ວນ Khammoune	ນາກາຍ, ບົວລະພາ, ມະຫາໄຊ, ຍົມມະລາດ, ໄຊບົວທອງ [5] Nakai, Baoulapha, Mahaxay, Nyommalath, Xaybaouthong
14	ສະຫວັນມະເຂດ Savannakhet	ເຊໂປນ, ພິນ, ນອງ, ຊົງບູລີ, ພະລານໄຊ [5] Sepone, Phin, Nong Xongbouly, Phalanxay
15	ຈຳປາສັກ Champasack	ໂຂງ, ບາຈຽງຈະເລີນສຸກ, ສຸຂຸມມາ, ມູນລະປະໂມກ [4] Khong, Bachiengchalearnsouk, Soukkhuma, Mounlapamok
16	ສາລະວັນ Salavanh	ລະຄອນເຜົ້າ, ຕາໂອ້ຍ [2] Lakhonepheng, Taoy
17	ເຊກອງ Sekong	ເລົ້າງາມ, ດາກຈຶງ, ລະມາມ, ກະລຶມ [4] LaoNgam, Darkchung, Lamam, Kaleum
18	ອັດຕະປື Attapue	ເມືອງພູວົງ, ເມືອງຊານໄຊ, ເມືອງສະໜາມໄຊ, [3]

		Phouvong, Xayxay, Samamxay

Annex 2: List of persons met

	Name and surname	Position and organization	Contact details
1	Mr. Ked Phanluck	Director General, Teacher Training Center, MoES	02022204585
2	Ms. Khampeasueth Kithyavong	Deputy Director, Department of Planning, MoES	
3	Ms. Chanthamly Souliyasack	Technical, Pre-Primary Department, MoES	02056426265
4	Mr Et Vongphachan	Deputy Division, General Department, MoES	02055311458
5	Mr. Sengthong Sisavatthong	Deputy Director, Inspection Department, MoES	02095224577
6	Mr. Vithaya	Technician, Department of Pre-primary Education, MoES	02092787478
7	Mr. Phisithxay	Technician, Department of Planning, MoES	02054535456
8	Ms. Phonunsy Phavanvaeng	Head of Division, Save the Children, Lao PDR	020 28 965 351
9	Ms. Bounmy Souvannalath	Gender Equity, Disability and Social Inclusion, DFAT	020 2223 5445
10	Ms. Gilmour Blossum	BEQUAL	20 5552 9561
11	Ms. Phet Sivongxay	Principal of Hoaumeng Primary School Hoaumeng District, Houaphan Province	02056759465
12	Mr. Khamsone Phetvixay	School Principal. Ban KorHing Village (Khmu). Hoaumeng District, Houaphan Province	0309513408
13	Mr. Likuao Maixaiyang,	School Principal Ban KangKao (Hmong), Hoaumeng District, Houaphan Province	020 55188894
14	Ms. Souk Singkhamthong	Chief of the Village and Head of VEDC	02095449516
15	Ms. Pakhammy Bouavang	Kindergarten Teacher/Caretaker Sam Tai District Center	030 9272007
16	Ms. Doung Kannivong	School Principal, Phansavath School, Hoameung District	Mr Vithaya's phone number
17	Ms. Kong Singvilaykham	Ban Tin, Sopvao Houaphan Province	030980708
18	Mr. Vinphone Lodbounmy	Head of the village-Ban Khor	02054836786
19	Ms. Phanouphone	VEDC	0305731186
20	Mr. Monesing Phetviengsy	Deputy Director, Provincial Education, Houaphan Province	02055555262
21	Mr. Lienthong Vannakham	Technician Provincial Education, Houaphan Province	02098785888
22	Mr Kad Vandavone	Teacher, pre-primary school	02055179628
23	Mr. Khamsone Petvixay	Principal, Ban Khangkao, Houaphan province	0309513468

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24	Ms. Doung Kannivong	Principal, Ban Phansavath	0309339677
25	Mr. Bouanphet Chanthavong	Teacher, Primary school Ban Korkhoune	
26	Ms. Nasy	Teacher, Kindergarten Ban Korkhoune	0309941661
27	Ms. Eiing	Teacher, Kindergarten Ban Longngeun	02091450515
28	Mr. Sithxay Saythaly	Principal, Ban Haosean Pre-primay School	02055558237
29	Ms. Souksamone Khantri	Project Coordinator, ECU, MoES	02022220393
30	Mr. Bounlam keomanivong	Deputy Division, ECU, MoES	02022220474
31	Ms. Siphaphone Manivanh	Deputy Director Preprimary School Department	02022425314
32	Ms. Khammasa Xaymonty	Technician, MoES	
33	Ms. Phougsouk Xayyaboune	Deputy Division, General Department, MoES	02055401133
34	Ms. Souphanikhone Senglangsi	Technician, Advancement of Women and Children	02055685343
35	Mr. Vithyout Sysouvanh	Technician, Advancement of Women and Children	02052368104
36	Mr. Bounhieng Singvongsa	Deputy Division, Preprimary School Department	02028022126
37	Mr. Sengphet Sumphomphackdy	Director of Finance Department, MoES	02055629808
38	Mr. Soukdavong Mahanvong	Technician, Inspection Department	02055112213
40	Ms. Bounhome Chanthasack	Deputy Director, Inspection Department, MoES	02096998349

Annex 3: Pictures of visited schools in June 2020

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Annex 4: List of Assessment Questions

1. General Guiding Questions for Field Trip
    1. How many staff/teachers are there at your school and how many are responsible for and/or working with this project?
    2. How many students are you responsible for at the moment? What are their ethnicities?
    3. Do you know how many are currently dropout of school, which grade?
    4. Do you keep a track record of ethnic groups' students that already graduate from your school? If you do, what is the system that you use?
    5. Do you share information about the student enrollment and dropout with another nearby schools? If you do not, would like to share and how would you like to share it?
    6. If the parent have some concerns who/where do they go to?
    7. Have students and/or students' parent approached you and requested for your help with their concerns? If this is the case, what were the issues and how did you help them?
    8. Do you have any procedures/mechanisms or guidelines regarding collaboration with ethnic groups communities? If you do, are they helpful?
    9. What mechanisms have you put in place to ensure the ethnic communities are empowered through meaningful consultations, capacity-building, and capacity-maintenance?
    10. How do you currently coordinate with MoES and other Government sectors about your school activities, progress and challenges related to ethnic groups?
    11. Do you have your own reporting format to report to MoES or do you use the one provided by MoES?
    12. How do you communicate with the student's parents and/or their guardianship?
    13. What are your main concerns at the moment? How would you like to address these concerns?
    14. Could you please share your stories in working with ethnic groups communities?
    15. For project staff: how has the project been described to the communities in terms that the ethnic group people can understand?
    16. For the communities: how have you been informed of the project? When did the project start?
    17. What language do you speak and what languages do the communities speak? Can you understand when the community talk to you?
    18. If you or your community/school don't understand Lao language well enough, how have you made arrangements for language translations for your community?
    19. Does someone from your village/school receive a support from the project (ethnic groups teachers and or other scholarship programmes)
    20. How do you sure everyone in the community knows what is going on? How do you pass your own information to the project/gov staff?
    21. Have you or your school been invited the community to participate in identifying potential risks to the traditional community from direct impacts on the social and environment at the beginning of the project period?
    22. Have you or the community been invited to social and environmental safeguards workshops? If so, have you raises any comment, concern and/or suggestion?
    23. Do you think your concerns have been incorporated in the project plan?
    24. After the project is operational, how does the project assess if the community fully understood the project and its implications?
    25. How have you gone about including local ethnic group, women, and disabled people and their knowledge, their concerns in the decision-making process?
    26. Have you incorporate ethnic group peoples and their traditional knowledge systems as partners in the design of this project?
    27. How have you ensured that assistance is provided so that project participation will be possible

by the ethnic group peoples?

28. How do you and the community measure the project's level of sustainability, in the planning stages, and after the project is operational? What mechanisms are present for the local ethnic group communities to understand the objectives of the other major stakeholders in the long term?

29. Have you been sensitive to the nature of ethnic groups' knowledge? (Eg. recognize that traditional knowledge is a way of life, an experience-based relationship with family, spirits, animals, plants, and the land, an understanding teaching that uses indirect signals from nature to predict future events).

2. Guiding Question for Site with Previous Project and Its Supported Components

Topics to Discuss by Project Components	Integrated Strategies to Support Ethnic Groups Checklist
Teachers'/Ethnic Groups Teachers' Teaching Skills	✓ Have you received support to school financial reporting system? ✓ How do you measure reading outcomes of the students and capacity development of the teachers? ✓ Have teaching and learning material developed specifically for ethnic groups children?
Management and Maintenance of School Buildings	✓ Capacity Building and Project Management ✓ School financial reporting system, financial training, report writing and data information for measuring school effectiveness
Financial Management and Limited Budgets for Rural Schools:	✓ School financial reporting system, financial training, report writing and data information for measuring school effectiveness
Assessment of Teachers' and Students' Performance - Monitoring and Evaluation	✓ Have teaching and learning material developed specifically for ethnic groups children? ✓ Provision of quality guidelines and self-study material for both students and teachers, EQS ✓ SBG to ensure that schools meet four basic minimum required conditions ✓ Reading development intervention ✓ Have the project developed instructional approaches that support ethnic students to acquire Lao language skills?

Topics to Discuss by Project Components	Integrated Strategies to Support Ethnic Groups Checklist
School Buildings and Facilities	✓ Have sufficient number of classrooms and provide tables and chairs. ✓ Improve and/or complete the incomplete schools with the provision of proper toilets and a water supply (digging a simple well could be an option). ✓ Install a basic playground and establish playgroups for pre-school classes. ✓ Provide sufficient school equipment and resources.
Community Incentives, Support and Commitment	• Promote community awareness campaigns on the importance of pre-primary education through parenting guidance. • Provide better pre-primary school facilities, a safer environment and

	improve the quality of teaching so that mothers are confident in leaving their children at school. • MOES to promote a pro-poor policy and to subsidise school fees and costs for the extremely poor in the village. • Promote and implement the National School Meals Program (NSMP). • Promote group walks of children to and from school to discourage parents from taking young children to the fields. • Provide an incentive through the provision of school materials and resources, lunch as well as clean water.
Teachers and the Quality of Teaching	• Promote and provide ethnic group teachers' training programmes. • Provide scholarships to ethnic group people for teacher training. • Provide teachers' books and teaching guidelines for ethnic group teachers.
Students/Children Issues and Motivation	• Provide pre-primary classrooms with basic school supplies and the necessary teaching and learning materials so that they can attend. • Raise awareness of "equal opportunity and education for all" and address the importance and benefits for young children in attending school. • Train and provide community-based caregivers to encourage parents to leave children at school. • Promote and continue implement NSMP. • Community Child Development Groups (CCDGs), and VEDCs' promotion and creation of school walking groups for safety reasons and to make travel more enjoyable for young children. • Improve the communication skills of the teachers to encourage young children to attend school.

Annex 5: Survey Questionnaires

<div align="center">

ສາທາລະນະລັດ ປະຊາທິປະໄຕ ປະຊາຊົນລາວ

ລາຍການກວດສອບ ຄວາມປອດໄພທາງດ້ານສະພາບແວດລ້ອມ ແລະ ສັງຄົມ

Lao GPE III Learning Equity Acceleration Project P173407

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS CHECKLIST

</div>

ຊື່ ແລະ ນາມສະກຸນ ຜູ້ຕອບຄำถາມໃນແບບສອບຖາມ/ Full name of the checklist completer:

ຕຳแໜ່ງ (ໃນໂຮງຮຽນ)/Position (at school):

ວັນທີ/Date:

A. ລາຍລະອຽດຂອງໂຮງຮຽນ SCHOOL PROFILE

ຊື່ໂຮງຮຽນ: Name of School:			
ທີ່ຕັ້ງ: Location:	ຊື່ ແລະ ເລກທີ່ ຖະໜົນ: ເມືອງ: No. Street Village	ບ້ານ: ແຂວງ: District Province	
ປະເພດ ຂອງໂຮງຮຽນ: Classification of School:	☐ ກ່ອນປະຖົມ/ອະນຸບານ: Pre-Primary School:	☐ ປະຖົມ Primary School	Both
ຈຳນວນໂຮງຮຽນ No. of School Buildings:			
ຈຳນວນ ຄຼ ຍິງ/ຊາຍ No. of Teachers:	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	
ຈຳນວນ ຄຼ ຊົນເຜົ່າ No. of Ethnic Groups Teachers:	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	
ຈຳນວນນັກຮຽນ No. of Total Students	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	
ຈຳນວນນັກຮຽນ ຊົນເຜົ່າ No. of Ethnic group students	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	☐ ຍິງ female ☐ ຊາຍ male	

School/Village Checklist

	ປະຖົມ PRIMARY ຊັ້ນ (ປີຮຽນ) Grade Level																		(ຍິງ/ຊາຍ) ລວມTotal		
	ອະນຸບານKinder			(1) ປ 1			(2) ປ 2			(3) ປ 3			(4) ປ 4			(5) ປ 5					
	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male	ລວມ total	ຍິງ female	ຊາຍ male
ຈຳນວນນັກຮຽນ No. of Students																					
ຈຳນວນຫ້ອງຮຽນ No. of Classrooms																					
ອັດຕາສ່ວນຂອງນັກຮຽນ ຕໍ່ຫ້ອງ Student-Classroom Ratio																					
ອັດຕາສ່ວນຂອງນັກຮຽນ ຕໍ່ຄູ Student-Teacher Ratio																					
ເດືອນເຂົ້າຮຽນ (ເດືອນຂອງສິກຮຽນ): School term months:																					
ເວລາ/ຕາຕະລາງ ຂອງຫ້ອງຮຽນປົກ ກະຕິ: Time/schedule of regular classes																					
ຕາຕະລາງ ການພັກຮຽນ: Schedule of school holidays/break																					

B. ອາຄານຮຽນ ແລະ ສິ່ງອຳນວຍຄວາມສະດວກ ທີ່ມີຢູ່ EXISTING SCHOOL FACILITIES

ອາຄານຮຽນ School Building	ສ້າງຂຶ້ນໃນປີໃດ? In what year was building constructed?	ສະພາບປະຈຸບັນ Condition					ໝາຍເຫດ Remarks
		ສະພາບດີ/ຍັງ ໃຊ້ງານໄດ້ Good/ Functional	ຕ້ອງການ ການສ້ອງ ແປງ Needs repair	ຕ້ອງປ່ຽນໃໝ່/ສ້າງ ອັນໃໝ່ For replacement	ຊົ່ວຄາວ (ບໍ່ ຖາວອນ) Makeshift or temporary	ຕ້ອງໄດ້ຮື້ຖອນ For demolition	
ຫ້ອງຮຽນ Total classrooms							
ອະນຸບານ Kindergarten							

ໂຮງຮຽນໄກຈາກບ້ານ ເທົ່າໃດ (ປະມານຈັກກິໂລ)? How far is the school from the village?	
ມີວິດຖ່າຍພຽງພໍບໍ່ ຫຼື ຖ່າຍຕາມປ່າ? Are there adequate toilets or is open defecation practiced?	
ສຸກສາລາທີ່ໄກ້ສຸດຢູ່ໃສ? ແລະ ໂຮງໝໍທີ່ໄກ້ສຸດ ຢູ່ໃສ? Where is the nearest clinic? Hospital?	
ພະຍາດຫຍັງ ທີ່ມັກເກີດ ກັບນັກຮຽນໃນໂຮງຮຽນ? What kind of illnesses/sicknesses are most common amongst students at the school?	

ໂຮງຮຽນ/ບ້ານ ໄດ້ມີການຈັດການສ້າງຈິດສຳນຶກກ່ຽວກັບ ການນຳໃຊ້ນ້ຳ ແລະ ສຸຂາພິບານ (ນ້ຳ ແລະ ວິດຖ່າຍ) ຫຼື ການຮັກສາສຸຂະພາບ ແລະ ຄວາມສະອາດ ບໍ່? Has the school/village had any WASH, Covid-19 or other similar awareness raising on hygiene and sanitation?	☐ ມີ Yes	☐ ບໍ່ມີ No
ວິດຖ່າຍ ໂຮງຮຽນToilet at School	☐	☐
ວິດຖ່າຍສຳຫຼັບຄົນພິການ Toilet for people with disability	☐	☐
ວິດຖ່າຍ ໄດ້ແຍກສຳຫຼັບ ຍິງ/ຊາຍ ບໍ່ ? Separate toilets for male and females?	☐ ແຍກ Yes	☐ ບໍ່ແຍກ No

ມີລະບົບນ້ຳໃຊ້ແບບໃດ (ນ້ຳປະປາ, ນ້ຳລິນ, ນ້ຳສ້າງ, ນ້ຳບາດານ, ນ້ຳຫ້ວຍ, ອື່ນໆ)? ໄດ້ຊົ້ນ້ຳກະຕຸກບໍ່? What type of water supply is available? is it portable?		
ມີອ່າງເກັບນ້ຳ ໃນໂຮງຮຽນບໍ່? Is there a water storage tank in the school?	☐ ມີ Yes	☐ ບໍ່ມີ None
ມີແຫຼ່ງພະລັງງານ (ໄຟຟ້າ) ໃດແດ່ໃນໂຮງຮຽນ? What is the source of power in the school?		
ຮງຮຽນມີຖັງ/ກະຕ່າ ແຍກປະເພດຂີ້ເຫຍື້ອບໍ່? Does the school have waste segregation bins?	☐ ມີ Yes	☐ ບໍ່ມີ No

ໂຮງຮຽນທຳການກຳຈັດຂີ້ເຫຍື້ອ ວິທີໃດ? How is solid waste disposed by the school?	☐ ມີຄົນມາເກັບຂີ້ ເຫຍື້ອCollected by waste haulers	☐ ເຮັດປຸຍ Composting	☐ ເຜົາ/ຈຸດBurning ☐ ແບບອື່ນ, ກະລຸນາລະບຸOthers, specify

ມີ ອາຄານ/ສິ່ງກໍ່ສ້າງ ໃນບໍລິເວນອ້ອມລັດສະໝີ 100 ແມັດຈາກຂອງໂຮງຮຽນ ທີ່ຖືກຈັດໃຫ້ເປັນພື້ນທີ່ ມໍລະດົກ ບໍ? Are there buildings or structures within 100m from the school compound which are considered as heritage sites?			☐ ມີ Yes	☐ ບໍ່ມີ No
ຖ້າມີ, ກະລຸນາລະບຸ ບັນດາສິ່ງປຸກສ້າງດັ່ງກ່າວ. If Yes, specify these structures:				

C. ຄົນຊົນເຜົ່າທ້ອງຖິ່ນ/ຄົນພື້ນເມືອງ INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

ຄົນຊົນເຜົ່າ/ຄົນພື້ນເມືອງ Indigenous Peoples Identification	ມີ YES	ບໍ່ມີ NO	ບໍ່ຮູ້ NOT KNOWN	ໝາຍເຫດ Remarks
ມີນັກຮຽນ ຊົນເຜົ່າ/ເດັກນ້ອຍທີ່ເປັນຊົນເຜົ່າ ຫຼື ຄົນພື້ນເມືອງ ລົງທະບຽນເຂົ້າຮຽນບໍ? (ໝາຍກຸ່ມຊົນເຜົ່າ ຂອງຂະເຈົ້າ ໃສ່ບ່ອນໝາຍເຫດ) Are there children identified as ethnic minorities or indigenous people that are enrolled in this school? (note ethnic groups in remarks)				
ສິ່ງທີ່ໜ້າເປັນຫ່ວງ ກ່ຽວກັບ ການເຂົ້າຮຽນຂອງເດັກນ້ອຍຊົນເຜົ່າ Key concerns regarding school attendance of children from ethnic groups				
ກະລຸນາລະບຸ Please explain:				
ແນວທາງແກ້ໄຂ ບັນຫາທີ່ກໍານົດມາຂ້າງເທິງ Perceived solutions as to how to address issues identified above.				
ກະລຸນາລະບຸ Please explain:				

D. Grievances - Concerns

	ມີ YES	ບໍ່ມີ NO	ບໍ່ຮູ້ NOT KNOWN	ໝາຍເຫດ Remarks
Have students and/or students' parent approached you and requested for your help with their concerns? If this is the case, what were the issues and how did you help them?				
ແນວທາງແກ້ໄຂ ບັນຫາທີ່ກໍານົດມາຂ້າງເທິງ Perceived solutions as to how to address issues identified above.				
ກະລຸນາລະບຸ Please explain:				

E. Grievance Redress Mechanism

	ມີ YES	ບໍ່ມີ NO	ບໍ່ຮູ້ NOT KNOWN	ໝາຍເຫດ Remarks
Does the school have a procedure for dealing with grievances or complaints (from teachers, parents, children)? If yes, please describe briefly below:				

School/Village Checklist

	ມີ YES	ບໍ່ມີ NO	ບໍ່ຮູ້ NOT KNOWN	ໝາຍເຫດ Remarks

Recent Construction or Repair Work at the School

	Yes	No
Has any construction or repair work been carried out at the school within the last 2 years?		

If Yes, please list and describe briefly (for example the work carried out, duration of work, number of workers, costs)	Was the work carried out by a local contractor, a contractor from another district, and/or village volunteers?		
	Local	Other District	Village Volunteers
1			
2			
3			

Construction Work Management	Yes	No
Was the work done during school opening hours?		
Did the contractor remove all waste?		
Did a government staff from the school supervise the construction work		
Was the contractor instructed by a government staff about conduct, waste disposal, sanitation, hygiene, not to make loud noise, vehicle access or other issues before starting the work? If yes, please describe briefly below		

General Environmental Management at the School	Yes	No
Has the school carried out any environmental activities? (waste clean-up, school gardening, tree planting)? If yes, please describe briefly below:		

ສິ່ງທີ່ຕ້ອງການແກ້ໄຂດ່ວນ

ໃຫ້ຈັດອັນດັບບູລິມະສິດ ສິ່ງທີ່ຕ້ອງການແກ້ໄຂດ່ວນທີ່ສຸດຂອງໂຮງຮຽນ: **List down the priority needs of the school:**
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.