

Mid Term Review Report of the project:

## **Empowerment of the Ethnic Minorities through Education**

Long District, Luang Namtha Province, Lao PDR  
23 November – 14 December 2007



submitted to  
Norwegian Church Aid/Vientiane

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## Summary

The “Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities through Education” Project is the first project in the PDR to set up cluster schools in the upland area. The project is divided in 3 phases: Phase I: 2006-2008 (Pilot Phase), Phase II: 2009-2011 and Phase III: 2012-2014. Three donors support the project in this phase: Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation (PCF), Switzerland, Human Education International (HEI), Norway, and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) itself. NCA is in operational partnership with Long District Education Office and the Provincial Education Services of Louang Namtha.

The direct beneficiaries are 376 Akha students in 11 target villages, 30 teachers and 10 education officers. Indirect beneficiaries are 244 Akha and Lahu school children, especially girls in 10 other schools in Bohkbor and Soploi sub-districts, and other 1280 out of school children (6-15 years of age) in 26 villages of the 2 sub-districts. Other beneficiaries are village leaders, parents of school age children, mass organisation representatives in 21 villages.

The overall development goal for the project is: “Improvement of the quality and relevance of education for the Akha children in Bohkbor and Soploi sub-district, Long District, Louang Namtha Province, Lao PDR”.

The immediate project objectives for this phase are divided into *quantitative objectives*: Creation of 2 core schools and 9 satellite schools, and upgrading of both, Provision of learning materials, and development of 20% local curriculum for ethnic children. The *qualitative objectives* encompass training of teachers (child centred approach/creation of learning materials/school management and cross-cutting issues like Child Protection/STI/HIV/AIDS and drug prevention campaigns), capacity building of district and provincial education staff and sensitisation (importance of schooling, establishment of parents associations and enhanced knowledge of the cross-cutting issues mentioned above.

The Mid-term evaluation took place from 23<sup>rd</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007 with visit to the project areas, and the results of the evaluation are as follows:

### **Fact findings:**

- The project is financially sound
- The project design is still valid and the logframe is very precise and applicable
- The project is well managed at all levels
- All project staff members are committed and professional
- Good support and follow up from donors
- Project activities are timely and effectively implemented
- Fine balance between quantitative and qualitative inputs in Phase I
- 6/8 of project targets are realistic
- Training courses for teachers, district and provincial staff are relevant and carried out according to activity plans.
- Sensitisation of villagers is on the right track
- Involvement of villagers in development of local curriculum
- Relevant cross-cutting campaigns have been carried out
- Core schools are well functioning
- Teachers are hard working and well supported and encouraged by project staff

### **Recommendations:**

- Intensified focus on village sensitisation – employment of short term local gender consultant
- More local resource persons attached to the project.
- Follow up on teacher training (esp. multigrade teaching, child centred approach, production of local learning materials)
- Increased capacity (conceptual) building of district and provincial staff (participation and child centred approach)
- Employment of male counterpart to project coordinator
- Continued/intensified cooperation with PADETC (and SCN), Lao Women's Union at district and provincial level
- Investigation of possibilities for establishing of Life Skills Training Centre in some villages as a pilot project.
- Upgrading of the structures in the core schools.
- Purchase of a project car for the Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities education project.

The donors are encouraged to continue their support into the next phases, as there is strong reason to believe that this project will serve as a model for future clusters in the upland areas. It appears realistic to establish 1-2 more clusters in the following phases. The continuous sensitisation of villagers, the dialogue with Long District authorities as well as the conceptual training of project, district and provincial staff will enhance the possibilities of a sustainable future development of the area.

## List of abbreviations:

ACF	Action contre la Faim
CB-DAC	Community –Based Drug Abuse Control
CRC	Child’s Rights Convention
BENC	Basic Education Development in Northern Communities
DDA	Demand Driven Approach
DEB	District Education Bureau
EEME	Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities through Education
EFA	Education for All
GoL	Government of the Lao PDR
HEI	Human Education International (HEI Verden)
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
LADP	Long Alternative Development Project
LCDC	Lao National Commission for Drug Control
LPES	Luang Namtha Provincial Education Services
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NPD	National Project Director
PADETC	Participatory Development Education Training Centre
PCF	Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SCN	Save the Children Norway
STI	Sexually Transmitted Illnesses
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs Control
WFP	World Food Programme

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## 1 INTRODUCTION:

### A SHORT DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF LONG DISTRICT

Long District is one of the poorest districts in the Lao PDR. It is located in the north-western part of the country. The construction of the main road through the district was completed as late as in 2000. There are 84 villages, 5,063 households with 26,995 people of which 13,672 are women. The district has just recently been connected to the electricity circuit. Bokhbor and Soploi sub-district are 30-60 km from the district centre, Muong Long. They used to be the biggest opium producing sub-districts in Long, and with a high rate of opium addiction. The area is mainly populated by ethnic minority groups of which the Akha group constitutes approximately 75% of the population in Long District. The rest mainly belongs to the Lahu and Tai Doi groups.

Since 1993 NCA has been the executing agency for the tripartite project together with the Lao Government through LCDC and UNODC (previously UNDCP) in Long District with the objective of reducing/eradicating opium poppy cultivation and improving the livelihood. The first and second phase of the project was Called "*Drug Demand and Poverty Reduction in Northwestern Laos*". The third phase of the project named "*Long Alternative Development Project*" (LADP) began in 2002 and the project then moved to the remote sub-districts of Bokhbor and Soploi, with 9 villages from 2002, 12 more from 2003 and again 5 more from 2004, to a total of 26 villages. The LADP phased out in December 2004.

As for infrastructure, health and education etc. a 63 km earth road is now completed from the district through these two sub-districts to the Mekong River, also with access to some villages. Two sub-centres are constructed, one in each sub-district, with offices and staff houses, meeting rooms and stores, and one dispensary. 23 village schools are constructed. In all target villages Development Committees are established and trained and villagers as well as district staff have participated in various training courses.

The food security in the target area has improved, but is not yet secured. Only small areas are suitable for paddy rice growing, so the main food source is upland rice. Combined efforts of the LADP and the Lao Government have resulted in a reduction in opium growing.<sup>1</sup> LADP has worked actively to increase rice production through small scale irrigation schemes, extension of paddy land, trying other seed varieties and training of farmers. Crop substitution programmes have introduced alternative crops in order to improve nutrition and food security (e.g. fruit trees, fish ponds and vegetable growing). These initiatives have been made not only as supplements to local food crops, but also with the intention of starting cash crop production. Livestock and forest products constitute additional income.

Despite successful methods of detoxification (in 2006 the official number of addicts amounted to 69 in the 2 sub-districts) carried out by Community Based Drug Abuse Control (CB-DAC) and LADP, villagers still generate income from production of opium which makes it possible to buy rice during deficiency periods, as food shortage is

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<sup>1</sup> On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006 the Government declared the Lao PDR an opium-producing-free country.

increasing. Although precise data are not easily available, it is a fact that the number of opium addicts have decreased considerably in the area.

However, a new threat has entered the villages, the use of methamphetamines. For a few years this has been noted along the main road through the district. This is specifically noticeable in remote villages close to the border of Myanmar, where the villagers because of low level of education are highly exposed to the risk of becoming addicted. Most of these villages are target villages.

## **2 “Empowerment of the Ethnic Minorities through Education” (EEME)**

The formal partnership with UNODC ended in 2004, but NCA continued (from 2005-2007) to finance and implement projects to ensure sustainable drug demand reduction and livelihood in the target area without the financial involvement of UNODC, but entirely funded by Norway. However, the livelihood development philosophy not only encompasses fulfilment of basic physical needs but also awareness about the relevance and meaning of human rights and education.

### **2.1 Project background**

At the inception phase of the LADP project the education services of the district were limited with few complete primary schools located along the main road, and a very small number of ethnic children had access to education. LADP has supported both formal and non-formal education for the ethnic minority groups living in the mountainous area of Long district. Parents had been motivated to participate in the education activities through PRA, teachers had been trained and ethnic children had been given scholarships to teacher training school. In 1997 NCA developed a drug prevention curriculum with different resource persons including a representative from the Akha culture. More schools have been built by the ethnic groups and enrolment has increased. As a continuation of these local and external initiatives, the “Empowerment of the Ethnic Minorities through Education Project” has been established. The project started in March 2006 and is planned to cover three phases.

The *target area* is Soploi and Bokhbor sub-districts. The *direct beneficiaries* are 376 Akha students in 11 target villages, 30 teachers and 10 education officers. *Indirect beneficiaries* encompass 244 Akha and Lahu school children, especially girls, in other schools in the target area and other 1280 out of school children (6-15 years of age) in 26 villages in the 2 sub-district. Additionally leaders, parents of school age children and mass organisations in 21 villages are identified as indirect beneficiaries.

The *timeframe* of the project is planned to take place in 3 phases:

- Project phase 1: Pilot Phase 2006-2008
- Project phase 2: 2009-2011
- Project phase 3: 2012 -2014

The project is *co-funded* by Norwegian Church Aid (Norway)<sup>2</sup>, Human Education International (HEI)<sup>3</sup>, Norway (preliminary from Jan 2006-December 2008), and Pestalozzi Children's Foundation (PCF)<sup>4</sup>, Switzerland. PCF is also providing technical and advisory support in planning, implementation, review and network.

The *stakeholders* in the project are children, parents and leaders in the villages, teachers, head teachers, Louang Namtha Provincial and Long District Education Service. Other concerned line agencies at the district level includes health and agriculture offices Lao Women's Union and Youth Union. The Education Donor Working Group and the INGO Education Working Group are development partners with interest in primary education. Links are established with Save the Children Norway (SCN), Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC), UNICEF who all have similar pilot projects in three other provinces in the Lao PDR. Furthermore collaboration is established with NGOs in northern Thailand.

As for *project organisation* Norwegian Church Aid in Lao PDR is in operational partnership with Long District Education Bureau (DEB) and the Provincial Education Service in Louang Namtha (LPES). (Please see a schematic overview of the project organisation page 4).

In a *wider perspective* the EEME project is congruent with the national goal for education. The development goal for the Lao PDR is to abandon the status as "an undeveloped country" by the year 2020, and in this respect "Education is essential for the development of human resources (...) and a vital tool for alleviating poverty"<sup>5</sup> Approximately 14 percent of students, mostly girls, children living in remote areas, and the poor and disabled are unable to attend primary school according to recent statistics<sup>6</sup>. However, the percentage of children without access to education for one reason or the other is most likely higher considering the geo-political configuration of the country.

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<sup>2</sup> Core funding is provided by NORAD via a block grant administered through NCA head office in Oslo

<sup>3</sup> Human Education International (HEI) is a Norwegian NGO focusing on primary education. Most of the money comes from Norwegian primary schools but it also gets some support from Norwegian Government. It has projects in South America, Africa and South East Asia. The organisation has a double agenda: 1. to provide information to primary students in Norway about children's living conditions in so-called Third World countries, and 2: to encourage Norwegian children to support their brothers and sisters in the South by raising money for different education projects.

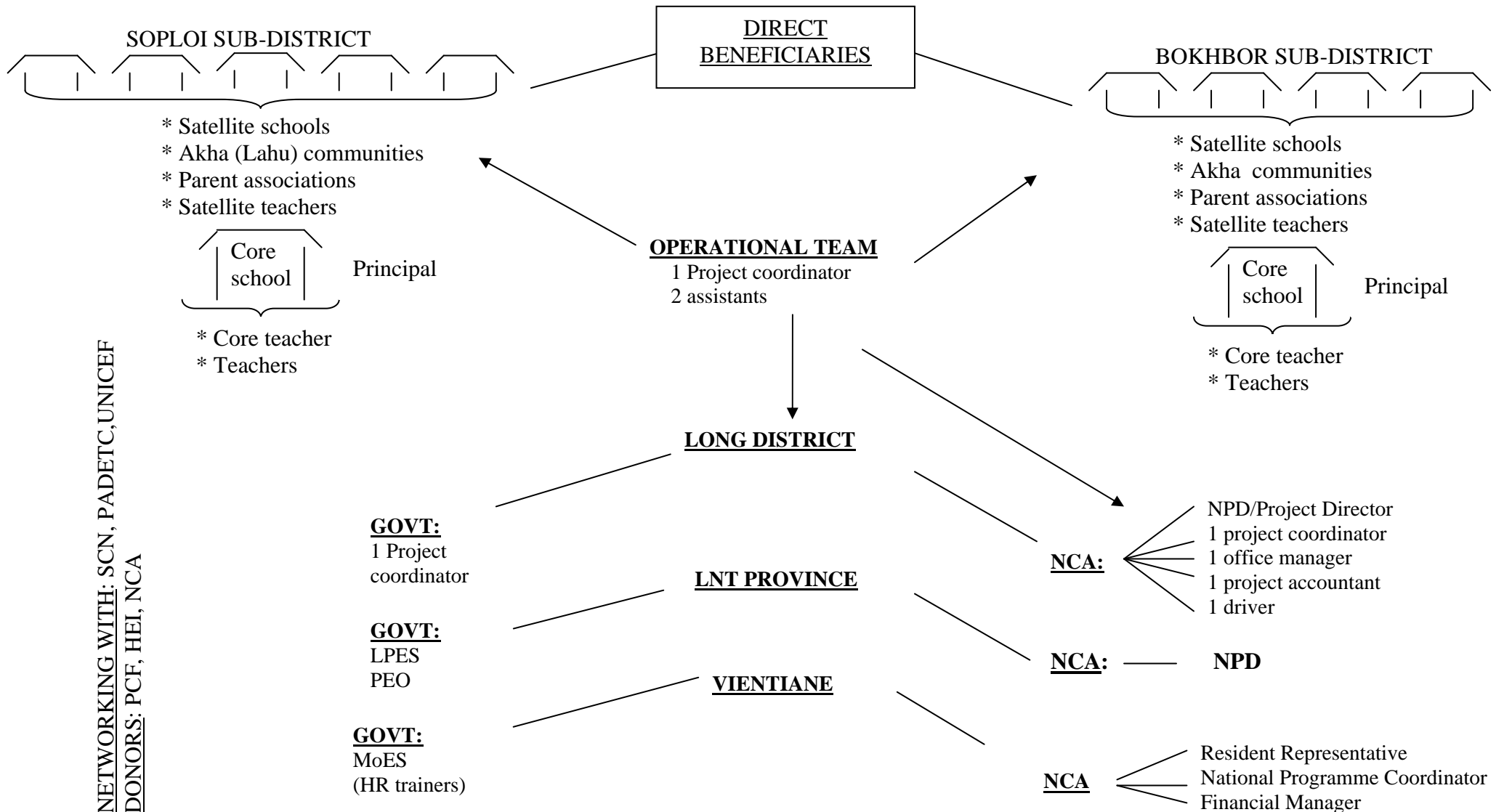
<sup>4</sup> The Pestalozzi Children's Foundation creates educational opportunities in places where many children and adolescents cannot go to school for a variety of reasons. The Foundation supports partner organisations by setting up alternative schools and vocational training centers. The Foundation makes it easier for children from remote areas to get to school. It helps working children to integrate in the school system. This support is given in the long-term. Educated children and adolescents improve the living conditions of their family and their community.

<sup>5</sup> Speech by Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Somsavat Lengsavat at the Education for All conference in Vientiane the 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Quotation from Vientiane Times Thu 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Op.cit.



**Figure 1: PROJECT ORGANIZATION**



**NETWORKING WITH: SCN, PADETC, UNICEF**  
**DONORS: PCF, HEI, NCA**

## 2.2 Project objectives

The overall development objective of the projects is:

*“improvement of quality and relevance of education for the Akha children in Bohkbor and Soploi sub-districts, Long Distict, Louang Namtha Province, Lao PDR”*

The immediate project objectives are divided into 4 related areas **with interchangeable quantitative and qualitative activities** – all encompassing clear descriptions of targets, indicators and means of verification:

Project objective 1:

*“2 cluster schools established and child centred approach introduced to the teachers”*

Project objective 2:

*“improve relevance of 20% extra curriculum for the ethnic minorities, especially the Akha children”*

Project objective 3:

*“improve school conditions and living quarters for students and teachers”*

Project objective 4:

*“build capacity of parents, principal and district partners and project staff”*

The development of the social capital among villagers lies implicitly in the project activities as well as the strengthening of the human resources among teachers, staff and partners constitutes a vital element in the action plan of the project. This continuous capacity building of local government officials and institutions should not be underestimated, as replicability of the project might be left in the hands of the local and national institutions. The concern about human rights including the rights and protection of the child is also an indisputable aim of the education project.

## 2.3 Project strategies

The involvement of the district and provincial education resource persons will ensure that the project activities are integrated in the national Education for All Plans of Action. The long-term and exit strategies should promote *sustainability*, not least through the capacity building of the human resources. In this respect the establishment of effective indicators and monitoring mechanisms is crucial.

As for the beneficiaries of the project the central strategy is the *sensitisation* of villagers, including parents of school age children. The main strategy to achieve greater consciousness among villagers of the importance of schooling is sought through

*transformational participation*, starting with PRA exercises, carried out in harmony with the local culture.

*Training* of teachers and other resource persons in child centred and rights based approaches in cooperation with other agencies operating in the same people-centred attitude is envisaged as a method to promote *sustainable human development*.

### **3 Review approach**

#### **3.1 Review objectives**

The Master Document, Action Plan and Logframe as main sources for the analysis the Mid-term review is intended to:

1. check whether the project has met its objectives and desired results within the given time frame;
2. to map positive and negative outcomes and examine the quality and quantity issues of implementation;
3. to judge the sustainability of the project's actions within a larger context of Education for All;
4. to indicate where progress has been made and where existing work needs to be strengthened bearing in mind the financial and personnel constraints.

Specific issues that have to be studied are as follows:

#### A: Meeting the project objectives:

- Is the project proceeding in a timely manner so that the stated desired result can be reached?
- Is the project fulfilling the expectation in empowerment of the ethnic communities in basic education through quality and relevant education.

B: Access to universal enrolment and improve retention in basic education.

C: Development of 20% curriculum and creative learning materials.

D: Demand driven approach

E: Quality of education

F: Management issues.

#### **3.2 Review methodology**

Experience from 3 years as education advisor in the Lao PDR, earlier reviews carried out for NCA among ethnic populations, independent studies among Akha minority groups as well as the study of relevant project documents formed the basis of the present review.

Although lack of sufficiency in Lao language has been a hindrance for full participation in the discussions especially with different village groups, it has been possible to gain valuable insight through *non-verbal communication* and *observation*. As for meetings with teachers and members, village heads and members of parents' associations *semi-structured interviews* were made possible by means of Akha and Lao translators.

During interviews with education officers, NCA and government staff as well as representatives from donor organisations *structured interviews* were applied, the reason being that the relevant questions were mainly concerned with management issues.

The overall intention behind the conversations initiated by the consultant should be seen in the light of:

- Strengthening the social capital in ethnic communities to avoid further polarisation among already marginalised population groups.
- Protection of the child and observation of child rights.
- The sustainability concept in terms of inclusion of ethnic minority groups in their own development.

The review team spent one week in the Soploi and Bokhbor sub-districts. 7 of the 11 satellite schools and both core schools were visited. The team talked to village resource persons in 6 villages, 11 teachers, 2 core teachers, the 2 principals and to government and project staff involved in the project. Furthermore the team observed evening classes in one village (for detailed information see Appendices 2 and 3).

#### **4 Analysis of the” Empowerment of the Ethnic Minorities through Education Project”**

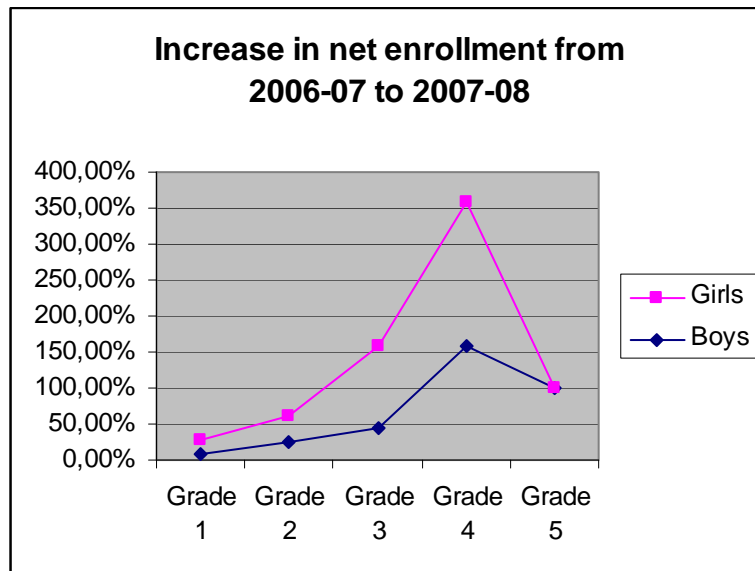
Each of the specific evaluation themes A-F (cf. p.6, Appendix 1 for the ToR) contains a set of sub-questions to be addressed, and they will be analysed in details (in the following order: B,E,C,D,F). As for the analysis of the 4 main themes incl. item A in the ToR( cf.p.6, Appendix 1) they will form the overall basis for the conclusion as they require general recommendations to be discussed by the project team for further intervention. The answers and suggestions from all interviewed persons will be taken into consideration accordingly when analysing all questions presented in the Terms of Reference. Also valuable comments from the discussion of the draft version of the report with the core project staff is incorporated as well as comments from the donors are reflected upon. After each topic a small catalogue of ideas are presented to be discussed by all parties involved, if found relevant.

##### **4.1 Ad B: Access to universal enrolment and retention rates in basic education**

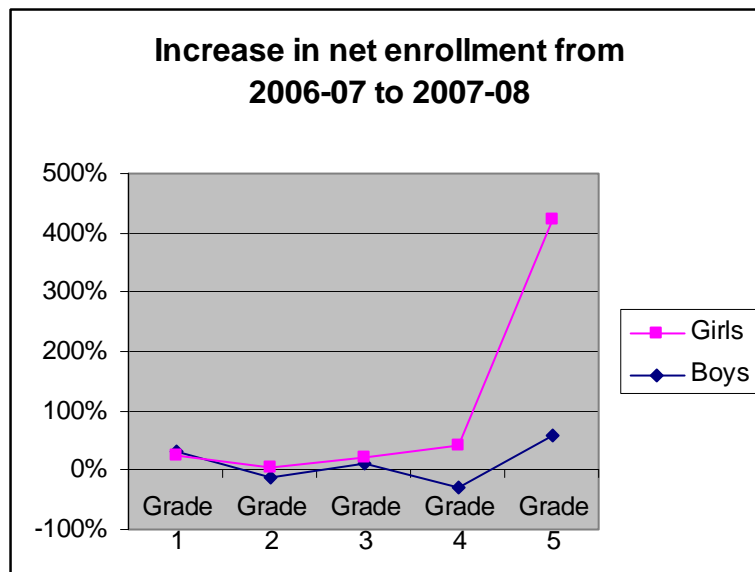
The following graphs show the net enrolment rates from the school years 2006-2007, and 2007-2008. It should be noted that the project started in the middle of the school year.

4.1.1 Primary school enrolment in 11 target schools and Jamai and Soploi areas.

**Figure 2: School Enrolment in 5 target schools in Jamai**



**Figure 3: School Enrolment in 6 target schools in Soploi**



For details pertaining to the specific schools please see Appendix 5.

The reasons for the apparent “status quo” in the first 3 grades were twofold: there has been a severe measles epidemic and many –especially girls – belong to the gross enrolment “cohort”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> **Net enrolment** refers to: the number of school age children who are enrolled in the grades that comply with their age, whereas **gross enrolment** refers to the total number of students enrolled in school regardless of their age.

The schools have had noticeable effect in the villages. As development indicators it is worth mentioning that the village as such are cleaner, parents have begun to use soap, more families boil drinking water and most families sleep under mosquito net.

Many girls seem to drop out after grade 1 which might be due to the fact that they and/or the parents are attracted to the new idea. Parents might feel forced to send the girls to school after sensitisation discussions, but the girls do not find it attractive enough, and the girls are withdrawn from school again to look after siblings.

In order to keep the children in school after grade one see the suggestions below: (for teachers, parents associations and project team to observe) (For the girls Life Skills Training Centres might be a realistic alternative (See p.19)

- Keeping the school attractive for children. It must be fun to go to school!. Singing, games, different pedagogical methods
- Special efforts must be made to keep girls to continue in P2.
- Outdoor activities, camping, involving the children in producing their own learning materials.
- Appointing “buddies” /also know as “my schoolfriend”.
- Rewarding the good students (small useful process for obtaining good results, for being a good friend, for helping in keeping the school and the surroundings clean.
- Giving an extra gift or paying further studies for a good student (evt. a full scholarship e.g. end good students to the secondary school in Long)
- Paying special attention to shy students (boys and girls)
- Keeping close contact with parents of children who are about to drop out.
- Appoint more female teacher as satellite teachers (if possible)
- Organise inter-village school visits for children
- Continue the camping practice involving villagers
- Provide the children with a camera and let them make a “documentary” about their own village and its future (the teacher will help them with small text boxes)
- Investigate the possibility of setting up a kindergarten-like system in the villages. In a long-term perspective this seems also to be the national policy of the Lao Government.

#### 4.1.2 Security issues in target and core schools:

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Part 1, Art.3 the child must be protected in the following aspects which all apply to the situation of the children both in target and ore schools:

*1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*

*2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.*

*3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.*

Especially in the **Jamai core school** there are strict rules that seem to be complied with. Girls and boys are not allowed to enter each others' dormitories, male teacher cannot enter the girls' dormitory without being accompanied by a female teacher, and similar rules apply to the access to boys' dormitory. If children are sent to the forest to collect firewood etc. they are never unaccompanied. Whenever the students leave the school premises they go in groups. Interviews with grade 5 students in Jamai revealed that the youngsters feel completely safe. The teachers instruct them in classes of their rights and they are not afraid. The fact that a police station is established in close proximity to the school enhances the feeling of security, and the cooperation with the police is very good.

In **Soploi core school** the same rules are taught to the students, but there seems to have been irregularities, and incidents of harassment of a female teacher and some female students have occurred. NCA follows the situation closely and there might be retaliatory measures against the offender. A new principal will be appointed next year, and the fact that a police station is established and the province plans to construct a lower secondary school next to the core school will probably rectify the situation in terms of attention paid to the increasing number of students in the area.

Community members and **satellite school teachers** painted a very peaceful picture of the security situation in the villages. There is a code of conduct for teachers, and any abuse will be reported to the district who will then take the necessary step of warning and eventual penalty. There is a security team with the school and the village leadership. According to the district authorities there has been no case of abuse. However, one must bear the incidents from Soploi in mind. As Child Rights (CRC) is a cross-cutting issue some experiences from SCN might be worth considering:

- Parents are invited to a workshop together with school principals to discuss child issues
- Direct assistance: parents or/and school principal go and talk to children individually on their rights
- Drama teams set up plays to disseminate information on child rights in schools
- Put up posters and slogans in- or outside the class-room

#### 4.1.3 Physical school environment

The two core schools as well as the 11 satellite schools are constructed through funding from AsDB and functioning according to the target set in the logframe. Parents have contributed in kind. The **core schools** are solid structures with appropriate and satisfactory washing facilities, although the increasing number of boys/young men especially in Jamai could justify more washing facilities. During the school year 2006-2007 91 children and 36 teachers in the target area received beddings. At present all 159 children have received this necessary equipment. The classrooms are spacious and fairly well equipped. During the school year 2006-2207 467 children were allocated textbooks and writing materials in time for the start of the school year. At present 881 school children in both clusters and

also among the indirect beneficiaries in the area have been provided with learning materials. The household utensils for students and teachers have been distributed in time, and appear to be adequate. The playgrounds in front of the core schools are often used for different games, with playthings provided by the project and produced by the students themselves. The libraries are well equipped, but not in full use. The school gardens are very well kept and constitute a healthy supplement to the students' diet and so will the planned fish pond near Soploi core school. World Food Programme (WFP) allocate 1 kg salt pr year pr student and 2 cans of sardines and 4 kg rice pr month. Furthermore WFP provides "blended food" for snacks. The project coordinator has a mini-project in pig-raising (made possible with surplus flour from WFP). The recommendations below should be considered:

- **Jamai** core area needs a new teachers' quarter (it its unacceptable that the core teacher and his family must share one room with another teacher)
- An extension of the boys dormitory is urgently needed
- The space in front of the toilet buildings should be covered with cement
- The boys' kitchen needs refurbishing.
- The shortage of water should be looked into.
- **Soploi** core area needs a kitchen for teachers.
- An extension the boys' dormitory
- The shortage of water should be looked into
- It seems that protein supply is scarce.

For the water situation (repair and supply) in both core areas, NCA will coordinate with other donors in the area, especially ACF.

The **satellite schools** including chairs and tables are locally constructed, built in time and satisfactorily equipped. The atmosphere is pleasant, and many schools are embellished with children's drawings, posters, rules in the particular schools. Local learning materials are displayed in the visited schools except for the school in Sompankao. WFP provides soya beans and oil for the schoolchildren, and the parents prepare the meals in turn. Only the school in Ban Bomai keeps the library – under lock- in the school building. As for physical improvement see the suggestions below:

- Many blackboards need to be repaired or replaced.
- Water posts next to the school would be appropriate, where possible
- Libraries (book boxes) should be kept in the schoolroom.
- A maintenance team to keep the school in good condition could be organised (parents' association/teacher/villagers/students)
- Good local farmers could be given small incentives for assisting the students in the school gardens.

**Teachers' houses** are built by the villagers, and according to the teachers they are well provided for by the villagers. Many teachers have children living in their house which is both a question of safety as well as it enhances the teacher's insight in the Akha culture. The teachers in Sompankao complained that they were not given enough rice.

- The maintenance team should help to keep the teachers' houses in good condition.



- The support to teachers in Sompankao village has to be looked into

#### 4.1.4 Evening classes

In 9 villages evening classes are offered to grown ups, drop outs and in some cases children who have no time to attend day school follow evening classes. According to the latest issued quarterly report (April-June 2007) there were a total of 226 adult students of whom 23 were women. There are 3 levels of adult education.

Education levels	Men	Women	Total number of students passing examination	Number of women passing examination
1	119	16	84	16
2	63	3	37	0
3	25		16	

The figures indicate that women seem to be very conscientious the first year and then drop out – most probably because of the household workload. Another reason could be that they don't see the immediate effect of the teaching, and they might not be to blame. The review team observed evening classes in Phagnoua: in **P1** 13 male and 6 female students attended the class, which was the normal number. Normally 10 male students attended the lessons in **P2**, but only 4 showed up that night because of the rice harvest. In **P3** 10 of the normal number of 12 followed lessons in mathematics.

The attendance was impressive as was the seriousness of the students. As a positive aspect that should not be underestimated is the opportunity for the teacher to interact with grown up villagers.

However, evening classes are not without challenges. The first constraint is the *workload of the teachers*. It should be taken into consideration that the teachers during their various training courses have learnt a whole new set of teaching methodologies which undoubtedly give them much preparation work for day classes, as well as they have to make lessons plans and attend meeting with the core teacher. Their motivation for teaching in the evenings might also be the monthly supplement of 10\$. At present the evening classes takes place 5 days a week, following the ordinary school year.

Offering both day – and evening classes could be considered as an integrated or holistic approach to community development, and the incentives given by WFP to students seem very appropriate (1,5 kg rice). On the other hand it could be argued, as it has been from an interviewee, that focusing on *both formal education-* especially as the teaching methodology is new to both teacher and learner- and *non-formal education* constitute the risk of “loosing them both”.

Options to deal with this problem might be considered:

- To assign one more teacher to the village to be in charge of evening classes (Well bearing in mind the shortage of teachers). This person might also be trained in health issues and e.g. gardening (as a kind of an all round community resource person).
- To set evening class teaching on halt until the teachers are more prepared-and hence more comfortable- to overcome the job.

- To pay a former drop out (if any) from the village to teach adults in the community (although this might represent some cultural constraints)
- To reduce the number of evening class days to 3-4 during the week.
- If evening classes are to be continued the electricity situation has to be looked into. (holding a torch while doing arithmetic is not very easy!)

## 4.2 Ad E: Quality of Education.

Quality in education is a controversial issue, as it has different meanings and is validated differently according to a society's political and ideological position. Most often the concept is linked to the *performance of the teacher*. Quality can be measured in terms the number of students who can pass *certified examinations*, and it can be perceived as *relevance for the students* in a particular cultural context. All three concepts can be applied to this project.

### 4.2.1 Quality measured as teacher performance / training

All teachers are very happy to have received the training, starting in 2006, organised by NCA and thus be involved in the overall development in the area. The targets concerning training set in the logframe have been reached in time, and the teachers make use of the training in their daily teaching. The *trainers* in the courses were NCA staff and HR personnel from the Ministry of Education and networking partners. Most *topics* taught at the courses were new to the teachers as *child centred approach* is not the usual pedagogical methodology in Lao schools. The 5 star model constitutes the core of the child centred approach: activities for children, questions, group work, learning aid and lessons relevant to the children's lives. Very few teachers in the satellite school, though, remembered them, but they appeared to make use of some of the techniques. As the shortage of teachers in the Lao PDR is considerable<sup>8</sup> multigrade teaching seems to be the only possibility in village schools at the moment. Some teachers have P1, P2, P3 in one room and are trying to keep the children occupied, and a few have an Akha assistant to take care of one of the groups. Various organisations have trained teachers and government education staff in cross-cutting issues like Sexually Transmitted Illnesses (STI)(including drama) and drug abuse (NCA project and HIV team), child rights (District Lao Women's Union) and hygiene (UNICEF), and use of libraries (National Central Library). One project staff has been in Bangkok to participate in gender based violence monitoring and evaluation training. The various trainings have all been carried out in accordance with the action plan.

During the workshop held in Jamai (29/11-2/12 2007) the National Project Director (NPD) pinpointed the achievements and challenges in connection to the training of teachers. The interview with satellite school teachers and core school teachers confirmed the difficulties brought forward by the NPD. According to the teachers and core teachers the biggest problems concerning *teacher performance* seem to be:

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<sup>8</sup> Because of the Government's lack of funds to pay the teachers' salaries, only a certain quota of teachers are budgeted for every year.

- 1) The time constraint especially in connection with lesson planning and monthly and weekly meetings.
- 2) Many satellite teachers haven't yet fully understood the concept of child centred learning.
- 3) Multigrade teaching is still a hindrance for proper performance in the classroom.

The topics taught in the training course within a relatively short period of time appear to have been too much, and the teachers have had no time to practice and exchange ideas before going to teach classes. The training is naturally intended to be followed up and before beginning new training sessions, it would be advisable to:

- Take time to plan thoroughly in cooperation with: the 2 core teachers, 1-2 satellite teachers, district coordinator, trainers and NCA project coordinator. It is important that the teachers themselves are involved in the training needs assessment and the planning of follow up training. It could be an idea also to invite 1-2 bright grade 5 students who have been "exposed to" the insufficient teacher performance.
- It could be considered to appoint 2 core teachers at each core school (if available). One could be responsible for the planning of lessons, training of satellite teachers in planning, report writing (for both teachers) and close cooperation with the core school principal. The other core teacher would be focusing on the pedagogical training of satellite teachers, i.e. child centred learning approach, multigrade teaching, cross-cutting issues and production of local learning material.
- To utilise the resources and capacity of the core school principal to alleviate the burden of the core teacher. (But as he is the government's resource person in the whole area he might be equally busy.
- If this model seems feasible both teachers should receive more training within their specific field eventually together with government education staff, as well as they should have the possibility to practice it with their grade 4 and 5 students before going to the satellite schools. (Resource persons from PADETC would be a very good option as trainers especially for the teachers in pedagogical topics). When/if the trainers find their "core teacher students" skilful enough, let the core teachers teach the satellite teachers themselves.
- Having 2 core school teachers would give them more time to cooperate/plan/exchange experience with the other core school teachers.
- Core school teachers should have the possibility to go for a study trip to cluster schools in northern Thailand (NFE- Centre in Chiang Rai would be a very good partner in this). If the idea of appointing a village resource person (see p.13) to assist the satellite teacher 2 of these persons should accompany the core school teachers to Thailand. It should be made sure that the environment as for remoteness, village profile and ethnic groups in Thailand is as similar to the Lao environment as possible (e.g. Akha villages in Mae Sruai and Mae Faluang districts)
- It could be considered to let grade 5 students from core schools assist the core teacher in producing learning material. They would follow the core teacher to the villages to train the satellite teacher, and at the same time they would help in sensitising the villagers to send their children to school.

- Multigrade teaching especially requires in-service teacher training and could be done by a pedagogical consultant, while parents activate the other children. Valuable insight can be gained from experiences from multigrade teaching in rural primary education in Australia (see Appendix 4 for reference)
- The teachers should be trained in using audio-visual learning materials. The students should be accustomed to hear Lao language from others than the teacher, and many instructive programmes on radio or television on the cross-cutting issues would be a good supplement to the daily teaching and campaigns. Also a continuation of the camping practice with different ethnic groups is a good way of forcing the students to practice Lao language.
- The teachers should have more training in how to guide and encourage the students to use the library, both at the core and satellite schools. Library use should be an integral part of daily learning. As the two assistants often play with the students, they have the capacity to introduce the children to the use of a library.
- Akha assistants who help in school should be given small incentives, and invited for workshops, and perhaps some of the training/follow up courses for satellite teachers.
- Enhanced cultural knowledge of Akha (Lahu) culture and language before being appointed to a village would further the interaction between teachers and villagers. These courses could be held at the core schools. The resource persons must be Akha (Lahu).
- As many Akha are shy – especially girls – confident grade 5 core school female students could be appointed as “buddies” - also known as “my schoolfriend”.
- As capacity building among government education staff in pedagogics seems to be lagging behind these should be given special attention to ensure the sustainability once NCA has pulled out of the area. PADETC as a national organisation would be very appropriate to undertake this assignment.

#### 4.2.2 Quality measured as examination results

Measuring the individual impact of education should be seen in a long term perspective, and as the first cohort of students of the cluster model has been examined this year, there is little evidence of the sustainability. However the results from the two core schools show promising results: **Jamai core school 2007-2008:**

Degree	Number of students at the beginning of the year			No. of students at the end of the year			No. of students passing the final examination			Percentage of students passing the examination		
	total	girls	boys	total	girls	boys	total	girls	boys	total	girls	boys
<b>P 1</b>	91	45	46	89	42	47	48	15	33	54%	36%	70%
<b>P 2</b>	56	23	33	56	23	33	44	18	26	79%	78%	79%
<b>P 3</b>	30	7	23	29	7	22	28	7	21	97%	100%	100%
<b>P 4</b>	15	3	12	14	2	12	14	2	12	100%	100%	100%
<b>P 5</b>	9	3	6	9	3	6	9	3	6	100%	100%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>58,4%</b>	<b>82%</b>

### Soploi core school:

Degree	Number of students at the beginning of the year			No. of students at the end of the year			No. of students passing the final examination			Percentage of students passing the examination		
	total	girls	boys	total	girls	boys	total	girls	boys	total	girls	boys
<b>P 1</b>	86	42	44	83	42	44	53	25	28	64%	60%	64%
<b>P 2</b>	46	19	27	46	19	27	40	17	23	87%	89%	85%
<b>P 3</b>	34	13	21	34	13	21	33	13	20	97%	100%	95%
<b>P 4</b>	63	14	49	63	14	49	63	14	49	100%	100%	100%
<b>P 5</b>	22	3	19	22	3	19	20	3	17	91%	100%	89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>86%</b>

The tables above show a very high passing rate, and also that girls appear do better at examination than boys. Again the same problem occurs with girls leaving school after grade 1. The school drop out rate in Jamai was 2,7% (of whom half were girls). The Soploi drop out rate 1,19% (no girls) [Sept 07].

The figures are extremely encouraging, and indicate that the students find the school worth while and the school environment conducive for studying. This should be another reason for upgrading the teachers. The challenge is how to enable the best students to continue schooling. According to the core teacher in Soploi 56 students will continue in lower secondary school. The plan to build/integrate a secondary school in the vicinity of the core school is undoubtedly a motivation for the students to continue and:

- NCA should look into the possibility of offering scholarship to good students – especially from poor families.
- If scholarships are not an option, good students might be involved in different “support jobs” at the core school for which they get small incentives.
- Seen in a gender perspective girls might have priority.

#### 4.2.3 Quality measured as relevance for children.

Together with other “minority” groups in the country the Akha and Lahu groups belong to what it termed “indigenous peoples”. According to international conventions:

*“Children belonging to the peoples concerned [indigenous peoples] shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong”<sup>9</sup>*

These are fair words, and in some countries with a large contingent of so-called indigenous peoples the first three school years the children are taught in their mother tongue. There is no doubt that the Akha and Lahu children would feel more at ease, but considering the many indigenous groups in the Lao PDR this practice seems an unattainable task. Therefore the following could be considered:

<sup>9</sup> Convention (No 169) concerning Indigenous Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. International Labour Organisation. Adopted 27 June 1989, entry into force September 1991.( Article 28)

- Make sure that the Lao teacher has a minimum knowledge of Akha/Lahu language- and culture- before being sent to the village
- Appointing a local Akha assistant to help the teacher (for incentives)
- Appointing an Akha teacher in an Akha village (this might cause problems in terms of authority or the Akha teacher might not speak proper Lao)
- Let the children in P1-P3 have “5-minutes talk” (local story telling) once a week after their own choice where they are allowed to speak Akha/Lahu, and invite parents to come to school that day (if time).
- Let the children have a” handicraft day” where they are allowed to bring their “hobbies” to school as an appreciation of their local skills.

The means to compensate for the “loss” of mother tongue education is the Lao Government’s accept of 20% local curriculum to be taught in schools in remote areas.

## **5 Ad C : Development of 20% Local Curriculum and creative learning materials**

The Lao Government has accepted that an addition of 20% of local curriculum be applied in teaching among Akha groups. As Thailand has year long experience in local curricula project staff visited 4 institutions in northern Thailand in order to get ideas that could be adapted to the target area. During the first quarter of 2007 training courses were held in the Lao PDR according to the action plan. 36 teachers received training in production of local learning materials (e.g. abacuses, scales) and 25 local resource persons have been actively involved. Local curriculum encompasses both genuine local elements such as handicraft (knitting, sewing etc.) and crosscutting issues as hygiene, HIV/AIDS/STI and drug abuse prevention. Training and campaigns were held in 22 villages during the first quarter of 2007. The steps have been the following:

1. collecting local knowledge in 4 villages (participants were: 9 men and 4 women from the villages, project staff, project consultant, teacher and curriculum developers from Xiengkhuang provincial Education Department)
2. training of local curriculum development in a satellite school (2 teachers, villagers from 2 villages, DEO project consultant and project staff (18 men and 10 women). Trainers were the Xiengkhuang team and LPES
3. the local curriculum has been revised by two experts from PADETC

It seems like a good start, especially as the advisory team: The curriculum developers from Xiengkhuang, PADETC and to a certain extent PCF are involved in the procedure. It still needs improvement, and the teachers’ manual is not yet finalised. The ideal would be to have the teachers’ manual finalised before the school year 2008-2009.

It appears to reflect the local culture, but:

- Experiences from Centre for Non-formal education might be adapted to the project
- Ensure that the use of the local curriculum is evaluated at a regular basis, and that all concerned parties are involved.
- Ensure that a team of teachers and curriculum developers have the opportunity to revise the teachers’ manual after each school year, and that students are asked.
- It would be appropriate to add more gender issues (looking into power equalisation, and the social role of women)

## 6 Ad D: Demand Driven Approach (DDA)

*“We want to be paid for our work”*

Female member of parents’ association in Ja Kham Leu

This statement is not exactly what represents a demand driven approach to development, but she might not be to blame, although the DDA concept rely heavily on the needs of the community. Neither does she express that the concept of participation is properly understood. It has been said by many interviewees that the *“district gives rules and responsibilities, whereas NCA talks more about participation”*. The concept of participation might not be fully understood by representatives from district and provincial education services. In general village leaders were very positive about the village school, whereas a great number of parents’ associations were more uncertain about their role, and many gave the impression that the task was rather onerous. There have been 2 workshops where parents and members of the parents’ association have been invited to discuss the importance of the school and the parents’ role in that respect. Involving parents in order to increase the sense of ownership is a long and difficult process, but nevertheless these are elements that are in line with the national goals to fulfil the EFA goals.

The Government introduced the concept of DDA in 2005 and are now in the middle of the second phase. There are 3 issues in particular **from the government DDA programme that might be adapted to the EEME:**

- 1) The *mother-teacher forum* idea, meaning that the mother of a child is in close contact with the teacher concerning her child’s performance and behaviour. The purpose of involving women directly is naturally commendable, but as most Akha /Lahu women will not speak Lao, this might seem somewhat unrealistic. The training included demonstration sessions between the teacher and the mother with close support from the trainer
- 2) Establishment of a Village Education Fund with the purpose of supporting poor students.<sup>10</sup>
- 3) Life Skill Training Centres have been established with the purpose of providing learning facilities for drop outs, in particular for girls who have not completed primary school (topics like tailoring and food processing have been taught by external resource persons). To follow up on these training courses PADETC functions as quality assurance.

Additionally the following seems to be useful for further village training as the qualitative elements of the project needs strengthening.

- Continuous participatory sensitisation (incl. CRC) of villagers both in their own villages, but some should also be invited for workshops at the core centre.
- Hire a female Lao gender consultant to go to villages and let the same consultant be facilitator in the workshops for villagers at the core centre

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<sup>10</sup> Additional purposes in the government programme are: Purchase of textbooks, school administration and support to talented teachers. Well-off villagers provide 35.000 kip pr. family, poor families 5.000 kip and the poorest families contribute with labour.

- For every village meeting with the project team (and eventually the core teacher) assist the villagers to make a SWOT analysis on different development issues (incl.school) relevant to the village. SWOT is a very simple tool that can be understood by all, and it is a good continuous reflection and analysis tool.
- Continue to invite villagers to participate in the camping programme
- Investigate (ask villagers) about the idea of setting up a kind of kindergarten (small incentives), so girls do not have to look after younger siblings.
- Intensified conceptual training of district and provincial staff on participation and sensitisation procedures.

## 7 Ad F: Management issues

Management issues can be viewed from different angles and the following will be a presentation of elements that are found relevant for this project pertaining to personnel, reporting routines, financial management and overall the management.

### 7.1 Personnel issues

The success or failure of a project is not least connected to personnel issues, and NCA has a very dedicated project staff at all levels. The female *Project Coordinator* is just the right person in the right place. She is satisfied with her job description which she assisted in drawing up. The cooperation with the district is improving, and she has good discussions with and support from the NPD. She is based in Long but spend much time in the villages. She has a very pleasant disposition and a polite behaviour towards the villagers. She is respected by the core teachers, and listens to them. She has participated in training in Thailand, and considers herself still under training in development issues. She seems to be overloaded with work and in order to keep her it should be seriously considered to:

- Hire a male counterpart to the project coordinator. He would be able to take care of management issues in relation to the project (e.g. coordination with district, report writing etc.) the project coordinator and the NPD should draw up a preliminary job description for him.
- A car should be allocated to the education project. The villages are very remote, and the staff visits the schools very often. Not least because of communication (invitation to workshops/students visiting other villages/camping), messages sometimes come too late because of lack of transport. The car should be stationed either in Jamai or Soploi.
- Continuous development training of the project coordinator by means of regular visits by community development (incl. education) consultant would be beneficial for the project staff.<sup>11</sup>

One Akha assistant is under raining in Vientiane. NCA also provides scholarship for one Akha student who is presently studying in Thailand. When she graduates in 2008 she will be hired to assist the project. The *two female assistants* of which one is still under training, who are in Jamai at present, are both doing very well. They create a vivid and joyful



atmosphere, and the students are very happy about the games and exercises they make with them

- They should have the opportunity to visit each other regularly, and be involved in all workshops.
- They should have the opportunity to go for further training outside the core site
- There should be a more comfortable room in the two sub-centres where the staff incl. the girls have the opportunity to relax.

The *National Project Director*, based in Long, is very appreciative of the project and the staff – both in Long and the support from Vientiane. According to him the design of the project is still valid. He is a visionary person as well as he has a very good overview of the project’s possibilities and challenges. He follows the project very closely, and is respected and welcomed in the villages.

The *National Programme Coordinator* follows the project very closely with quarterly travels to the project site in Long and to core schools. She is highly respected by the staff and her intensive follow up on project activities which also encompasses frequent visits to villages is appreciated by all. She is very satisfied with the staff, understands their problems, and is a good inspiration to them. After the first 1 1/2 of the project she is aware of the main challenge at present:

- Enhanced sensitisation at village level.

## **7.2 Reporting routines**

There is no major delay in the external reporting routines (to donors), and they are satisfactory. PCF has set up standard forms that have made it easier to pinpoint essential issues. Also the internal reporting routines on project progression (from project staff to head office) are without problems. The communication level among concerned parties is direct.

There are standard forms for the principals of the core school to fill in to the District Education Office, and the District Coordinator find them adequate. Every second month the DEO monitors the core schools, or when need occurs.

## **7.3 Financial issues**

Money is allocated in time from the donors. If there is a delay in the disbursement it is due to delay in submitting reports from NCA’s side, which rarely happens, and there is no problem as the cash flow of the EEME projects is sufficient to carry out activities as planned. As for follow up it seems that PCF poses more conditions on agreements whereas HEI is very flexible. The financial manager gets full support from the Resident representative, and he finds the staffing adequate and skilled at head office and in Long, and he trains the finance staff regularly. The last training was in “Basic financial, technical accounting of non-profit organisations”. A need assessment has made the financial manager arrange an upgrading course of the staff in “Budgeting, accounting, budget control and revision of budgets”. By the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month he gets reports from the financial staff, and there does not seem to be difficulties ahead.

## **7.4 Overall management**

The Resident Representative is satisfied with the project as it is well-financed and financially sound in terms of timely allocation and effective use of funds. It is an ongoing discussion, though, if the management needs another full or half position in the finance section. The project is in line with the national EFA goals, so there are no policy problems in connection with continuation of the project. The project covers a big area, and the focus on each village/school is intensive. The follow up from donors is good, and especially the fact that the Country Coordinator for PCF is a Lao national, contributes to a constant and fruitful dialogue. HEI and PCF, Switzerland, visit the project at regular basis which gives valuable inputs to the management units of the project. The Resident Representative is very good at delegating the responsibilities to project staff at all levels which again indicates the reliability and dedication of the staff. Seen in a long-term perspective the challenge is the project's and eventual replicated projects' sustainability. This will depend on the development of the Lao human resources, to take over the project, to maintain the structures that have been built and to continue to make use of local resource persons.

## **8 Ad A: Is the project meeting its objective ?/Conclusion**

The Empowerment of Ethnic Minorities Education Project is a healthy project. It is well planned, the logframe is very precise and the balance between the quantitative and the qualitative inputs is just about right for Phase I. The planned and ongoing activities are in line with the national Education for All goals, and they are –with few exceptions mainly due to transport difficulties- carried out in a timely and effective manner. The donors are appreciative, supportive and the money is allocated in time. The EEME project meets the needs of the direct beneficiaries, the ethnic minority groups in the mountains in Long District, as well as the project is assisting other schools and teachers in the area.

The sensitisation among villagers encompassing campaigns on child rights, STI, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse prevention and the need for schooling are all important elements in the general community development. They are crucial steps in the inclusion of minority groups in their own development process that hopefully prevents further polarisation in the rampant globalisation.

As for the objectives to be met by the end of Phase I there has been very much progress until now: What the quantitative inputs are concerned the core schools are solid structures the schools are well managed and functioning, and reports to authorities are submitted in time. The boys' dormitories in both cores need repair/extension, as well as the water situation has to be looked into. Core teachers' quarters and kitchen facilities also need repair or refurbishing. Learning materials have been allocated in time and libraries are set up. The 11 target schools are functioning and teachers are allocated by the Government. The classrooms are well furnished by the villages who have contributed with wood and labour. The children have all received learning materials, and most schools have local learning aids in the classrooms. Teachers' houses are adequate and all the teachers are well cared for by the villagers including parents associations (except for Sompankao - Soploi cluster) where the teachers claim that they are not receiving enough rice from the village).

The steady progression taken into consideration the objective of and increase of 20% in net enrolment in schools appears to be realistic and the objective of a 15% increase in girls' survival rate likewise – although the drop out after P1 is a general problem. On the contrary, the objective of reaching the goal that 85% of the students making regularly use of the libraries seems overestimated. 50-60% would be more realistic. The target of 25% of out of school youth taking evening classes will depend on whether the project will continue to offer evening classes, or it will be decided to set them on halt as long as the teacher allocation is scarce.

Concerning the qualitative inputs the focal areas have been: teacher training, sensitisation of villagers and capacity building of government staff. The *teachers* have been trained in child centred approach, production of learning materials, management and cross-cutting issues like child rights, and STI/HIV/AIDS drug abuse prevention. It is obvious that they have learnt from the courses, but also that especially the core teachers are too overburdened with work. Shortage of teachers is a general problem in the country, although solutions would be to employ two core teachers pr. core school. The satellite teachers need more training especially in child centred approach and production of pedagogical learning materials. The courses in developing of local curriculum materials are well carried out and follow up courses are planned. The official *20% local curriculum* manuals seem well under way.

The *sensitisation of villagers* is the most immediate challenge. The target of 50% of parents and community leaders fully understanding the learning content and pedagogical approaches seems very ambitious, but nevertheless this is where the energy should be concentrated. In this respect more staff trained in community development, a gender consultant and continuous networking with resource persons especially from PADETC would be important.

As for sustainability the continuous *capacity building of provincial and district staff* and the *development of social capital* in the villages are crucial. Continuous conceptual training of district and provincial personnel in child centred learning and time spent and decision making in a participatory manner with villagers should be prioritised.

The cluster idea in the upland areas is an excellent idea, and the present number of satellite schools seems manageable. The experiences from the northern Thailand with the same physical and environmental profile as well as the presence of the same ethnic minority groups have shown that the minorities have “developed” without losing their cultural characteristics, the cultural assertion comply with the human rights declarations. After completion of Phase I and after one year of Phase II where the lessons learned have been reflected upon, it would seem appropriate to open 2 more clusters. PCF and HEI are recommended to continue their support of the project.

## Appendix 1.

### **Terms of Reference for the Mid Term Review Of the Empowerment of the Ethnic Minorities Through Education Project**

#### **1. Rationale**

NCA intends to commission a consultancy input to the Mid Term Review (MTR) of PCF and HEI funded Empowerment of the Ethnic Minorities Through Education Project Phase I (1 March 2006 to 31 December 2008) in Long District, Luang Namtha Province. The objectives of EEME I are:

- 1) To create 2 cluster schools and introduce child centred approach
- 2) To create 20% local curriculum for the ethnic children
- 3) To improve the condition of 2 core schools and 9 satellite schools
- 4) To build the capacity of 10 education officers, 30 teachers, members of parents association in 11 target schools and 5 project staff

An MTR of the project is planned to be carried out from 25 November to 08 December 2007 with 5 days of field visit to the project site.

#### **2. Objective of the Mid Term Review**

Using the EEME master document, action plan and Logframe, the MTR is intended:

1. to check whether the project has met its objectives and desired results within the given timeframe;
2. to map the positive and negative outcomes and examine the quality and quantity issues of implementation;
3. to judge the sustainability of the project's actions within larger context of Education For All;
4. to indicate where progress has been made and where the existing work needs to be strengthened, bearing in mind the financial and personnel constraints.

#### **3. Specific issues to be addressed:**

The consultant is asked to study and recommend on the following specific issues.

##### **A. meeting the project objectives**

- Is the project proceeding in a timely manner so that the stated desired result can be reached?
- Is the project fulfilling the expectation in empowerment of the ethnic communities in basic education process through quality and relevant education?

##### **B. access to universal enrolment and improve retention in basic education.**

The project tries to reach a higher enrolment rate with the establishment of cluster schools and community mobilisation through increasing access of formal primary and increasing attendance of

evening courses of out of school adolescent youth aged 12 to 25 years old. The project supports textbooks and school construction and maintenance purchasing materials, assisting poor students and teachers at the dormitories at the 2 cores schools. Two dormitories have been established in Soploi and Boakbor areas to accommodate children of grade 4 and 5 from both areas. What is the usefulness and the possible child abuse issues in the 2 dormitories? What recommendations would the consultant give for insuring child protection at the dormitories and at the satellite schools?

After the initial first year of implementation, what are the net enrolment rates of primary schools in the target areas? Did the schools reach the access and retention targets? If not, which children are not enrolled in schools? What could be done to get them enrolled?

**C. Development of 20% local curriculum and creative learning materials.** PADECT has assisted the project to develop 20% extra curriculum. About 30 text books have been drafted, local people have been involved in the development of 20% extra curriculum and teachers have been trained in production of training materials. What are the status of the curriculum development? Do the curriculum reflect local culture, values and gender issues. What need to be improved?

**D. Demand driven approach.** Parent association have been established under the project with the target to get half female members. Their mandates are to improve community ownership and participation in local curriculum development, students' enrolment and school management.

What is the status of parent association and commitment towards basic education process and demand driven approach to EFA? To what extent the parent associations and community participation have contributed to increased enrolment of primary schools? What is the status of women involvement and participation in education? What is the usefulness of parent association in improving learning difficulty and school attendance?

What recommendations would the consultant give for the utilisation of parent association?

#### **E. quality of education**

Project interventions to improve quality of teaching and teachers include training for teachers for improving the teaching methodologies, introducing of child centered approach, producing teaching materials, and remedial training for weak teachers. In addition, the teachers also received training in CRC. Akha teachers have been recruited to the target schools to teach the ethnic students and the evening classes.

Are training provided to the teachers relevant to improve their capacity to enable them to teach in the local context? Are teachers allocated to the cluster schools well performed their duty? What are the impacts of the training and the recruitment of the ethnic teachers on the enrolment of students and quality of education? How child centered approach has been applied in the target schools? Are the teachers capable to apply child centered approach in the cluster schools? What are recommendations for improving the quality of teaching and learning in the targeted schools?

#### e. Management issues

NCA, a non-profit organisation in coordination with Long District Office of Education is implementing the project. NCA National Coordinator provides overall supervision of the project and coordinate with donor agencies. Project director supervises and monitors the implementation of the project in the target areas. The education project officer together with 2 field assistants and 3 coordinators from the district education office implement and follow up on the implementation of the project activities in 11 target schools. NCA Financial manager and Chief Accountant control financial issues of the project. In addition, Country Coordinator of PCF also provides technical support to the implementation of the project.

What is the level of commitment and involvement of the above mentioned staff members, teachers and coordinators in the implementation of EEME I? What recommendations would the consultant give to improve their management and commitment?

What recommendation would the consultant give for integrating or adapting cluster school concept into other education projects in the upland areas?

#### 4. Consultancy services required

An international consultant is required to undertake this review.

##### Tasks:

The main tasks of the international consultant are to carry out the review according to the TOR as follows.

1. [Assess](#) the status of achievements and constraints of the project
2. [Read relevant documents](#) such as the project document, log frame matrix, quarterly and annual reports of the project, and others.
3. Visit and discuss with relevant staffs at Luang Namtha provincial education services (LPES) and the Long district education bureaus (DEB), selected schools, project team and others.
4. Meet with major development partners working in the education sector that have similar approach, if any.
5. [Produce a](#) report not more than 30 pages (not included annexes) [reflecting](#) the [present](#) situation and potentials [for](#) EEME II.
6. [Recommend how](#) donors [can support](#) the EEME II for the remaining of the project life.
7. The report findings shall be discussed with the Project Team. Appropriate feedback and comments of the team shall be incorporated in the report.

##### Required qualification and experiences

1. Post graduate studies and training in relevant fields
2. Previous practical [experiences](#) in education policies, management [and](#) teacher education based on demand driven approach concept.
3. Broad experiences and knowledge of the education sector in [developing countries](#), [preferably in Asia](#).
4. skills in dealing with government organisations, various stakeholders and development partners
5. analytical skills
6. Fluency in English

## Appendix 2

### Review Itinerary

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
Fri 23/11	Arrival	Vientiane
Sat 24/11	Meeting with HEI	Vientiane
Sun 25/11	Review of documents	NCA, Vientiane
Mon 26/11	Review of documents	NCA, Vientiane
Tue 27/11	Travel to project site in Luang Namtha	Long
Wed 28/11	Visit school in Ban Houaytoukao	Jamai cluster
“	Visit core school in Soploi	Soploi cluster
“	Visit evening classes in Ban Pang Ngouay	“
Thu 29/11	Visit school in Ban Ja Kham Leu	“
“	Visit school in Ban Ai Saeng (Lahu)	“
“	Visit school in Ban Sompankao	“
“	Back to Jamai Sub Center	Jamai
Fri 30/11	Participating in Workshop in core school	“
Sat 1/12	Visit school in Ban Boh	Jamai cluster
Sun 2/12	Short visit to Ban Houaytoumay	“
“	Return to project site	Long
Mon 3/12	Travel to Oudomxay	Oudomxay
Tue 4/12	Return to Head Office	Vientiane

Wed 5/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report writing</li> <li>• Meeting with Mrs. Khamla (DDA)</li> <li>• Meeting with PADETC</li> </ul>	Vientiane “ “
Thu 6/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report writing</li> <li>• Meeting with SCN</li> </ul>	“
Fri 7/12 – Tue 11/12	Report writing	“
Tue 11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting highlights of review</li> <li>• Submitting draft report</li> </ul>	“
Tue 11– Thu 13 /12	Revising report	“
Fri 14 /12	Submitting final report	“



## Persons Interviewed

Name	Position	Location
		Soploi cluster
Mr. Lohsoh	Village head	<b>Ban Ja Kham Leu</b>
Mr. Phantavie	Satellite teacher + Akha volunteer	“
	4 members of parents' association (1 woman)	“
Mr. Pahsay (Lahu)	Village head	<b>Ban Ai Saeng</b>
Mr Jutoh	Village head	<b>Ban Sompankao</b>
Mr. Khamsay (Akha)	Satellite teacher	“
Mr. Thong (Kamu)	Satellite teacher	“
Mr. Ampronh	Core teacher	<b>Soploi Core School</b>
Mr. Khamleu Mr. Khamouanh	2 teachers at core school	“
Mr Khamsi Thongkhanh	Principal	“
Name	Position	Jamai cluster
Mr. Sakha Peujah	Village head	<b>Ban Houaytougao</b>
Mr. Khamla	Satellite teacher	“
	2 members of parents' association (1 woman)	“
Mr. Bounhom Lohkhangpouh	Satellite teacher	<b>Ban Boh</b>
Mr. Soukhorn	Satellite teacher	<b>Ban Sam Meung Kao</b>
Mr. Thin Leuangouthay	Core teacher	<b>Jamai Core School</b>
Mr. Phokeuh	Teacher	“
Ms. Manichan Sohsavanhsaeng	Teacher	“
Ms. Thon Outhikoun	Teacher	“
Mr. Bounthiang Sohlisak	Principal	“
Ms. Tjupah (13) Mr. Laeuh (17) Mr. Sohtou (16)	Grade 5 students	“
Ms. Sisouvanh Vorabuth	Project Coordinator	<b>Long</b>
Ms. Maikham Phakoumah	Assistant	<b>Jamai and Soploi</b>
Ms. Bouavay Bounmisay	Assistant	“

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Location</b>
Mr. Khamfouanh Kingsatha	National Project Director/ Project Director	<b>Long</b>
Mr. Somnjay Singkhakham	District Coordinator	“
Mr. Somsouvanh Geophakham	District Education Officer	“
Mr. Sayjay Leungsavath	Head of Planning and Statistics Section	<b>Louang Namtha (LPES)</b>
Mrs. Minavanh Pholsena	National Programme Coordinator NCA	<b>Vientiane</b>
Mrs. Margrethe Volden	NCA Resident Representative in Lao PDR	“
Mr. Visiene Xaiyasensouk	Country Coordinator, Lao PDR, PCF	“
Mr. Ivar Munthe	Project Consultant, HEI Verden	<b>Stavanger, Norway</b>
Mr. Oudone Inthadasy	Deputy National Project Director / BENC / EU	<b>Louang Namtha</b>
Mrs. Khamla Poumsavanh	Consultant /Teacher Training College	<b>Vientiane</b>
Mr. Phoxay Chanthavongsa	Deputy Director, PADETC	“
Mr. Julian Kramer Mr. Vilasack Viraphanh	Country Representative, Programme Coordinator/ Save the Children, Norway	“
One-Neua Xomsihapangna	Financial Manager, NCA	“

### References

- Government of the Lao PDR: *Community based Project Implementation of Basic Knowledge in Vientiane District Phase II* (2205-2007)
  - Lao Commission for Drug Control and Supervision & Norwegian Church Aid: Memorandum of Understanding – Regarding the project “*Drug Demand Reduction and Poverty Alleviation for Ethnic Minorities n Long District, Luang Namtha*” January 2005-December 2007
  - NCA : SWOT Analysis for Actual Situation of Project (17 Sept.2007)
  - \_\_\_\_\_: Programme Reporting ( by Resident Representative) ( “ ” )
  - \_\_\_\_\_ : Project Reporting (by National Programme Coordinator ) (16 Febr. 2007)
  - \_\_\_\_\_: Master Document for Projects (by Resident Representative) (28 Febr. 2006)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ : Internal Quarterly Project Report (by NCA Education Officer)(April –June 2007)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ : “ ” “ ” “ ” “ ” ( “ ” “ ” “ ” )(Jan – April 2007)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ : Village Profiles 2007
  - Save the Children Norway: International Save the Children Alliance – Child Protection Policy (Excerpt from UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Art.19
  - \_\_\_\_\_: Ethical Principles in Save the Children Norway (to be signed by project staff)
  - \_\_\_\_\_:SCN Child Protection Code of Conduct (to be signed by project staff)
- UNESCO 1995 (APEID): *Multigrade teaching in primary schools* (edited by Centre for Research on Rural Education/ University of Western Australia)

## Appendix 5

### Detailed overview of school attendance and increase/decrease in number of students (Schoolyear 2006-2007 and 2007-2008)

#### a) School enrolment in Jamai cluster 2006-2007 and 2007-2008:

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Houaytoukao</b>					
P1	11	5	12	4	Status uo
P2	13	3	11	3	- 2
P3			8	3	+ 11

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Ban Bormai</b>					
P1	10	5	8	4	- 3
P2	7	4	6	3	- 2
P3	8	0	6	1	-1

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Jamai Core School</b>					
P1	26	10	20	12	- 4
P2	5	5	11	6	+ 7
P3	5	6	4	5	+ 4
P4	12	3	31	9	+ 25
P5	6	3	12	3	

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Houaytoumai</b>					N/A
P1			11	8	
P2			5	3	
P3			4	5	

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Sammeungkao</b>					
P1	5	10	5	8	- 2
P2	4	2	3	4	+ 1
P3	5	4	1		Status quo

Total enrolment in Jami cluster	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in %	
	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls
P1	52	30	56	36		
P2	29	14	36	19		
P3	18	7	26	15		
P4	12	3	31	9		
P5	6	3	12	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>52%</b>

**b) Schools enrolment in Soploi cluster 2006- 2007 and 2007-2008:**

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Ja Kham Leu</b>					
P1	9	7	3	3	- 10
P2	6	2	8	2	+ 2
P3	6	2	5	2	+ 1

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Sompankao</b>					
P1	7	11	14	17	+ 13
P2	5	7	2	4	- 6
P3	2	3	3	4	+ 2

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Ai Saeng</b>					
P1	4	4	7	3	+ 2
P2	6	4	4	5	- 1
P3			6	1	+ 7

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Sompanmai</b>					
P1	13	11	18	13	+ 7
P2	4	0	5	6	+ 7
P3	11	3	4	0	- 10
P4	6	3	7	3	+ 1

Village	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in %
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
<b>Phagnoua</b>					
P1	10	15	13	10	- 2
P2	8	6	7	5	- 2
P3	5	5	9	7	+ 6
P4	6	0	5	5	+ 4
P5	3	3	6	0	Status quo

Soploi Core school	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in students
	boys	girls	boys	girls	
P4	40	11	31	16	- 5
P5	16	0	43	14	+ 43

Total enrolment in Soploi cluster	Children enrolled (2006-2007)		Children enrolled (2007-2008)		Increase in %	
	boys	girls	boys	girls	boys	girls
P1	43	48	55	46		
P2	29	19	26	22		
P3	24	13	27	14		
P4	52	14	43	24		
P5	19	3	49	14		
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>24%</b>