Lao People's Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment

October 2008

Ministry of Education

Lane Xang Avenue

Vientiane

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Foreword

In 2000, 164 governments with partner organizations from around the world convened in Dakar, Senegal to endorse a comprehensive vision of education with focus on providing opportunity to people of all ages to access quality education. It also emphasized the need for special measures to reach the poorest, most vulnerable and most disadvantaged groups in society. In the meeting six EFA goals were set for achievement by 2015.

In order to achieve the foresaid goals, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) established the Lao National Commission for EFA, the role of which is to identify policies and strategies under a National Plan of Action (NPA) as well as measures and tools for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA goals.

Under the guidance of the National Commission for EFA, a comprehensive assessment at the mid-point of the 2000-2010 decade has reviewed the successes, progress and remaining challenges in the implementation of the EFA Goals through analysis of the 7 programmes outlined in the NPA. This report, the "Education For All Mid-Decade Assessment" (EFA MDA), outlines the results of this assessment and highlights proposed measures and strategies to accelerate progress and achieve EFA Goals by 2015, with a special focus on providing education opportunities to all citizens of Lao PDR.

The report serves as an important tool to constructively measure the impact of existing policies and strategies and it will enable the Government of Lao PDR and all stakeholders to enhance our capacity and improve implementation to achieve the EFA Goals by 2015.

Vientiane, 7 October 2008

Somsavad LENGSAVATH
Standing Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao PDR
Chairperson of the Lao National Commission on EFA

Introduction

This Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) is the result of a combined effort between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and supporting development partners (Asian Development Bank, AusAID, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank, UNESCO) in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR).

This EFA MDA report assesses the progress made against each of the six EFA Goals since the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar up to the year 2005. It also highlights successes, remaining challenges and potential ways forward for reaching EFA goals by 2015. Annex 3 of the report explains the EFA analysis framework which was used to conduct the assessment.

The Government's policy and strategic framework for action which covers development targets and programs to achieve the six EFA goals is set out in the EFA National Plan of Action (NPA). The NPA has seven programs which together aim to address all of the six EFA goals.

The report outlines progress under each of these seven NPA programs to give an assessment of achievement towards the EFA goals at the mid-point of the 2000-2010 decade. Special attention is given to quality and equality in access to education and on **"reaching the unreached"**.

In terms of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the EFA MDA reports against each of the targets for MDGs 2, 3 and 6 (shown in Table 1 below).

Table 1: Millennium Development Goals 2, 3 and 6

2.	Achieve **universal primary education**. *Target*: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling
3.	Promote **gender equality and empower women**. *Target*: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015
6.	Combat **HIV/AIDS**, Malaria and other diseases. *Target*: Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS (19b. Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS)

The relationship between EFA NPA programs and how they address the six EFA goals and 3 MDGs is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: EFA NPA Programs, EFA goals and MDGs

EFA National Plan of Action	EFA Goals	Millennium Development Goals
1. Access and Participation in ECCD	Goal 1: ECCD Goal 5: Gender	3. Gender equality and empowerment of women
2. Access and Participation in Formal Primary Education	Goal 2: UBE Goal 5: Gender	2. Universal primary education 3. Gender equality and empowerment of women
3. Access and Participation in Lower Secondary Education	Goal 2: UBE Goal 5: Gender	3. Gender equality and empowerment of women
4. Youth and Adult Literacy	Goal 4: Literacy Goal 5: Gender	3. Gender equality and empowerment of women
5. Skills Development Program for Disadvantaged Groups	Goal 3: Life skills and lifelong learning, Goal 5: Gender	3. Gender equality and empowerment of women 6. HIV/AIDS
6. Improve the Quality and Relevance of Formal Primary and Lower Secondary Education	Goal 2: UBE Goal 5: Gender	3. Gender equality and empowerment of women
7. Education Management and Administration	No specific EFA Goal: some policy indicators are included	No specific MDG Goal

The findings of this assessment will contribute directly to the production of the 10-year **Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF)** which is currently under development by MOE. The ESDF will result in a comprehensive sector plan that will form the basis of potential program support to the sector.

The ESDF, assisted by the analysis from the EFA MDA, will provide the MOE with a tool to focus donor support, request increased budget allocations and identify gaps that could be addressed with Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Catalytic Funds.

Contents

Executive Summary

Overview

This report is a stock taking of progress towards EFA Goals by 2005/6. In the EFA National Plan of Action, approved in 2004, 7 Programs were developed through which the 6 EFA Goals are to be achieved. The evidence gathered in this report is used to chart progress on those main indicators, which were identified while formulating the EFA NPA. Also, three of the Millennium Development Goals, those concerned with achieving universal primary education, gender equality and combating HIV/AIDS have strong education sector components. Hence the report partly addresses progress on these three MDGs as well.

The MDA exercise was carried out in a highly inclusive and participative way. Stakeholders from many organisations contributed to the various drafts through submissions of written comments and by participating in workshops. This final version has been produced with the benefit of many insights and comments on both the structure and the interpretation of the data presented.

A summary of the key indicators from the NPA Programs between 2000/1 and 2005/6 is shown in Table 3 below. Broadly, after 5 years there are more children enrolled in schools, more schools, more classes have been opened, more teachers are employed and the Government of Lao PDR has devoted a higher share of public expenditure to education – see Table 3 which shows that there was a 40% increase in the proportion of public expenditure devoted to education in 2005/06 compared to 2000/01. Private sector provision, though still modest, has increased over the half decade. Overall, gender parity, in terms of equal numbers of males and females participating in the NPA Programs, is moving in the right direction. For the first time the outcomes of education have been measured at Grade 5 through assessment of student learning in three subjects. The results show that while Lao language skills and knowledge of the "World Around Us" are fairly satisfactory the level of mathematics skills is very poor indeed. Indications are that self-reported literacy rates among 15-24 year olds and adults have increased.

When the broad picture is more closely examined there are some factors which are inhibiting significant progress. First, enrolments could potentially decline at the primary level since fertility rates are falling and because the efforts to enroll the last 5 -10% of children – who constitute the majority of the "unreached" and who live in rural areas without access to roads – have yet to take effect. Second, there are wide variations, by Province and by income level of households in all the

key indicators of participation in education, such as the proportion of children being admitted to school and of those continuing through the grades to completion of primary school. Third, the NPA Programs aimed at disadvantaged groups – females, the poorest, remote area dwellers – have been relatively neglected in the sharing of scarce resources: for instance, expenditure on Non-Formal Education (for literacy and skills development), as a proportion of total recurrent spending on education has dropped markedly in 5 years.

Progress against the EFA National Plan of Action

The most obvious success in **NPA Program 1** *(Early Childhood Care and Development)* has been the growth of the private sector, though it flourishes mainly in urban areas. The pilot scheme which added a pre-primary class to existing primary schools has been judged a success and will be continued. Nationally, though higher than in 2000, only some 10% of children had a pre-primary experience in 2005. High instances of stuntism, through malnutrition, are apparent in pre-school children as are cases of iodine deficiency. More needs to be done to coordinate with the Ministry of Health to improve the health of young children otherwise many will fail to realise their potential as productive citizens.

Analysis of progress on **NPA Program 2** *(Primary Education)* shows that both gross enrollment and net enrollment rates have risen steadily between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006. The increases have been higher for girls than boys: boys are more likely to go to school, but girls who go to school are more likely to be in the official age. Though improved over 5 years, repetition and drop-out remain high with repetition becoming more of a boys' problem in the latter grades. The rates of repetition especially in those in the early grades and for boys require both investigation and action. In addition, although there are 386 new primary schools, 68 schools were closed in the period 2001 to 2005[1].

In **NPA Program 3** *(Lower Secondary Education)* while transition rates from grade 5 to grade 6 were the same in the base year and at the mid-decade point, actual numbers of new entrants to grade 6 have shot up by 13,000 or 17%. Further increases will depend on increasing the supply of lower secondary places and in creating demand among the lower income and remote area groups. Table 3 shows an increase of only 8% in the number of Lower Secondary Schools. However, the number of complete ie grades 6 – 11) secondary schools increased by 52% to 310. Repetition at this level is much lower and again more of a boys' problem.

[1] ESDF, Situation Analysis, Appendix 1 Table 29

Under **NPA Program 4** *(Youth and adult Literacy)*, between 2000 and 2005 the self-reported literacy rates increased for both those in the 15 – 24 year olds age group and for adults. Interestingly male rates have increased slightly more than female rates. On account of the results of the National Literacy Survey in 2001 caution must be shown in regard to self-reported literacy rates since tested rates for functional literacy were just over half those for self-reported rates.

A clear success in **NPA Program 5** *(Skills Development for Disadvantaged Groups)* is the formulation of a vocational and technical education and training policy. However, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector is small in comparison with the secondary education sector and it does not yet provide sufficient programs targeted at the disadvantaged groups.

In **NPA Program 6** *(Improve the Quality and Relevance of Formal Primary and Lower Secondary Education)* many of the indicators point to improvements over 5 years, for example in the increase in the proportion of qualified teachers. However, major gains in quality are expected in the long term from the Teacher Education Strategy and Action Plan. Also, the learning outcomes from the primary school cycle have been measured and the results highlighted the need for improved mathematics teaching.

Since the on-going ESDF work is undertaking a thorough analysis of the sector's management the MDA avoided assessing **NPA Program 7** *(Management and Administration)* except for one area – that of monitoring and evaluation. This report highlights that there is a lack of regular monitoring and supportive supervision in each of the NPA Programs from PES and DEB staff at school level due predominantly to the lack of capacity at those levels in monitoring and evaluation. Active consideration is being given in the MOE to monitoring and evaluation capacity for the sector.

While there was no special **Gender Program**, gender being mainstreamed as a matter of policy, it is an EFA and MDG Goal. There has been almost consistent improvement in student-related indicators for gender parity. However, children from low income, ethnic groups (especially women from ethnic groups) and rural areas display lower participation rates and lower literacy levels. Majority Lao-Tai, male and non-poor children are all more likely to be in school than non-majority, female and poor children.

Progress against the Millennium Development Goals

MDG 2 has three indicators, namely enrolment ratio in primary education, the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary and the literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds**,** women and men. There has been continuous progress across all 3 indicators. However, national averages hide

variations across regions and ethnic groups, and often provinces with low enrolment rates are the ones with high proportions of rural, poor and ethnic group children. The MDG goal will potentially be met by 2015.

MDG 3 has one indicator which falls within the education sector, namely the ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education. While fewer girls than boys are enrolled at all levels, and this share is lower at the higher education levels there are encouraging signs in that at primary levels, girls are more likely to enrol at the right age and less likely than boys to repeat grades. Most progress in reducing the gender gap in primary enrollments has been among the Lao Tai. The gender-related challenges facing the non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups arise from physical, socio-cultural and economic constraints to access as well as to perceptions held about the limited benefits of education. The MDA goal which targets equal numbers of males and female students at all levels looks unlikely to be achieved on present trends since the gender gap at the post-primary levels is wide.

MDG 6, Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases has one indicator which is within the education sector, namely the proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS. No comparative data on the knowledge base of the young people is available. However, reproductive health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs education has been integrated using a lifeskills approach, into the core subjects at primary and secondary levels - potentially reaching 80 percent of secondary schools and 15 percent of primary schools in 11 provinces in 2005-06. In addition reproductive health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drug education has been integrated into the teacher training and NFE curricula.

Summary

While progress has been made towards the EFA goals, this assessment makes it clear that Lao PDR faces considerable challenges if it is to achieve all the EFA goals by 2015. There is a pressing need for renewed efforts to reach those goals through a mixture of more effective implementation of the 7 NPA programs and by the adoption of bold policies and innovative strategies within the up-and-coming Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF). Future efforts will focus particularly on:

- making the primary sector more efficient through reduction of repetition and drop-outs;
- reducing the cost barriers to education for the poorest families;
- creating demand among groups who have yet to recognize the need for schooling;
- developing a curriculum which is responsive to local needs;

- improving the quality of schooling so that the outcomes match the needs for a skilled population able to participate in the global economy;
- designing programs which will allow for school failures and drop-outs to re-enter the education system to realize their potential; and
- ensuring that disadvantaged groups including females, those with physical and mental disabilities, and those with mother tongues other than Lao have access to quality education provision.

The MDA has identified for the MOE where, with the support of development partners, more effort needs to be made so that the EFA goals are achieved and to *reach the unreached*. For instance, there needs to be more specific targeting of resources within the evolving sectoral framework. Disadvantaged groups including adult female illiterates and communities without access to a complete primary school or to opportunities to learn skills for life and living are among claimants for resources and MOE administrative efforts.

Finally, links between this MDA and the ESDF will have to be strong if the challenges of achieving the EFA goals are to be met. It is therefore essential that the ESDF builds on this analysis and draws out the implications of the challenges identified in order to develop appropriate strategies to address them. This will ensure that the EFA goals and the means for achieving them are firmly anchored within the ESDF and help provide a solid basis for a subsequent application to the Fast Track Initiative. There has already been a fruitful exchange between the MDA and the ESDF, as evidenced by the use of some of the data collected in the Situation Analysis of the ESDF.

The MOE looks to the ESDF to set out strong policies and strategies which will provide the detailed map for achieving the EFA goals.

Table 3: Summary of Key Indicators for NPA Programs 2000/1 – 2005/6

INDICATOR	Males		Females		TOTAL	
	2000/1	2005/06	2000/1	2005/06	2000/1	2005/06
1. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in ECCD programs	6.9%	10.4%	7.4%	10.9%	**7.1%**	**10.6%**
2. Percentage of new entrants to primary who have attended an ECCD program	NA	9.4%	NA	10.4%	**8.8%**	**9.9%**
3. Number of children enrolled in kindergartens and crèches	16,748	24,317	17,770	24,880	**34,518**	**49,197**
4. Percentage of under fives suffering from stunting*	NA	NA	NA	43.2%	**40.3%**	**41.8%**
5. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Primary Education	128.9%	129.8%	109.1%	113.7%	**119.1%**	**121.9%**
6. Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in Primary Education	83%	86%	76%	81%	**80%**	**84%**
7. Survival rate to Grade 5	59.8%	60.7%	59.8%	59.6%	**59.9%**	**60.2%**
8. Student enrollment in primary schools	452,387	480,670	375,726	411,211	**828,113**	**891,881**
9. Primary school teachers having the required academic qualifications	69.6%	84.8%	86.4%	93.2%	**76.9%**	**88.7%**
10. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Lower Secondary Education	54.0%	57.0%	40.0%	46.2%	**47.0%**	**51.7%**
11. Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in Lower Secondary Education	23%	28%	22%	29%	**23%**	**28%**
12. Student enrollment in lower secondary schools	114,276	137,043	81,569	106,088	**195,845**	**243,131**
13. Self-reported youth literacy rate (age 15-24 year olds)	77.0%	82.5%	60.9%	63.2%	**68.7%**	**72.7%**
	2000/1				**2005/6**	
14. Number of Primary Schools	**8,155** (3,197 complete)				**8,654** (3,829 complete)	
15. Number of Lower Secondary Schools	**596**				**642**	
16. Number of Primary School teachers	**27,475**				**27,776**	
17. Pupil-teacher Ratio at Primary level	**30.1**				**32.1**	
18. Pupil-teacher Ratio at Secondary level	**23.3**				**25.8**	
19. Pupil-Textbook ratio in Primary Education	**0.48**				**0.22**	
20. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Technical Education and Training	**0.80%**				**0.50%**	
21. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Vocational Education and Training	**0.44%**				**0.42%**	
22. Public expenditure on education as percent of total government expenditure	**10.1%**				**14.0%**	
23. Repetition rates by grade in Primary Education (%)	**Boys**				**Girls**	
	2000/1	**2005/6**			**2000/1**	**2005/6**
Grade 1	**35.0**	**34.0**			**33.5**	**32.3**
Grade 2	**21.5**	**19.5**			**17.9**	**16.6**
Grade 3	**13.6**	**13.7**			**19.8**	**10.5**
Grade 4	**9.2**	**9.1**			**5.5**	**6.3**
Grade 5	**6.7**	**5.5**			**3.7**	**3.3**

Source: MOE/ESIT ** MICS III data*

Acronyms

5+4	Qualification for primary school teachers based on completion of primary school (five years of schooling) plus four years of teacher education and training, targeted on preparing teachers from remote communities.
8+3	Qualification for primary school teachers, based on completion of lower secondary schooling (eight years of schooling) plus three years of teacher education and training.
11+1	Qualification for primary school teachers, based on completion of upper secondary schooling (eleven years of schooling) plus one year of teacher education and training.
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASER	Age-Specific Enrollment Ratio
ASLO	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BEGP	Basic Education Girls Project
CFS	Child Friendly School
CLC	Community Learning Center
Crèche	Care for children of age 2 – 4 years.
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEB	District Education Bureau
DGE	Department of General Education (MOE)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DHTVE	Department of Higher, Technical, and Vocational Education
DNFE	Department of Non-formal Education
DOF	Department of Finance
DTE	Department of Teacher Education
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development[2]
EDI	EFA Development Index
EDP1	First Education Development Project (external financing by World Bank)
EDP2	Second Education Development Project (external financing by World Bank)
EGSWG	Education and Gender Sector Working Group
EFA	Education for All
ELPS	Early Learning in Primary School
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQIP II	Second Education Quality Improvement Project (external financing by ADB)
ESITC	Education Statistics and Information Technology Center (MOE)
ESDF	Education Sector Development Framework
FOE	Faculty of Education
FY	Fiscal year
GAR	Gross Admission Rate
GEI	Gender EFA Related Index

[2] ECCD in Laos covers both crèches and kindergartens. Note that the statistics presented in this report for ECCD enrollment cover only kindergarten, while statistics on teachers cover the whole sub-sector.

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIR	Gross Intake Rate
GOL	Government of Lao PDR
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HRD	Human Resource Development
IDD	Iodine Deficiency Disorder
IMU	Instructional Materials Unit (DOF)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO)
IVET	Integrated Vocational Education and Training.
IVETS	Integrated Vocational Education and Training System.
Kindergarten	Care intended for children of 5 years of age
LABEP	Lao-Australia Basic Education Project
LECS	Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey (LECS 1, 1992/93; LECS 2, 1997/98; LECS 3, 2002/03)
LNLS	Lao National Literacy Survey (2000)
LPRP	Lao People's Revolutionary Party
LRHS	Lao Reproductive Health Survey (2000)
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MDA	Mid-Decade Assessment
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS I, 1997; MICS II, 2000; MICS III 2006)
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPI	Ministry for Planning and Investment
N/A	Not Available
NAR	Net Admission Rate
NCAW	National Commission for the Advancement of Women
NEM	New Economic Mechanism (introduced in 1986)
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGPES	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
NIR	Net Intake Rate
NPA	National Plan of Action
NSC	National Statistical Center
NSEDP	National Socio-Economical Development Plan
NTC	National Training Council
NUOL	National University of Laos
ODA	Official Development Assistance
O&M	Operation and maintenance
PA	Pedagogical Advisor

PER	Public Expenditure Review
PES	Provincial Education Service
PFS	Provincial Financial Services
PPP	Policy Planning Process
PPS	Provincial Planning Services
Pre-school	Refers loosely to crèche, kindergarten and pre-primary preparation classes
PTR	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
RIES	Research Institute for Educational Science
SCN	Save the Children / Norway
SCUK	Save the Children / UK
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRC	School Readiness Competency
TESAP	Teacher Education Strategy and Action Plan
TEI	Teacher Education Institution
TTEST	Teacher Training Enhancement and Status of Teachers (external financing by Sida)
TUC	Teacher Upgrading Center
TUP	Teacher Upgrading Program
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UBE	Universal basic education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VTI	Vocational and Technical Institutions
WB	World Bank

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Chapter

1

Socio Economic Context

1. Country Profile

Figure 1: Map of Lao PDR

Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is located in the heart of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. It shares a border of 505 km long with China to the north, 435 km long with Cambodia to the south, 2,069 km long with Vietnam to the east, 1,835 long with Thailand to the west, and 236 km long with Myanmar to the northwest. The country stretches for 1,700 km north to south, with an east-west width of over 500 km at its widest and only 140 km at the narrowest point. Lao PDR has a land area of 236,800 square kilometers, three-quarters of which is covered by mountains and plateau. It is a tropical country, with its weather being influenced by the monsoons which result in a rainy season from approximately May to October.

Lao PDR was established in 1975, after the fall of the Kingdom of Laos, following decades of war. The Constitution of Lao PDR, which was promulgated in 1991, recognizes the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) as the leading nucleus of the political system.

The Government of Lao PDR is taking a development approach that guarantees the rights of all citizens, while at the same time promoting national unity. The Government's long-term overarching goal is to exit the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by 2020 through sustained equitable economic growth and social development, while safeguarding the country's social, cultural, economic and political identity.

Lao PDR is administratively structured into four levels: central, *provincial*, district and village levels. At the provincial and capital level the administration is run by a governor, the district by a chief administrator and the village by a village chief. Currently there are 16 provinces and 1 Capital City.. 142 districts, 10,500 villages and 953,000 households. The state is secular, but the population is predominantly Buddhist.

2. Population

The 2005 census reported the population at 5.6 million, up 23 percent from the 1995 census, showing an average annual growth rate of 2.08 percent. Fertility rates by place of residence are show in Table 4. If the population were to continue to grow at the same rate, it would double in approximately 34 years.

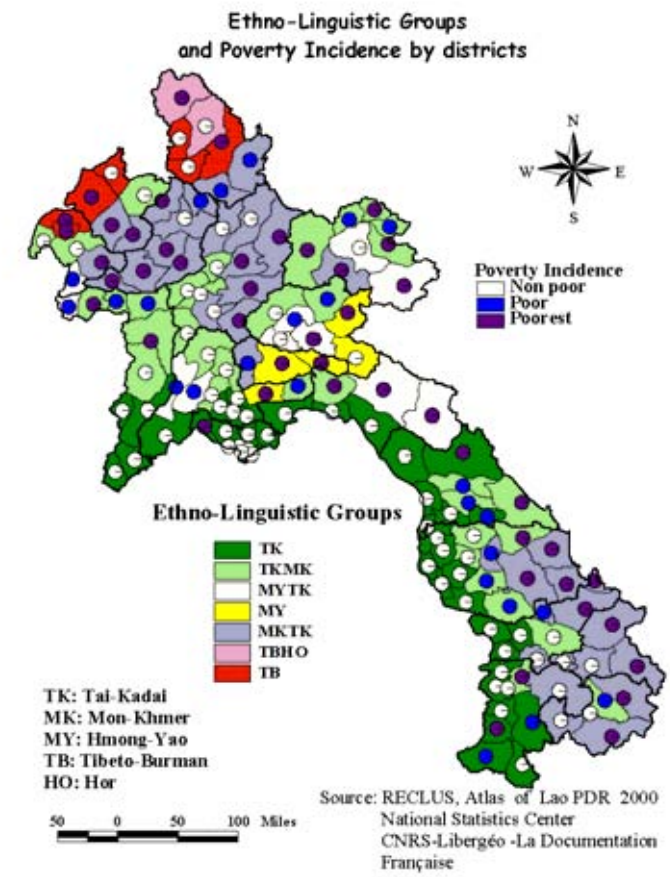
Table 4: Total Fertility rates by location

Place of Residence	Fertility Rate
Urban	2.04
Rural, on road	3.70
Rural, off road	4.74

Lao PDR has a relatively young population, with 39 percent of the population under 15 years of age.[3] One of the most prominent cultural features is ethno-linguistic diversity. The 2005 census identified 49 distinct ethnic groups, categorized in four main ethno-linguistic groups : the Lao-Tai, the Mon-Khmer, the Sino-Tibetan family and the Hmong-Iu Mien.

[3] Lao Reproductive Health Survey (LRHS).

Figure 2: Ethno-Linguistic Groups & Poverty Incidence by districts



According to the 2005 census, the Tai-Kadai group, also referred to as the 'Lao-Tai' ethno-linguistic group, accounts for 64.9 percent of the nation's total population. Because of differential population growth rates, however, among children between the ages of 0 and 16, the Lao-Tai represent only 59.8 percent (Table 5). Hence, *the non-Lao-Tai population is growing more rapidly than the Lao-Tai population.*

One of the most significant demographic changes can be seen in the ethnic composition of primary school enrollments. In the school year 1999/2000, Lao-Tai constituted over 73 percent of primary school enrollments, but this figure had fallen to under 63 percent by 2005/2006. By contrast, Mon-Khmer had risen from just under 18 percent to over 24 percent and the Hmong-Iu Mien and Sino-Tibetan rose from under 9 percent to 13 percent. The fertility rates given in Table 4 above make it quite clear that these demographic trends, which drive enrollments, will continue at least some decades into the future.

The average current household size is 5.9 persons (5.7 persons for urban households, 5.9. persons for households in rural areas with roads, and 6.1 persons in rural areas without roads). Almost 73 percent of the population lives in the rural areas.

Table 5: Population by Ethnicity, Total and Age 0-16 Cohort

Ethno-Linguistic Group	Number of Ethnic Groups	Percent in Total Population	Percent in Population Aged 0-16
Lao-Tai	8	64.9	59.8
Mon-Khmer	32	22.6	25.1
Sino-Tibetan	7	2.8	3.0
Hmong-Iu Mien	2	8.5	10.7
Other / No answer		1.2	1.5

Source: Census 2005

3. Economy

Economic Growth – Lao PDR is predominantly a rural society with an agriculture-based economic structure. Improvement in social conditions and the creation of income, especially in rural areas, are top government priorities. The integration of rural areas into the national market economy is central to eliminating widespread poverty. Thus, rural development, both its social and physical dimensions, is considered key to the eradication of mass poverty and sustainable improvement in social well-being.

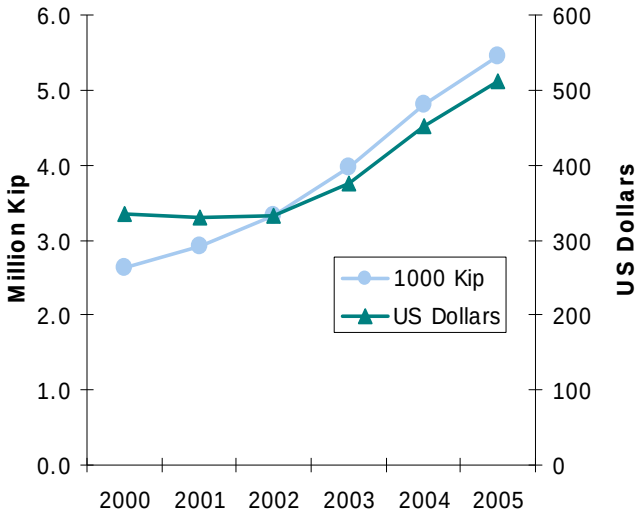


Figure 3: Development of GDP per Capita, 2000 - 2005

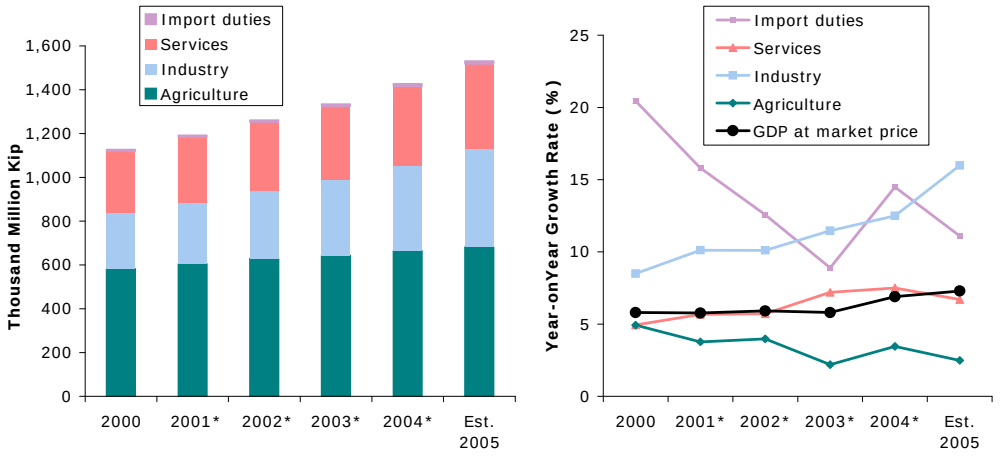
Since 1999 (as Figure 3 shows) the economic growth (GDP per capita) has been moderately strong (average annual growth of 5 percent), following several years of decline associated with the Asian economic crisis of 1997.

From the mid 1980s, with introduction of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1986, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) displayed relatively steady growth until the 1998/1999 fiscal year as a result of the Asian Economic Crisis. The Lao economy recovered the following year and has shown consistent growth since 1999 as well as a rise in GDP per capita of over 50 percent from 2000 to 2005 (US Dollar value). According to the human development index in 2005, Lao PDR was ranked 133 among 177 countries, up from the 141 of the 173 countries in 1993.

Changing Structure of the Economy – Since the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) in 1986, the industrial and service sectors have experienced high rates of growth, while the agricultural sector has shown a rapid decline. Still, as of 2005 agriculture contributed the largest share of the national economy, accounting for more than 44 percent of the GDP. Agriculture accounts for 70 percent of all hours worked and 80 percent of the labor force.[4]

Labor Force – The economically active population comprises 67 percent of the population aged 10 years and older (58 percent in urban areas, 69 percent in rural areas with roads and 73 percent without roads). By far the largest categories of employment are "unpaid family workers" (46 percent) and "own account workers" (self-employed, 42 percent).[5]

Figure 4: GDP and Growth Rate by Sector of Origin, Constant 1990 Prices



Further detail on the population by economic activity is shown in Figure 5 below. In the past decade there has been relatively low internal migration, except for a substantial migration into Vientiane Capital City, coupled with the impact of Village Consolidation Schemes in the Focal Site Development Programme.

Overall internal migration recorded in 2005 was the same as in 1995.[6] There is a small net emigration (estimated at approximately 0.1 percent), mostly people from rural to urban areas in the southern provinces. The movement of people from rural areas in the South across borders to urban areas has been encouraged by "the opening of borders, impact of globalization, labour market demand and

[4] Percent hours worked: LECS 3, p. 35. Percent labor force: The World Bank. Lao PDR: Economic Monitor. World Bank Vientiane Office. November 2006. Page 2.

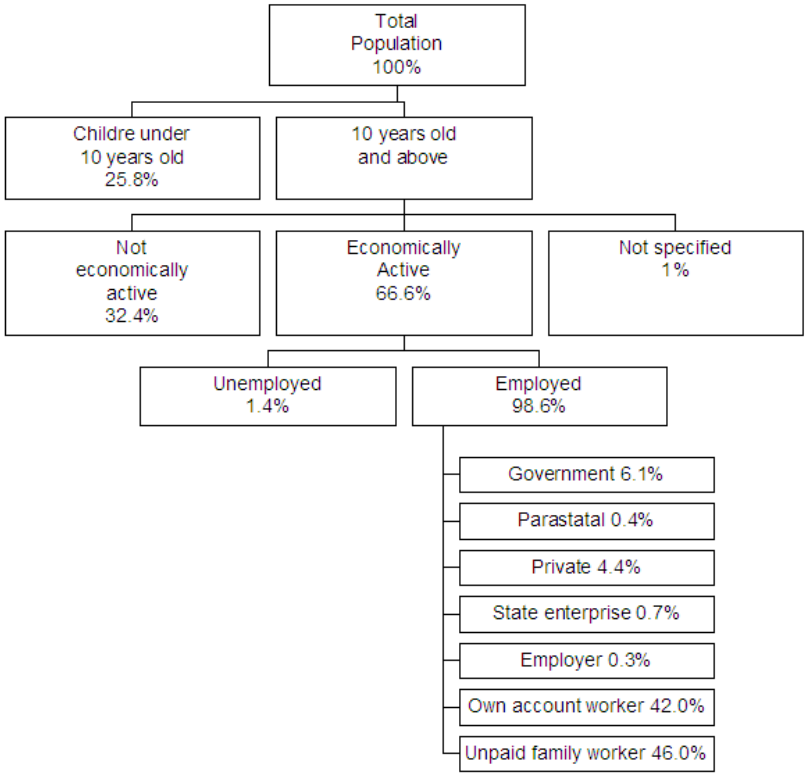
[5] 2005 Census, pp. 75-78.

[6] 2005 Census, pp. 20-21.

widening economic differentials within and between countries" [7] Many diverse factors, including natural disasters (mainly floods and droughts), unbalanced population growth (mainly high population growth in more remote areas with low economic growth) and strains on education and employment opportunities, have increased internal migration and both legal and illegal external migration.

Only 1.4 percent of the economically active population is counted as "unemployed". This can be attributed to the nature of the labor market: (a) There is little in the way of unemployment "benefits"; (b) There is a large informal labor market; and (c) For many people, it is possible quite literally to live for some time off the "fruits of the land".

Figure 5: Structure of the Population by Activity (2005 Census)



4. National Development

In 1996, the 6th Lao People's Revolutionary Party Congress called for the country's national long-term development goal: To graduate from the ranks of the LDCs by the year 2020 through sustainable economic growth and equitable social development, while at the same time safeguarding the country's social, cultural, economic and political identity. Foundations have been laid for the building of the country to:

[7] Skills Development for Disadvantaged Groups – Review, Issues and Prospects, Lao PDR, UNESCO 2005

- Move consistently towards a market-oriented economy;
- Build-up needed infrastructure throughout the country; and
- Improve the well-being of the people through greater food security, extension of social services, environmental conservation, and enhancement of the multi-ethnic population's spiritual and cultural life.

National development efforts have taken place in three stages. These stages are closely interlinked and need to be developed simultaneously to ensure the progressive transition from an isolated, subsistence-based rural economy to a production and services economy that can coherently achieve the 2020 goal.

The *first stage* was the establishment and implementation of the NEM, which was launched by the Government in 1986 in order to gradually transform the economy from a centrally-planned to market-oriented model.

The *second stage* involved the structural transformation and capacity-building of the economy, with a focus on developing transport and communications networks, promoting national and regional integration, and moving towards becoming a full economic partner among countries in the region.

The *third stage* involves "people-centered and sustainable development" which includes the achievement of basic food security, the preservation of natural resources and decentralization of development responsibilities to enable greater public participation. The immediate aim is to enhance conditions everywhere in the country, enabling the multi-ethnic population to have access to what are considered the basics of sustainable development: food security, market opportunities, education and health.

5. Poverty and Social Development

Poverty is multidimensional and manifests itself in different forms. It is more than a problem of inadequate income. In 2001, the Lao Government defined poverty as follows:

> *"Poverty means the lack of essential needs of daily lives such as the lack of foods (possession of foods that are less than 2100 calories/head/day), the lack of clothing, the non-possession of permanent accommodations,*

unaffordable fees of medical treatments in case of illness, unaffordable payments for self education as well as that of members of the family and unavailable conditions for convenient communications."[8]

Quantitative data on the incidence of expenditure, consumption or income poverty (henceforth referred to as *income poverty*) in the Lao PDR are compiled through the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Surveys (LECS) conducted in 1992/1993 (LECS 1), 1997/1998 (LECS 2) and 2002/2003 (LECS 3). The incidence of income poverty (headcount index) declined from 46 percent in 1992/1993 to 39 percent in 1997/1998 and to 34 percent in 2002/2003.[9] This impressive declining trend in poverty incidence, if continued, would enable the country to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 1 of reducing the proportion of people below the poverty line by half by 2015 (as compared to 1990). Some basic indicators on poverty **a**nd poor district classification based on this definition are shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Poverty and Poor District Classification

Indicators (in %)	Type of District			
	47 Poorest Districts	25 Poor Districts	70 Non-Poor Districts	Total 142 Districts
Average poverty incidence (proportion of poor households)	64	38	23	39
Average population share (district population/total populations)	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.7
Average poor population share (district poor/total poor population)	2.1	0.6	0.6	0.7
Percentage of district to total population	24.3	13.5	61.4	NA
Percentage of poor to total poor population	46.9	15.3	37.8	NA
Percentage of poor	NA	50.6	18.9	NA

Source: Skills Development for Disadvantaged Groups – Review, Issues and Prospects, Lao PDR, UNESCO 2005

Like income, other dimensions of poverty have shown considerable improvements in the past decade. Life expectancy now exceeds 60 years, as compared to 50 years in 1990.[10] During the same period infant mortality declined from 120 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 82. Under-five mortality declined from 163 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 115, and maternal mortality declined from 650 to 350. Adult literacy rose from 43 percent to 53 percent, with both men and women sharing in the

[8] PM Instruction No. 010 of 25 June 2001.

[9] Source: Lao PDR Committee for Planning and Investment, National Statistics Center and World Bank, Lao PDR Poverty Trends, 1992/3 to 2002/3, Draft Report, prepared by Kaspar Richter, Roy van der Weide and Phonesaly Souksavth, March 2005.

[10] Based on the 2005 census, NSC estimates the life expectancy at 63 years for women and 59 years for men. In the 1995 census the corresponding estimates were 52 years for women and 50 years for men.

improvement. The net enrollment in primary education has increased from 61 percent to 85 percent in 2004/2005.[11]

Access to health services, safe water and roads has improved modestly during the past fifteen years.[12] In terms of the MDGs, Lao PDR seems to be on track to achieve the target on under-five mortality, but may have difficulty in meeting the target on maternal mortality if the past trend continues. The effects of poverty on poor families are degrading. The consequences of poverty are also detrimental to economic advancement, social harmony and political stability. The development of the productive potentials of the poor, women and other vulnerable groups, would contribute to rapid economic growth and sustainable development. It would reduce negative externalities such as crime, the spread of diseases and environmental degradation. Poverty reduction is to be addressed through policies and programs that help redistribute the growing opportunities, incomes, services and choices to the poor in the multi-ethnic population of the Lao PDR. Therefore, poverty reduction is seen to be economically sound, socially just and politically worthy.

[11] Based on MOE 2004/05 enrollment data and the 2005 census data.

[12] World Bank, World Development Indicators, and National MDG Report. While there has been considerable progress, the social indicators in the Lao PDR are still well below the averages for the East Asia and Pacific Region. Some of them are even lower than the corresponding averages for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chapter

2

The Education Sector

1: Description of the Education Sector

1.1 Structure of the Education System

The structure of the formal education system in Lao PDR is illustrated in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Following the conventions of the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED), it comprises:

- 0 - Pre-primary education;
- 1 - Primary education;
- 2 - Lower-secondary education;
- 3 - Upper-secondary education;
- 4 - Post-secondary non-tertiary education;
- 5 - First stage tertiary education (bachelor level) ; and
- 6 - Second stage of tertiary, leading to advanced research qualification (MA, PhD)

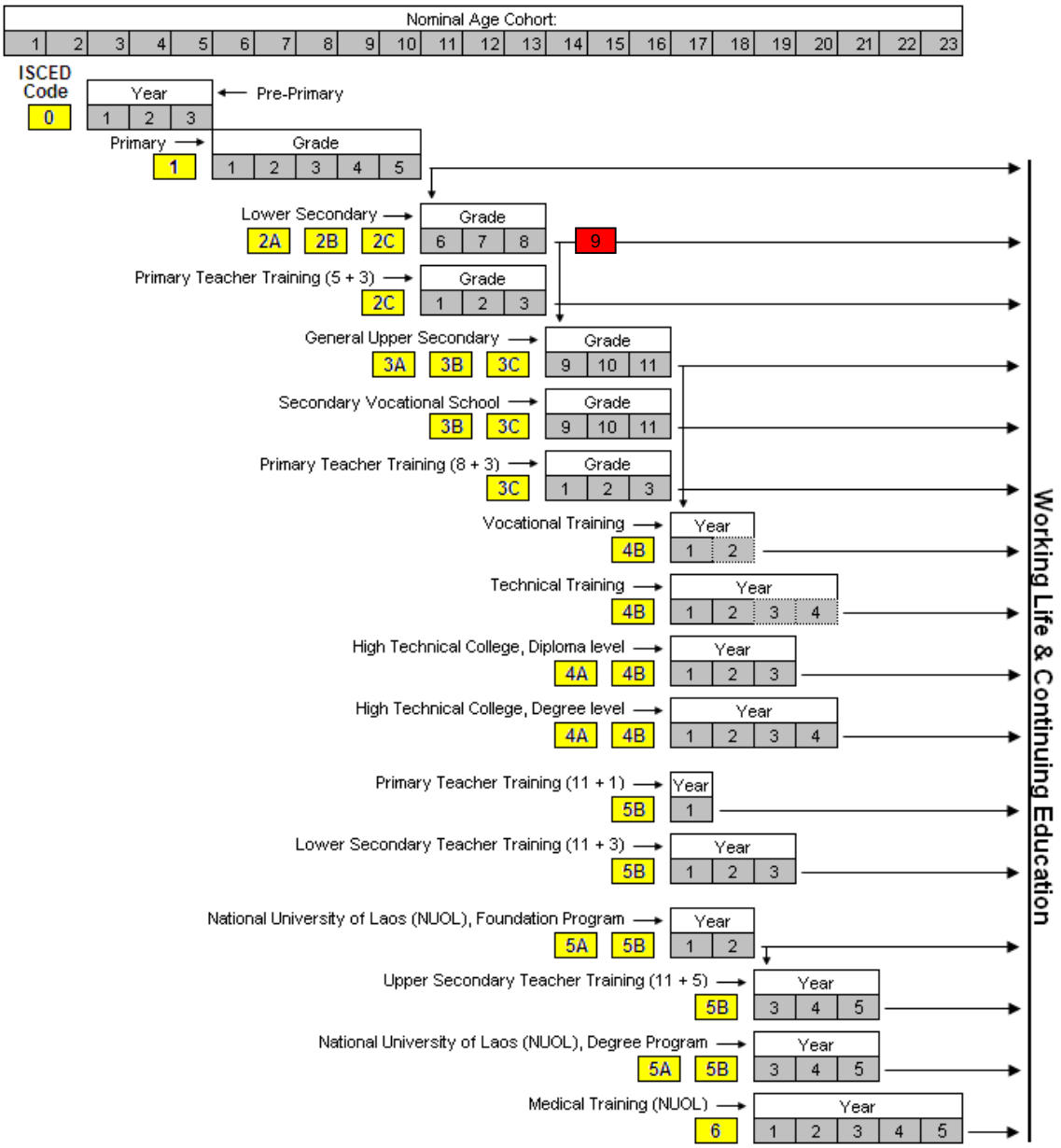
Levels 2 - 5 are sub-divided into forms A, B, and C, where A leads to several further levels of education, B leads to a "terminal" program C, which does *not* give access to further education and is expected to lead directly to the labor market.

Pre-primary education consists of crèches and kindergarten schools for three to five year olds, as well as primary schools that provide pre-primary classes. All aim to support the development of children and allow for a smooth transition into primary education.

Primary education consists of five years and is compulsory. Lower secondary education consists of three years, as does upper secondary education. By 2010, the present 5+3+3 system (shown in Figure 6 below), with 8 years of basic education, will evolve to the international standard of 9

years of basic schooling through a 5+4+3 structure (shown by the addition of Grade 9 in the red box below).

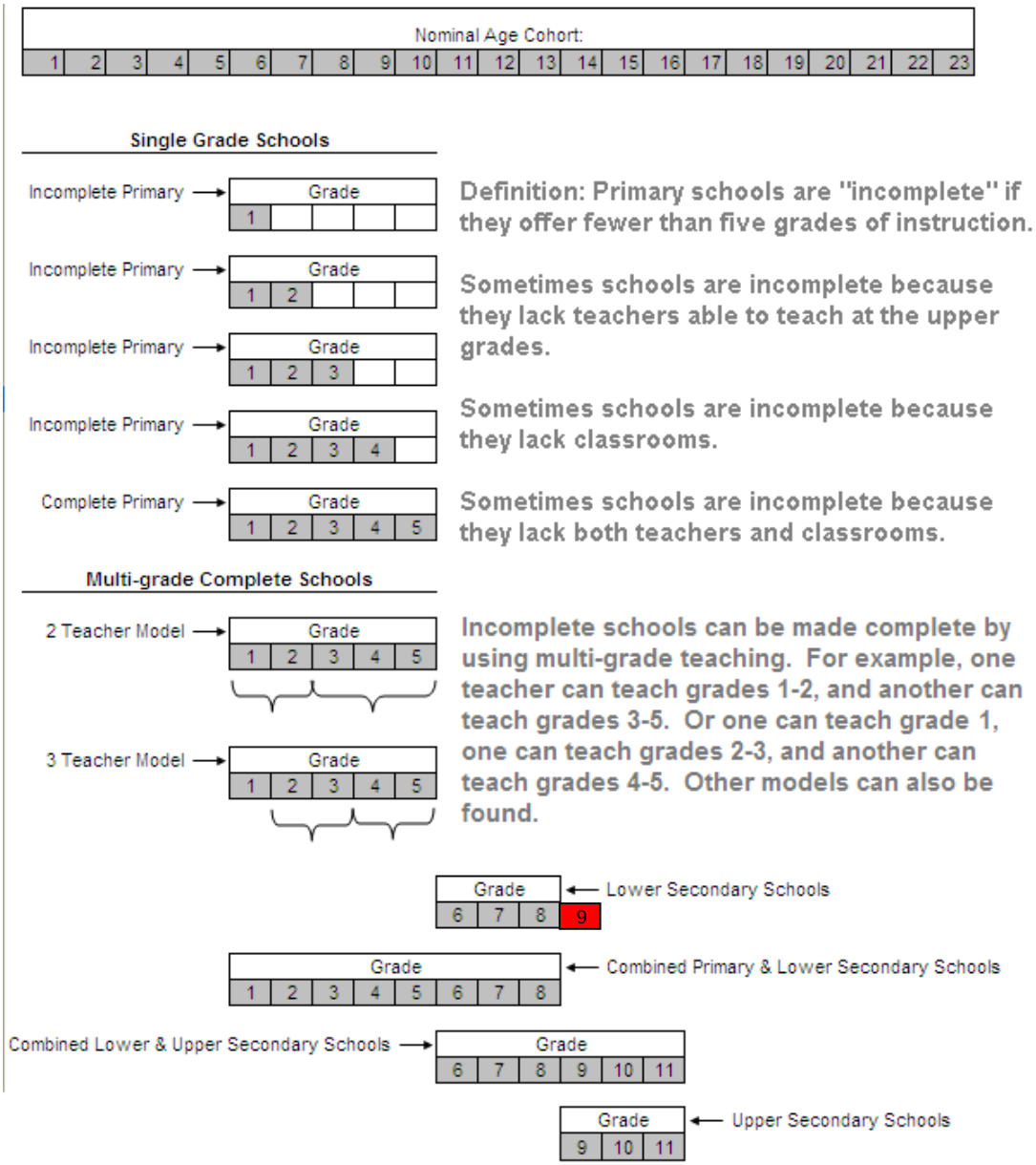
Figure 6: Structure of the formal education system



Post-secondary education in technical schools of one to two years, and three to seven years of tertiary education are offered by technical and teacher training colleges and the National University of Laos (NUOL). Even more than is the case for pre-primary schools, the private sector has contributed to the rapid growth of in private post-secondary fee-paying colleges mainly offering programs in business, computing, tourism, or English language.

In addition to the formal education programs there are non-formal education (NFE) program being offered to out of school youth and adults. The programs include basic literacy and numeracy training and a wide range of other vocational and skills based programs.

Figure 7: Primary and Secondary School Forms

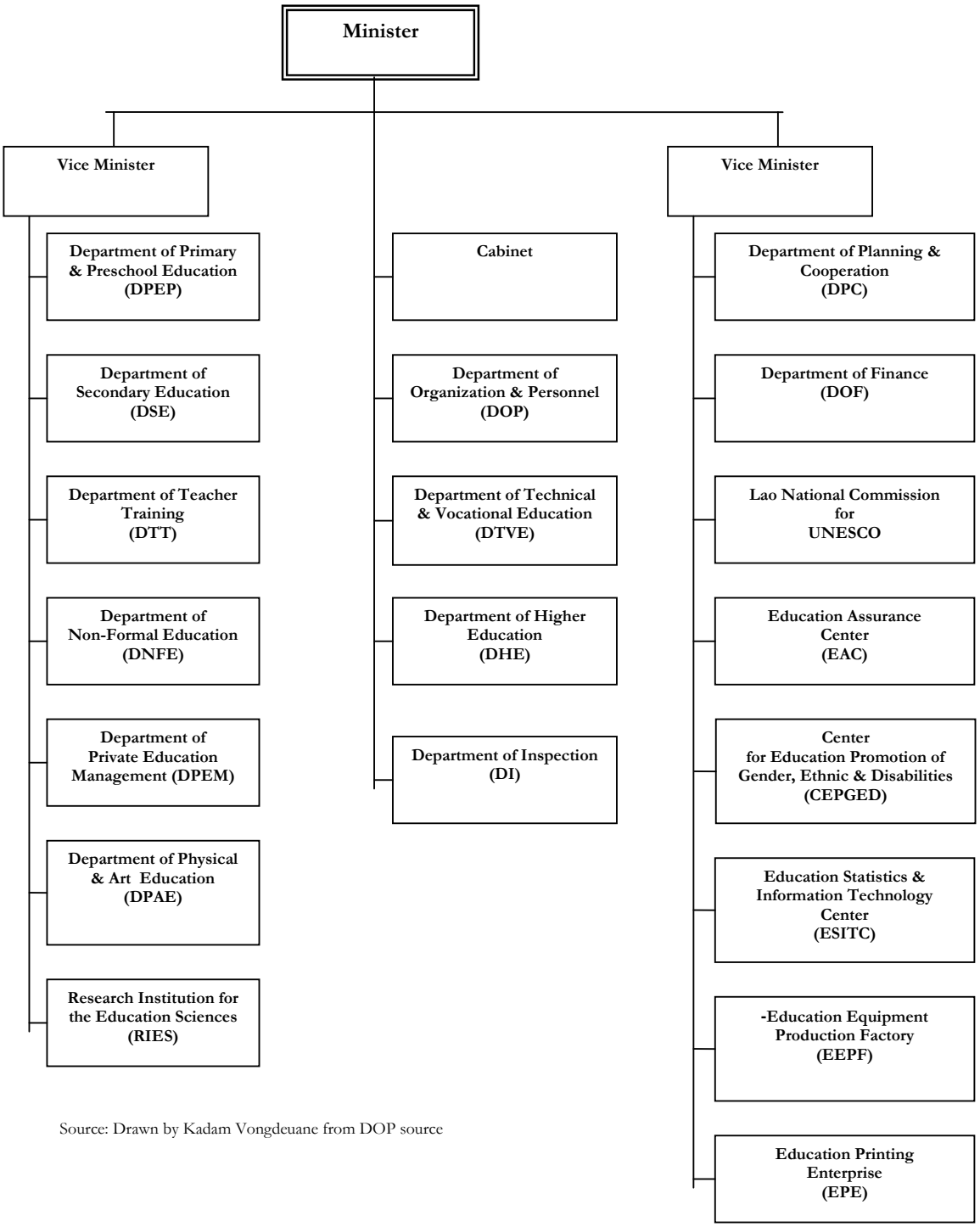


1.2 Management of the Education System

Public Sector – The organization chart for MOE shown in Figure 8 is based on the new Decree No. 62 of 2008 on the re-organization of MOE. The decree states that the Ministry of Education, is "government's central management organization and has the role and function for

the macro management of education nationwide focus on human resource development, develop individuals to be good citizens, have good behaviors, have knowledge, skills, profession and competence to comply with the needs for national safeguard and development.

Figure 8: Organization of the Ministry of Education



Source: Drawn by Kadam Vongdeuane from DOP source

MOE therefore is responsible for formal and non-formal education at all levels, for both public and private education. However under the Government's de-concentration process, initiated in 2000, MOE shares responsibilities with the Provincial Education Services (PES) and the District Education Bureau (DEB) as stated Article 62 of the new Education Law 2007.

Private sector – The private sector is encouraged to participate and invest in education which is stated in Article 60 and 61 of the new education law.

Article 60: Investment Policy

> The Government authorizes individuals, cooperation, and internal and external private organizations to invest in education by establishing schools, learning centers and education institutions; opening teaching-learning in accordance with the national education system and conform to the curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education, in order to provide services to society and get appropriate payment of fees from learners. The investment shall be in different ways in accordance with the Law on enterprises.

Article 61: Management principles

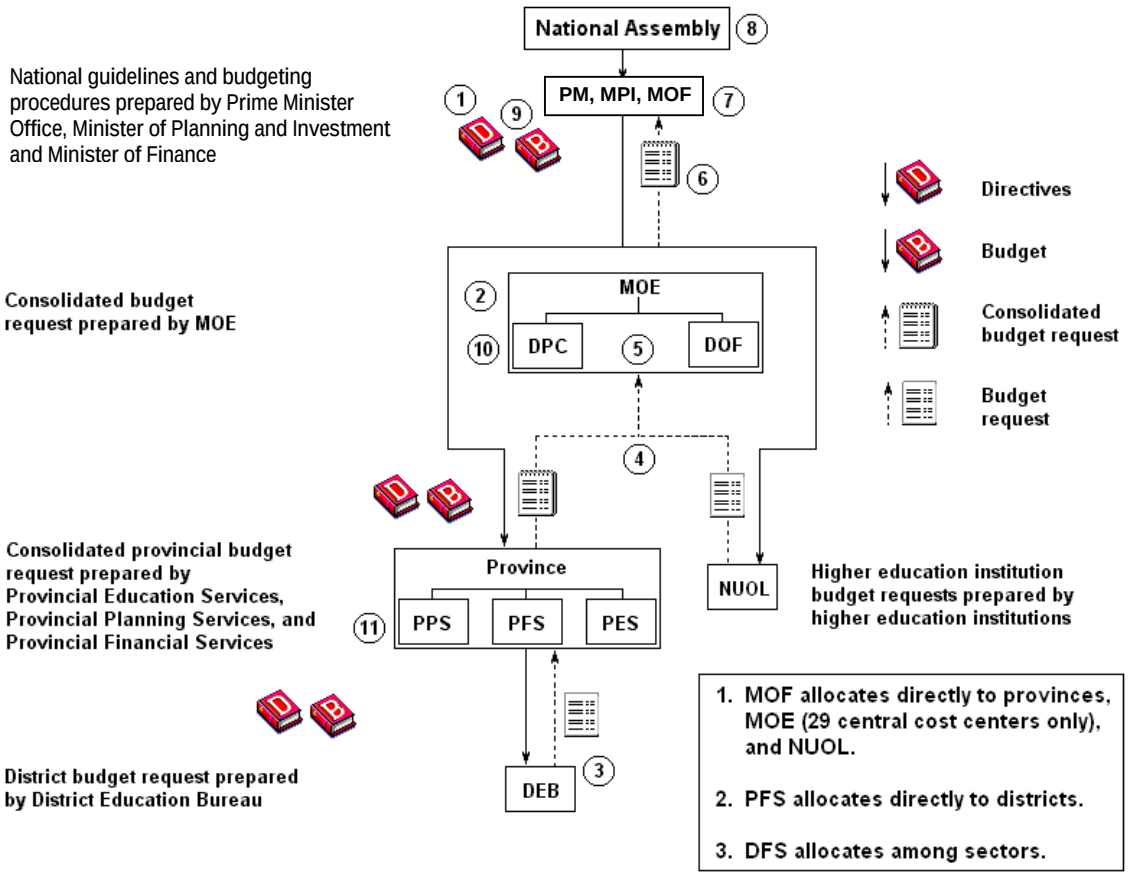
> The Government has the responsibilities to define regulations, principles and privileges concerning the organization, the running, and the management of private schools, learning centers and education institutions.

2: Financing Education

2.1 Organization and Sources of Public Financing of Education

In Lao PDR the fiscal year (FY) commences on 1st October and ends on 30th September the following year. Based on instructions from the Office of the Prime Minister and the budget planning system, the Ministry for Planning and Investment (MPI) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) prepare detailed guidelines and send them to the line ministries and provinces. The line ministries and provinces are responsible for budget preparations at central and provincial level. This process is shown in Figure 9 below:

Figure 9: Budget Planning System



MOE is responsible for primary, secondary, tertiary and non-formal education. Based on its annual budget request, a number of quota (civil servant) teachers and education administrators are allocated for the education sector. MOE is the largest of fourteen ministries. According to the Revised Education Law 2007, educational administration and management organizations are composed of: three levels; (1) Ministry level, (2) Provincial Educational Services (PES) and (3) District Education Bureau (DEB). There are over 15 departments in MOE (see Figure 8). Each department has its own responsibility, administrative arrangements and relationship to the provincial and district services.

The 1991 Constitution laid the foundation for a national budget based on the concept of a unified, decentralized state. Provinces and districts formulate budgets. The budget, authorized by the National Assembly, defines revenue targets and allocates expenditures for the center and for the provinces. In 2000, the "deconcentration decree" extended this framework by grantingprovinces wide responsibilities for fiscal management.[13] This decree established

[13] Prime Ministerial Decree 01 (PM 01, dated 11 March 2000).

"provinces as the strategic unit, districts as the planning unit and villages as the implementing unit."

The decentralized fiscal structure is based on an "upward revenue sharing" system in which most revenue is collected by the provinces. "Surplus" provinces are to transfer surplus revenues to the center to fund both central government expenditures and transfers to the "deficit" provinces. Provincial governors play a very important role in public financial management. Inter-sectoral budget resource flows are horizontal instead of vertical. The provincial and district governments administer a large proportion of the central assigned taxes.

2.2 Budgeting and Planning

At the provincial level, the budget amounts spent on each sector (or as a share of total budget expenditure) vary widely across provinces and districts.[14] Such variations have implications for education expenditure and development. Simplification of the decision-making processes that control the flow of funds from the central level to the school level (via the provincial and district levels) is required along with capacity development.

The PES plans must be approved by the governor's office, as well as the provincial MOF and the MPI. The PES communication lines with those provincial services are much stronger than with MOE; hence the execution of national policies is highly dependent on governors' priorities.

Three critical issues remain:

- The development of outcome-oriented budgeting;
- A review of the Deconcentration Decree so as to enhance its authority to ensure (i) equity of resources across provinces and (ii) implementation of national policies in the education sector; and
- A review of resource redistribution mechanisms across provinces.

The procedures of annual budgeting and planning preparation for education in Lao PDR consist of 14 actions that follow a "top-down" process, followed by a "bottom-up", process, which is finalized with a second "top-down" process. All phases of the educational planning and budgeting process (preparation and adoption) are indicated in Figure 9 above**.**

[14] This section draws heavily on World Bank 2006. Notes for the PSIA; technical report.

After the National Assembly approves the budget plan, MOF and MPI announce the provincial recurrent and capital budget allocation amounts to all line ministries and provinces. Then the Provincial Finance Services (PFS) and Provincial Planning Services (PPS), in turn, announce the recurrent and investment budget to the PES. Arrangements for the PESs to report to the MOE Department of Finance (DOF) and the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC) are incomplete making the monitoring and tracking of the budget very difficult.

In practice, at the provincial level, the governor has the authority for the allocation, authorization, and revision of both recurrent and capital implementations. The implementation of education budgets is dependent on the governor, as well on the provincial financial situation; those provinces that have sufficient revenue can implement more easily and effectively.[15]

2.3 Education Finance

Education is financed out of public resources, with four notable exceptions. First, there is the private sector which has grown very quickly from 2000/2001 to 2004/2005 including pre-school, primary, secondary, technical colleges and universities (as shown in Table 7 below).

Table 7: Growth of private educational institutions

Institution	2000/01		2004/05	
	Schools	Students	Schools	Students
Pre-school	111	6,350	136	11,820
Primary	83	15,202	105	21,020
Secondary	19	2,704	34	6,198
TVET Centre	42	6,021	63	7,369
Technical (mid-level)	2	199	11	2,633
Technical (high level)	0	0	31	14,317
College	7	4,187	15 (2002/03)	4,745
University	0	0	7	3,893

Source: Dept of Private Education, MOE

While demand for private, primary and secondary education is fostered by the search for better quality, motivated teachers and discipline, the demand for post-secondary education is motivated by the acquisition of skills in high demand on the labor market (e.g., business management, information technology and English), especially in the fast growing service sector.

Second, in vocational and technical education, teacher training, and higher education, two parallel programs are offered: (a) Daytime, "regular" courses, followed by quota students,

[15] Bouapao, L., Sengchandavong, O. & Sihavong, S. (2000). Educational Financing and Budgeting in Lao PDR. International Institute of Educational Planning/UNESCO.

admitted in limited numbers based on their scores and benefiting from a scholarship and competition students admitted on the basis of a competitive exam, but not receiving a scholarship; and (b) Evening "special" courses, accessible to all students who have graduated from the relevant level of education (as shown in Table 8 below).

Table 8: Vocational, Technical and Higher Education Students by Program and Education Level (2004/05)

Program	Quota	Competition	Special courses
Vocational education (MOE)	1,214	1,153	754
Vocational education (other ministries)	165	74	165
Technical education (MOE)	921	1684	6,414
Technical education (other ministries)	1,695	1,133	990
NUOL (bachelor program)	3,283	2,823	3,107
Champasack (bachelor program)	1,023	487	572
Souphanuvong (bachelor program)	666	227	96
NUOL (higher diploma)	206	468	2,157
Champasack (higher diploma)	196	294	0
MOE (higher diploma)	42	160	151
TOTAL	**9,411**	**8,503**	**14,406**

Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 9 below shows that all students, including quota students pay registration fees, in addition students in special courses have to pay fees.

Table 9: Fees by Program and Education Level, 2005/06 (Kip 1000)

Program	Quota & competition		Special courses	
	Minimum fee	Maximum fee	Minimum fee	Maximum fee
Vocational education (8+3)	NA	822	2,047	2,049
Technical education (11+2 & 11+3)	NA	822	2,047	2,049
University (higher diploma)	542	622	1,227	1,307
University (bachelor program)	496	576	1,176	2,096

Source: MOE/ESITC

Fees are budgeted and used to pay allowances to teachers and non-teaching staff, operation and maintenance (O&M) and minor repairs. They represent a significant share of recurrent expenses at those levels.

Third, although primary education is compulsory by law, for both primary and secondary education, parents pay minor registration, graduation and other fees, as do communities, generally in kind (see section 2.5 Household Financing of Education).

Fourth, multi-lateral and bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) fund a very high share of the investment budget, as shown in Table 13 in Section 2.4.3 below. External funding is allocated mainly to development projects focusing on primary education, especially in the poorest districts, but also to vocational, technical and higher education.

Considering the contribution of students to the recurrent budget, and the role of external funding in the investment budget, the actual share of public resources going to the education budget is limited. The integration of non-public resources in the public budget tends to overestimate the contribution of public resources to education.

2.4 Structure of Public Expenditure on Education

2.4.1 Development of the Education Budget

Public expenditure on education has almost recovered from the financial crisis of the late 1990s. After improving substantially during the first part of the 1990s, overall public expenditure virtually collapsed with the onset on macro-economic difficulties and was worsened by the Asian financial crisis of 1997 to 1998. Recovery took place during the first half of the decade beginning 2000, and by 2006 and 2007 public educational expenditure has almost recovered its level of 1995, both in relation to GDP and as a proportion of total public spending, as shown in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Lao PDR Public Expenditure on Education 1990/91 to 2006/07 (%)

Indicator	90/91	94/95	99/00	04/05	05/06	06/07
Education budget as % of GDP	1.9	3.6	1.4	2.3	3.2	3.2
Education as % total GOL	7.2	13.9	7.2	11.0	14.0	15.0

Sources: Data for 2005-06 and 2006-07 have been provided by the MOE/DPC. Data for 2004 to 2005 are estimates by MOE reported in UNESCO and ADB 2005b. Data for earlier years are from R. Noonan, *Education Financing in Lao PDR, Part I: Patterns of Expenditure in a Turbulent Decade of Transition (1990 – 2000),* SIDA/World Bank 2001

However, this recovery derives from a strong increase in the investment budget and does not imply any improvement in the share of domestic funding or in the ratio of recurrent to investment budget, rather the opposite, as shown in Table 13 and discussed in section 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 below.

2.4.2 Recurrent versus Investment Budget

The dominant features of recent public expenditure are the high proportion of capital spending and the high percentage of donor-financed spending. At the beginning of the 1990s, capital spending amounted to less than 5 percent of total public expenditure, with no foreign funding. Since 2004/2005, foreign funds account for over 90 percent of educational investment. As a consequence, 57.8 percent of the total education budget was externally funded in 2005/2006.

It might be observed that the recurrent-to-investment ratio is declining, as can be seen in Table 13 in Section 2.4.3 below. If recurrent spending is too low relative to investment, schools will be

built in which successful teaching cannot take place due to the lack of operating funds to pay teachers, buy textbooks, or carry out essential maintenance. However, less than 20 percent of ODA in education consists presently of "classic" infrastructure activity. Most ODA is capacity building or training.

2.4.3 Structure of the Recurrent Budget

The recurrent budget essentially pays salaries and benefits, scholarships and O&M expenses for MOE, PESs, DEBs, teacher education institutions (TEIs), vocational and technical institutions (VTIs) and universities. The share of salaries in the recurrent budget has improved recently as a consequence of the increase of salaries (as shown in Table 11 below).

Table 11: Breakdown of recurrent expenditure 1995-2007 (%)

Category	1995-96	1999-00	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07*
Salaries	82.2	67.4	75.4	77.6	82.9	78.4	86.0	80.8
Scholarships	NA	NA	8.3	7.4	6.2	15.9	4.9	7.4
O&M	NA	NA	16.3	15.0	10.9	5.7	9.1	11.8
Total	NA	NA	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calculated from MOE data

The rise in salary levels is confirmed by studies including a direct assessment of individual salaries[16]. Average staff salaries are show in Table 12 below:

Table 12: Average staff salaries by sub-sector (million Kip)

Institution	Institution			
	Salaries	N° Staff	Average staff salary (ASS)	ASS in GDP/Cap
Preschool	11,187.0	2,014	5.555	1.047
Primary	154,395.7	27,755	5.563	1.048
Secondary	91,669.5	15,953	5.746	1.083
Vocational	8,245.7	1,048	7.868	1.483
Teacher training	5,827.9	679	8.583	1.617
Higher education	28,894.8	1,560	18.522	3.490
Administration	27,916.0	4,371	6.387	1.203
Total	328,136.6	53,380	6.147	1.158

Source: Calculated from MOE data

[16] Tecsult 2006: Education Finance Study Final Report (EDP2/WB)

Table 13: Recurrent and Investment Budget (Billion Kip; 2001/02 to 2006/07)

Item	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
Education budget	386.1	451.9	457.5	658.1	1,033.4	1,189.9
Recurrent	184.7	185.8	246.6	304.7	383.1	430.5
Capital	201.5	266.1	210.9	353.4	650.3	759.4
Recurrent as % of education	47.8	41.1	53.9	46.3	37.1	36.2
Investment as % of education	52.2	58.9	46.1	53.7	62.9	63.8
% domestically financed	40.8	23.9	18.1	7.8	8.2	4.4
% foreign financed	59.2	76.1	81.9	92.2	91.8	95.6
Education budget as % of GDP	2.30	2.35	2.45	2.49	3.19	3.20
Recurrent as % of GDP	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.18	1.16
Capital as % of GDP	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	2.01	2.04
% Foreign financed	30.9	44.8	37.8	49.5	57.8	61.0
Education budget as % GOL budget	10.1	10.8	10.8	11.0	14.0	15.0
Recurrent as % GOL recurrent budget	10.0	10.4	8.7	8.7	10.2	9.4
Capital as % GOL capital budget	10.2	11.0	12.6	14.2	17.8	22.6

Source: Calculated from MOE data.

Notes:

1. The education budget is calculated as a percentage of total public expenditure, recurrent and investment.
2. Recurrent is calculated as a percentage of total public recurrent expenditure.
3. Capital is calculated as a percentage of total capital expenditure.
4. Figures for 2006/07 are preliminary estimates.

The number of scholarships has increased recently, which explains why their share in the budget has remained more or less constant around 7 percent in spite of the increase of salaries.

2.4.4 Distribution of the Recurrent Budget by Sub-sector

The share of the recurrent budget allocated to each sub-sector is shown in Table 14 and Figure 10 below. Since the beginning of the decade, the shares of the total expenditure allocated to primary and lower secondary education has shown a slight decline and the shares allocated to upper secondary and higher education have increased.

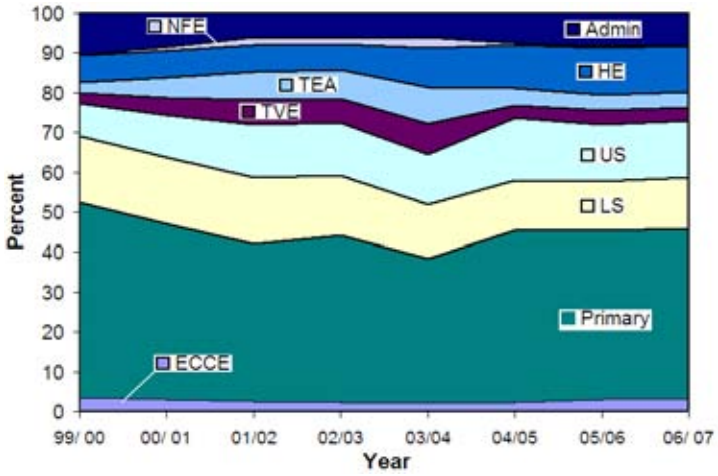
As a consequence of the expansion of primary and lower secondary education enrollments in upper secondary, technical and vocational, teacher training and higher education have recently increased. Future budgets will encompass this change whilst continuing to respond to the policy focus on basic education and the achievement of EFA. Through public expenditure management reforms (such as per capita budget allocations for basic education) and improvements in management information systems it should be possible to ensure that, by 2009, Nam Theun II revenues are properly directed to basic social services, including primary and lower secondary education for disadvantaged populations.

Table 14: Recurrent Expenditure in Education by Sub-sector 1994/95 to 2006/07 (%)

Sub-Sector	94/95	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07
ECCD	3.3	3.6	3.1	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.5	3.1	3.1
Primary	45.9	48.7	44.0	39.5	41.9	36.2	42.8	42.2	42.9
Lower secondary	16.9	16.7	16.6	16.6	14.9	13.5	12.7	12.4	12.7
Upper secondary	7.1	8.3	10.8	13.3	13.4	12.7	15.7	14.3	14.3
TVET	6.5	2.6	4.4	6.2	6.0	7.8	3.2	3.5	3.3
Teacher education	4.8	2.7	4.9	7.2	7.2	9.1	4.2	4.0	3.8
Higher education	8.4	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.5	9.9	10.9	11.8	11.6
NFE	na	na	0.9	1.9	1.5	2.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
Admin. & man.	7.2	11.1	8.5	6.0	6.3	6.1	7.7	8.3	8.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Estimates based on data from MOE/DOF; figures for 2000/01 are interpolations between 1999/2000 and 2001/02; figures for 2006/07 are preliminary projections.

Figure 10: Recurrent Expenditure in Education by Sub-sector 1999/2000 to 2006/07 (%)



2.4.5 Unit Costs

Unit costs values of primary education in Lao PDR is 3.2 percent of the GDP per capita, as shown in Table 15 below. This indicates that the international norms are not being met. The international developing country ratio for the unit cost of primary education as a proportion of GDP per capita varies from 7 to 14 percent. The ratio for lower secondary for Lao PDR is 3.4 percent compared to a range of 20 - 24 percent typical of other Asian developing countries. These low unit costs are reflected in the short supplies of teaching and learning resources. Each higher education student costs the equivalent of 8 primary students. While there was a major rationalization of teacher colleges in the late 1990s it is apparent that the cost structure of teacher education needs further attention. Its unit costs substantially exceed any other sub-sector of education, due in part to the high proportion of student-teachers getting a scholarship (quota students).

Table 15: Unit Recurrent Costs by Level of Education (2003/04)

Unit cost	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	TVET	Teacher education	Higher
US$	17.7	18.6	35.2	103.6	131.3	127.3
As % of GDP/capita	3.2	3.4	6.4	19.0	24.0	23.3

Source: Calculated from data provided by DOF, and Annual Bulletins, MOE 2003 to 2004.

2.6 Standard School Income Sources and Cost Breakdown

Recurrent and capital resources allocated to primary education (or any other level of education) are determined by various unrelated processes through which resources of all types and origins become available. They include:

(a) Financial resources originating from family (registration and other fees) and community contributions (salaries paid to contract teachers, cash contributions for repairs and furniture, in-kind contributions for construction of additional classrooms, repairs, furniture, etc.);

(b) Teachers paid by the province or the district

(c) Financial contributions from development partners and NGOs to build new schools, additional classrooms, rehabilitate existing premises, buy furniture and equipment, and provide textbooks and teacher guides;

(d) PES and DEB staff assigned to primary education (teacher trainers, pedagogical advisors, etc.); and

(e) Financial resources budgeted in PES for primary education activities, such as in-service training, etc.

2.7 Financing for Disadvantaged People

In order to assess the extent to which MOE policy is promoting access and retention for disadvantaged people, and especially the unreached, an assessment of MOE's explicit policy and interventions and its impact has been carried out. The analysis was done at two levels: (1) Households, since they are decision units regarding children's participation to school; and (2) Districts, since MOE policy and interventions are targeted to districts.

Analysis by Households – In the Public Expenditure Review (PER), the impact of MOE policy and interventions was assessed by considering households categorized by quintile according to level of consumption, that is the 20 percent poorest households (Q1), the next 20

percent (Q2), etc.[17] Enrollments in each expenditure-consumption quintile were compared with the relevant age group in the population in the quintile to *assess Gross Enrollment Rate (GER)* in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schooling. While differences across quintiles are limited for primary, they are significant for lower secondary and very marked for upper secondary, as seen in Table 16 and Table 17 below.

Table 16: Gross Enrollment Ratios (GER) by Household Income Quintile (%)

Level	Poorest Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Richest Q5	Total
Primary	91	110	120	127	128	112
Lower Secondary	23	41	51	71	88	53
Upper Secondary	12	17	27	38	53	29

*Source: Calculated from Lao Expenditure and **C**onsumption Survey 2002/03 (LECS 3).*

The same information has been presented in a complementary way by assessing the share of *total enrollment* in each quintile, as shown in Table 17 below, which includes results separately for primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and all three levels combined. The poorest households (Q1) have *higher total enrollments in primary school* than non-poor households (Q2 - Q5). This is because although GER is *somewhat* lower in Q1, families in Q1 tend to have more children than families in non-poor households. By contrast, Q1 households have *much* lower GER at lower and upper secondary level.

Table 17: Share (%) of Total Enrollments, by Level of Education, in Each Quintile

	Quintile				
	Poorest Q1	Low Q2	Medium Q3	High Q4	Richest Q5
Primary %	21.2	22.5	21.7	19.5	15.2
Cumulative %	21.2	43.7	65.4	84.9	100.0
Lower secondary %	9.4	16.2	20.0	26.6	28.1
Cumulative %	9.4	25.6	45.6	72.2	100.0
Upper secondary %	7.6	12.4	18.5	25.6	35.9
Cumulative %	7.6	20.0	38.5	64.1	100.0
All programs %	16.1	19.2	20.7	22.2	21.8
Cumulative %	16.1	35.3	56.0	78.2	100.0
Households %	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Cumulative %	20.0	40.0	60.0	80.0	100.0

Source: Calculated from enrollment data by quintile and school level from LECS 3, and enrollment data from Annual Bulletins, MOE 2002/03.

[17] World Bank 2007: Lao PDR Public Expenditure Review and Integrated Fiduciary Assessment

Figure 11: Concentration Curves, Primary and Secondary Enrollment

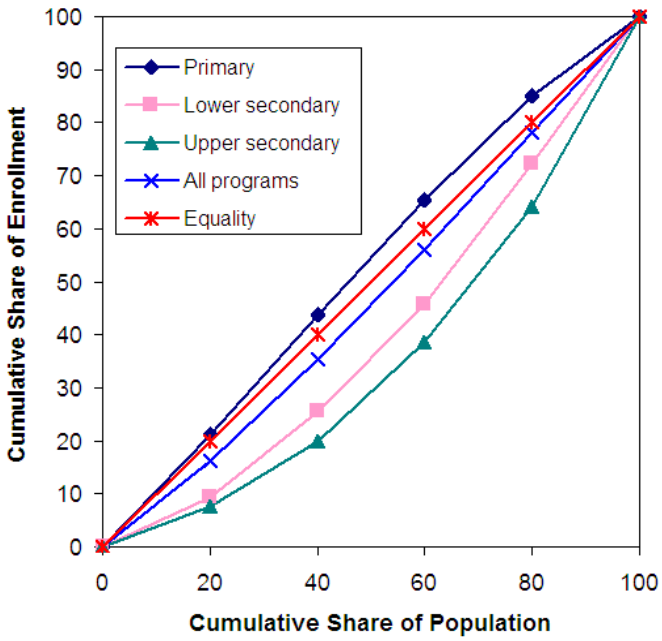


Figure 11 shows the *cumulative shares* of total enrollments in each quintile have been plotted against the *cumulative shares* of the population quintiles. Thus the 21.2 percent of the primary school enrollment comes from Q1 households, and 43.7 percent comes from Q1 and Q2 households combined (cumulative). These cumulative figures are shown in the *concentration curves* in Figure 11. If enrollment were distributed equally over the population quintiles, then the concentration curves would follow a 45 degree diagonal, the "equality line" shown in red. If "the poor have more", then the curve would rise above the equality line; if the poor have less, then the curve would fall below equality line. The curves show that primary education enrollment is slightly "progressive" over all quintiles, while secondary education, especially upper secondary, is regressive. The fact that the curve for "All Programs" is close the equality line signifies that there is not a big overall difference between the five quintiles in terms of *combined primary and secondary enrollments*. Overall participation is therefore not very inequitable.

3. Education and National Socio Economic Development

3.1 National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy

The National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) is the outcome of a highly participatory process that started in 1996 when the 6th Party Congress defined the long term objective as freeing the country from the status of LDCs by 2020 (the 2020 goal). It is central to

the national development agenda and reflects government policy that operationalizes national objectives and goals. The strategic vision behind the NGPES is poverty eradication through strong economic growth, the continuous building up of the country in all areas and increased focus on the poorest districts to ensure that they become increasingly integrated into the national economy. NGPES addresses the enhancement of an overall environment conducive to growth and sustainable development. The strengthening of this environment rests on four pillars:

- Strengthening of the macro-economic development framework;
- Strengthening of the business and investment environment;
- Improvement of public sector management; and
- Broadening of a national resource and revenue base.

The strategic linkages are based on four main sectors: agriculture and forestry, education, health and transport infrastructure. The agriculture/forestry sector focuses on food security and increased supply of agriculture products to create income and wealth. Approaches include sustainable development of sloping land, environmental management, stabilization of shifting cultivation, irrigation and human resource development. This is to be accomplished while ensuring that lowland agricultural and forestry potential for market-oriented production is achieved in an equitable manner.

The education sector strives to achieve the goals set out in the EFA NPA by consolidating three major tasks: *equitable access, improving quality and relevance, and strengthening education management.*

Within the NGPES, the "Poverty-focused Education Development Action Plan" focuses on the 47 districts identified as the poorest districts in the country.

3.2 National Socio Economic Development Plan 2006 - 2010

The Sixth NSEDP 2006-2010 plays a crucial role in achieving the overall targets outlined in the Ten-Year Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2001-2010 approved by the 7th Party Congress (2001) and the directions set by the 8th Party Congress (2006). The overall directions for the Sixth NSEDP include transforming the multi-sectoral economy from uneven performance to fast and stable development within the market mechanism guided by the State. The indicators and targets for the Plan coincide with most of those for the MDGs and the Brussels Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries (2001-2010).

One of the main goals of the education policy formulated in the Sixth NSEDP is the development of quality human resources to meet the needs of the socio-economic development of the nation and thus contribute to poverty reduction. *In order to improve the education of the whole population, it is necessary to concentrate on equitable access, quality, relevance and management of the education system.* Disparities in income, physical access, residence (urban/rural with road access/rural without road access), gender and language all affect educational attainment. Increasing primary school attendance and literacy rates, particularly for people in under-served areas, such as ethnic peoples, girls, and children with special needs, are important foundations.

The education system will need to be strengthened becoming the cornerstone of a human resources development strategy focused at increasing labor productivity. The GOL will implement the principle of compulsory primary education and the development of education at all levels, paying particular attention to the ethnic group areas and the disadvantaged groups. The EFA NPA is the main vehicle for increasing primary and lower secondary school participation and completion and reducing adult illiteracy.

3.3 Education Strategic Vision by 2010 and 2020

The "Education Strategic Vision by 2010 and 2020", issued by the MOE in 2000, links education to the broader socio-economic development, as well as to the immediate local situation. It recognizes the need for lifelong educational opportunities to ensure that all persons can continue to upgrade their level of education as circumstances change during their lifetimes. The Vision document aims to incorporate international trends and standards into the Lao education system and to develop all levels of education systematically and continuously, including strengthening the role of the private sector in the provision of education.

In general, the Strategic Visions document emphasizes education as a core component in overall human resources development for the development of the Lao PDR. The Education Strategic Vision summarizes policy objectives in eleven basic points that serve to guide the development of the education sector:[18] Many of these points are absorbed within the EFA NPA, for instance the increased focus on pre-school level, expansion of basic education, increasing participation of girls and peoples living in remote areas, increasing the quality of education experiences and enhanced management of education.

[18] MOE. "The Education Strategic Vision up to the Year 2020". Vientiane: MOE, October, 2000. Part II "Education Strategic Vision in 20 years (2001-2020) and in 10 years (2001-2010)", Section V "Overall Policy", pp. 17-18.

3.4 Education for All National Plan of Action 2003 - 2015

EFA Forum – The 'Education for All National Plan of Action 2003 -2015' (EFA NPA), was approved by the Government Cabinet Meeting on the 30th December 2004. On March 24, 2005 by Prime-minister's Decree (No. 69/PM) this decision was enforced, stating that MOE would take the lead and coordinate with the concerned Ministries to concretize and implement the EFA NPA. At the same time the Prime-Minister issued a decree (No. 68/PM) for the creation of a National EFA Commission chaired by the Deputy Prime-Minister.

As there is no specific budget for implementation of the EFA NPA, the EFA NPA is an integral part of the overall education sector development program and draws its funds from the regular recurrent and development budgets. At present there is no separate arrangement for monitoring and evaluating the EFA program. The National EFA Commission Secretariat formally housed in the Department of General Education (DGE) and headed by the Director General is currently located in the Department of Planning and Cooperation headed by a Deputy Director General and supervised by the Vice Minister of Education.

The Plan – The EFA NPA contains the Government's policy and strategic framework for action for basic education which covers development targets and programs for six basic education sub-sectors, including Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Primary Education, Lower Secondary Education, Youth and Adult Literacy, Skills Development for Disadvantaged Groups, as well as cross-cutting themes such as gender, inclusive education and special programs for children with special needs and socio-economically difficulties, school health and HIV/AIDS prevention. The Plan integrates the goals and targets of the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES), the Millennium Development Goals and all donor projects.

The Sixth Five Year Educational Development Plan, like its predecessor identifies three "pillars" of educational development in Lao PDR: (i) Improving equity and access, (ii) Improving quality and relevance, and (iii) Improving administration and management. These pillars have formed the basis for the development of the EFA NPA resulting in a total of 7 Programs of Action, each containing specific objectives, targets and suggested activities. Table 18 indicates how the EFA Programs of Action correspond to the three 'pillars' of educational development.

Table 18: Three Pillars and EFA Programs of Action

Three Pillars	EFA NPA Programs
1. Improving equity and access	1. Access and Participation in ECCD
	2. Access and Participation in Formal Primary Education
	3. Access and Participation in Lower Secondary Education
	4. Youth and Adult Literacy
	5. Skills Development Program for Disadvantaged Groups
2. Improving quality and relevance	6. Improve the Quality and Relevance of Formal Primary and Lower Secondary Education
3. Improving management and administration	7. Education Management and Administration

The EFA NPA recognizes "gender equality" (EFA Goal 5) and the 'development of relevant de-concentrated organizational structures and capacity for educational management' and 'poverty and sustainable development' as being strategic and crosscutting issues for realizing EFA by 2015. In order to prevent uncontrolled, demand-driven sector development from jeopardizing the realization of EFA, MOE is striving for a balanced (sub-) sector development.

3.5 Five Year Educational Development Plan 2006 - 2010

The Fifth Five Year Educational Development Plan (2001-2005) was effectively the first phase of the 20-Year Strategic Vision. In July 2006 at the National Education Conference, MOE approved its Sixth Five Year Plan for Educational Development (2006-2011). The Prime Minister also approved the Teacher Education Strategy 2006-2015 and Action Plan 2006-2010 (TESAP) in 2006, as well as the Strategy for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training 2006-2020 (TVET) in May 2007.

The Five Year Educational Development Plan, like its predecessor, provides detailed annual targets for the five-year period and continues to identify the previous three "pillars" of educational development in Lao PDR. In addition, GOL expresses commitment to the "design of a comprehensive, balanced and harmonious sector-wide approach".

The Five Year Educational Development Plan includes the GOL commitment for the implementation of the NGPES and the EFA NPA. Close coordination between the NGPES and the Lao EFA NPA is essential because those areas where EFA problems are most severe are

those in which poverty is greatest. In other words, achieving EFA nationally means that the greatest efforts will need to be made in the poorest districts.

3.6 National Education System Reform Strategy 2006 -2015

In March 2006 the Eighth Lao People's Revolutionary Party Congress reemphasized its long-term national development goal of enabling the Lao PDR to graduate from the ranks of the LDCs by 2020 and to build the basic human and physical infrastructure for the shift to industrialization and modernity.

In order to achieve this goal, the Congress confirmed in that during the period 2006 to 2010 education is to be considered the main focus for human resource development. Reform of the national education system is urgently required for the improvement of educational quality and standards. The aims of a reformed national system of education will be to educate the Lao people to be good citizens, to be knowledgeable, to be creative and enthusiastic and to contribute to the development of both the country and themselves. Through education people will gain employment, will learn to protect their own health and will behave with the integrity necessary to meet the demands of the socio-economic development of the country and its growing movement towards globalization.

With reference to the resolution of the Eighth Lao People's Revolution Party Congress, the guidance of the Prime Minister and the Government Cabinet Meeting , the national education system ·reform consists of six directives:

I. The national education system reform strategy aims to develop human resources that are applicable to the strategic development of the country's economic components as well as to the need to link the country with international goals.

II. Education reform should emphasize the national education structure. If change is to become a reality, then the attitudes and perceptions in society about the educational structural reforms need to be widely understood.

III. The national education system reform strategy should be implemented with the participation of society to ensure that education will continue to grow and develop.

IV. The national education system reform strategy should expand the intellectual life, preserve the traditions and culture of the nation and inspire a spirit of solidarity amongst the population throughout the country.

V. The national education system reform strategy should expand access to education, promote the capabilities of people, improve their living conditions and compete and link with regional and international situations.

VI. The national education system reform strategy should enhance the status of teachers and uphold the importance of their roles and positions.

Overall Goals – Educational development is placed as the central task for human resources development aiming for a better quality of education in order to contribute to the transfer to industrialization and modernity by gradually building the basic fundamentals necessary to sustain socio-economic development.

Educational development should encourage behavior and attitudes within the nation that take as there foundation the scientific approach, friendliness towards others and practices of modernity in order to gradually move towards regional and international educational standards, as well as to be relevant to the actual situation of the country. Lao people should obtain full educational development including "being good citizens, being educated, knowledgeable, employed, capable, innovative, creative, and enthusiastic about the development of the country; and in terms of their personal development, having good health, living with integrity and maintaining the revolutionary ideals of living a proper and upright life" in order to respond to the requirements for the development of the country in the new millennium.

3.7 Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) 2009-2015

To implement the strategies outlined in the documents outlined above and achieve MDG and EFA targets a cohesive structure, around which development partners can harmonise and align their collective support, is being developed.

This sector wide framework for planning and management purposes – the Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) – will allow:

(i) comprehensive projection of education sector resource requirements;
(ii) focused and better coordinated external assistance; and
(iii) more balanced sector development.

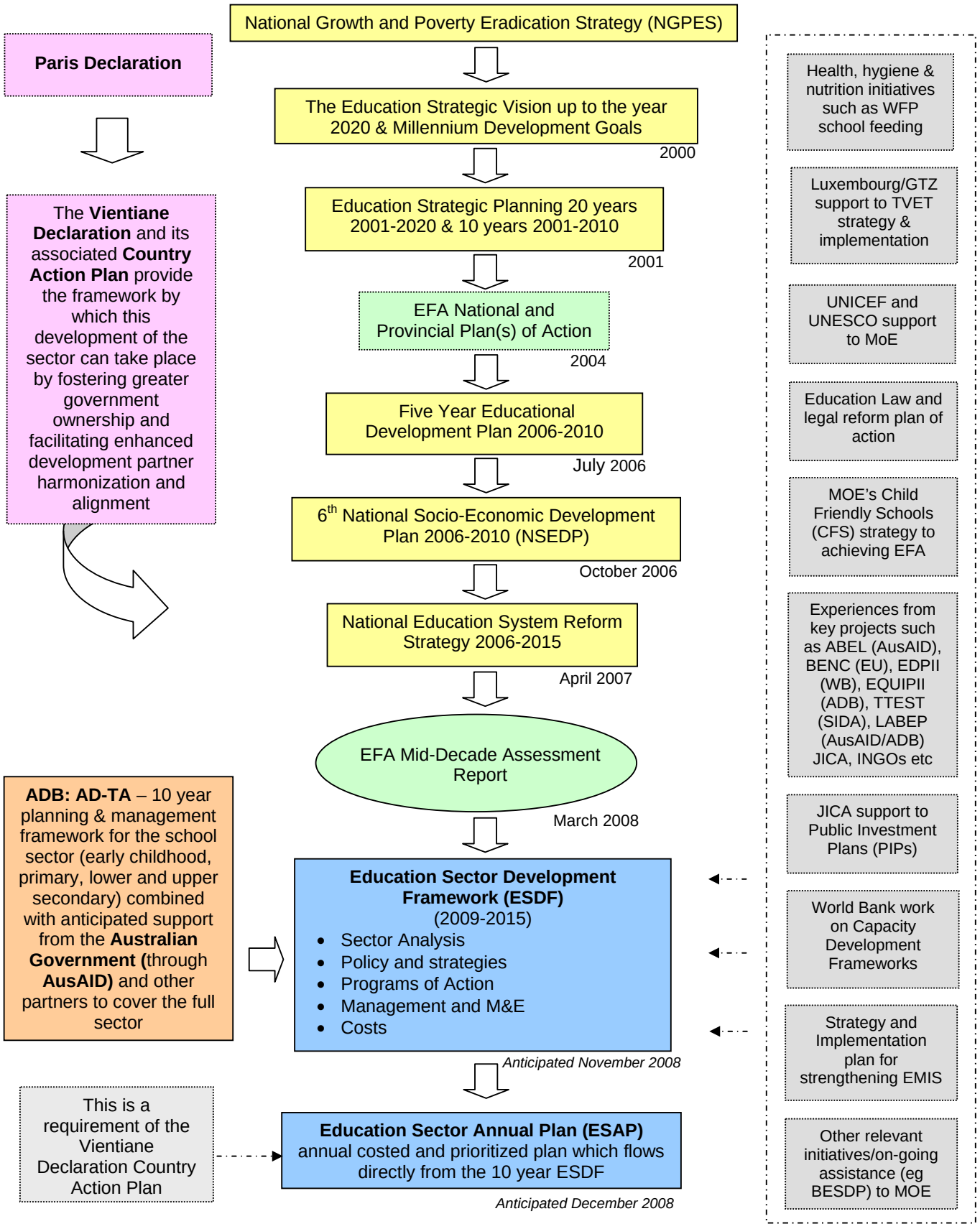
MOE is assessing the projected expansion of enrollments at the primary, lower, upper secondary and NFE, TVET and higher education levels and the impact this expansion will have on the

demand for physical facilities (teachers, textbooks, learning materials), institutional and management capacity at all levels of education management and delivery, and will establish priorities to match resource availability.

The ESDF is the first step towards a sector-wide approach and is critical to developing robust policies and strategies to achieve EFA goals and ensure future balanced development within the education sector. It will also enable MOE and development partners to fulfill one of the key commitments under the Country Action Plan of the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness by facilitating the production of an annual costed and prioritized sector plan.

A diagram illustrating how all the strategies outlined above, together with experience from development partner interventions, feed into the ESDF is shown in Figure 12 on the next page.

Figure 12: Overview of Education Sector Development



Chapter

3

Progress towards EFA

Section 1: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

EFA NPA Program 1 - EFA GOAL 1
Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children.

In April, at the 2000 World Education Forum, the international community adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, reaffirming the Jomtien Declaration of 1990 including ECCD as the first of six EFA Goals. The purpose of the program is to increase access to ECCD programs by specifically targeting girls, ethnic groups and disadvantaged children.

1.1 Core Indicators

Table 19: NPA Program 1 - ECCD - Core Indicators, 2000/01 - 2005/06

Indicator	2000/1			2005/6		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1. Gross enrollment ratio (GER) in ECCD programs	6.9%	7.4%	**7.1%**	10.4%	10.9%	**10.6%**
2. Percent of new entrants to primary grade 1 who have attended some form of organized ECCD program	NA	NA	**8.8%**	9.4%	10.4%	**9.9%**
3. Private center enrollment as percentage of total enrollment in ECCD program	NA	NA	**21.1%**	29.5%	27.6%	**28.5%**
4. Percentage of under fives suffering from stunting (height for age below 2 standard deviations)	NA	NA	NA	43.2%	40.3%	**41.8%**
5. Percentage of household consuming iodized salt (15 + parts per million, PPM)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	**87.1%**
6. Percentage of trained teachers in ECCD program	NA	NA	**83.6%**	NA	NA	**83.7%**
7. Public expenditure on ECCD programs as percentage of total public expenditure on education (recurrent)	NA	NA	**3.1%**	NA	NA	**3.1%**

Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 19 above shows the values of these indicators at 2000/01 and 2005/06. There are data gaps which cannot now be filled. Following the tabular presentation of 7 indicators there is an extensive treatment of these and other indicators of the status of ECCD in Section 1.3 below.

1.2 Policy Development

National Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy – MOE recognizes the value and importance of access to high quality ECCD programs which are driven by a comprehensive holistic national policy. With support from development partners, MOE is now developing such a policy which is expected to be finalized in early 2008.

In the Education Strategic Vision document, the MOE states its goal of promoting pre-primary education gradually, focusing on developing pre-school education by improving and increasing more crèches and kindergartens. The EFA NPA adopts pre-primary classes, targeted at "ethnic groups, girls and children from poorest families"[19] as a means for expanding pre-primary education.

MOE aims to increase the state budget to create model crèches and kindergartens in provincial and district capital towns, while at the same time stimulating the private sector to open crèches and kindergartens. MOE will continue to promote and establish public and private crèches, kindergartens and, under a Ministerial Decree[20], continue to "Establish pre-primary classes in primary schools in rural and remote areas, which have no kindergartens, but do have classrooms and teachers available".

1.3 Analysis of Progress

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in ECCD – Table 20 below shows that while the overall participation in ECCD is still low there has been a steady increase over the 5 year period, increasing from 7.1 percent in 2000/01 to 10.6 percent in 2005/2006[21], showing slightly higher enrollment ratios for girls than for boys (10.4 percent for boys, 10.9 percent for girls).[22]

[19] EFA NPA page 23, bullet 3.

[20] Minister's Decree Ref. 831/MOE.GE/05 dated 23 December 2005

[21] MOE up to 2005 collected data only on the children aged 3 to 5 enrolled in ECCD programs (kindergartens). Therefore the data reported upon excludes data of children enrolled in crèches and pre-primary classes.

[22] As children younger than three years are usually not allowed to attend kindergarten, and children older than five are usually enrolled in primary education, the GER in ECCD is a close approximation as NER in ECCD.

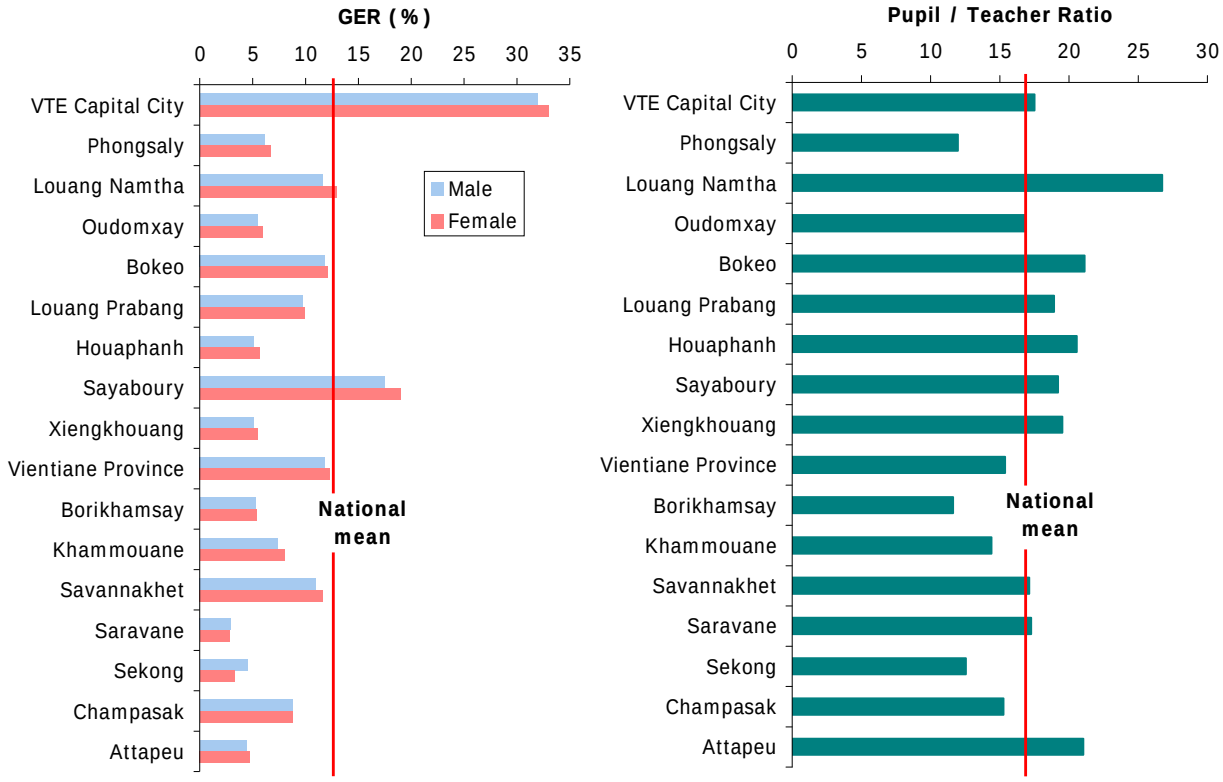
Table 20: GER and GPI for ECCD, 2000/01 to 2005/06

Year	GER Male	GER Female	GER Total	GPI for GER
2000/01	6.9	7.4	7.1	1.09
2001/02	6.7	7.2	7.0	1.07
2002/03	7.1	7.5	7.3	1.05
2003/04	7.9	8.4	8.1	1.06
2004/05	8.0	8.4	8.2	1.05
2005/06	10.4	10.9	10.6	1.04

Source: MOE/ESITC

The Gender Parity Index has gradually moved towards parity. With a GER of 10.6 percent for 2005/2006, the EFA NPA target of 10.9 percent for 3 - 5 year old children for 2005/2006 has almost been attained. However achievement of the GER targets (for 3 - 5 year old children) of 17 percent in 2010/2011 and 30 percent in 2015/2016 will require substantial efforts, including increased resources.

Figure 13: GER and Pupil-Teacher Ratio for ECCD by Province, 2005/06



Progress has not been uniform across the country and significant variations in participation are evident by province, as shown in Figure 13 above.

More than a quarter of all children enrolled in ECCD programs are in Vientiane Capital City when only 8 percent of the nominal ECCD population age group lives there. Vientiane Capital City has a

GER of over 30 percent, while Saravane has a GER of less than 3 percent. The reasons for these disparities are due mainly to shortages of pre-school facilities and lack of demand for such care and schooling.

The role of Private ECCD – The Government has been successful in encouraging the private sector to expand its provision. From a low of only 6.4% in 1991, by 2005/06 almost 29 percent children were enrolled in privately provided pre-schools by 2005 – see Table 21 below.

Table 21: GER in ECCD by Gender in Private Centers

Year	% Enrolled in Private Centers			GPI
	Male	Female	Total	
1991	7.2%	5.7%	6.4%	0.78
2000	23%	20%	21%	0.87
2001	22%	20%	21%	0.93
2002	23%	22%	22%	0.92
2003	26%	24%	25%	0.94
2004	29%	26%	28%	0.90
2005	30%	28%	29%	0.93

Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 22: Basic ECCD Statistics, Total & Private, 2005/06

INDICATOR	Total	Private	
		No.	%
Number of schools	1,087	174	16.0
Number of classes	2,094	566	27.0
Number of teachers	2,882	777	27.0
Crèche enrollment	2,960	1,405	47.5
Kindergarten enrollment	46,237	13,189	28.5
Total Crèche & kindergarten	49,197	14,594	29.7

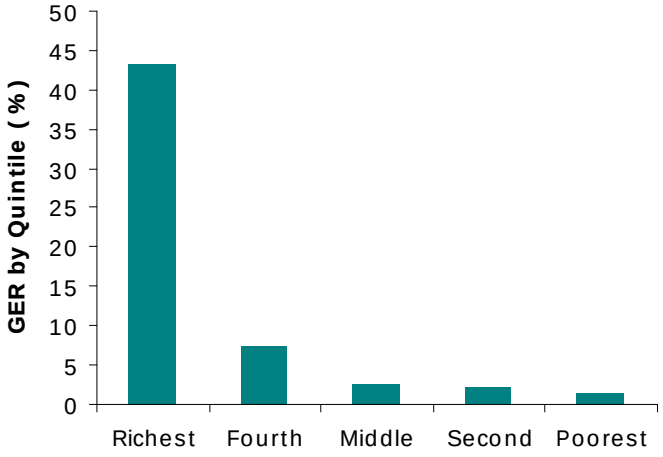
Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 22 shows that more than a quarter of the classes and teachers are in the private sector; nearly half of crèche enrollment and more than a quarter of kindergarten enrollment are in the private sector. Over the period from 2000/2001 to 2005/2006, total ECCD enrollment grew by an average annual rate of 6.0 percent, while private sector ECCD enrollment grew by an average annual rate of 12.7 percent.

However, private provision is very unevenly spread: five Provinces have no private pre-school enrolments[23], while 74% of pre-school enrolments in Vientiane and 37% of enrolments in Oudomxay are in the private sector. Private provision follows demand. Rural communities with no access to a road are not likely to attract private providers.

[23] Phongsaly, Houaphanh, Saravane, Sekong and Saysomboune.

Figure 14: GER by quintile for ECCD programs



Social Distribution of ECCD – The fact that such a large proportion of the ECCD enrollment is privately financed reflects a strong private demand, expressed primarily in the fourth and fifth (High-Middle, High) quintiles – as shown in Figure 14. Due to the fact that expansion of ECCD is dependent on private demand to such a large extent, access to ECCD programs to children from low income families is very limited. The estimated GER for children of the High quintile (43 percent) is more than ten times as high as for children from the lower quintiles. By 2005/2006 poor provinces such as Phongsaly, Houaphanh, Saravanne, and Sekong still did not have any private ECCD programs.

The privately-funded expansion in the sub-sector has the advantage of not straining the public education sector budget.

Figure 15: New entrants to Primary with participation in ECCD programs

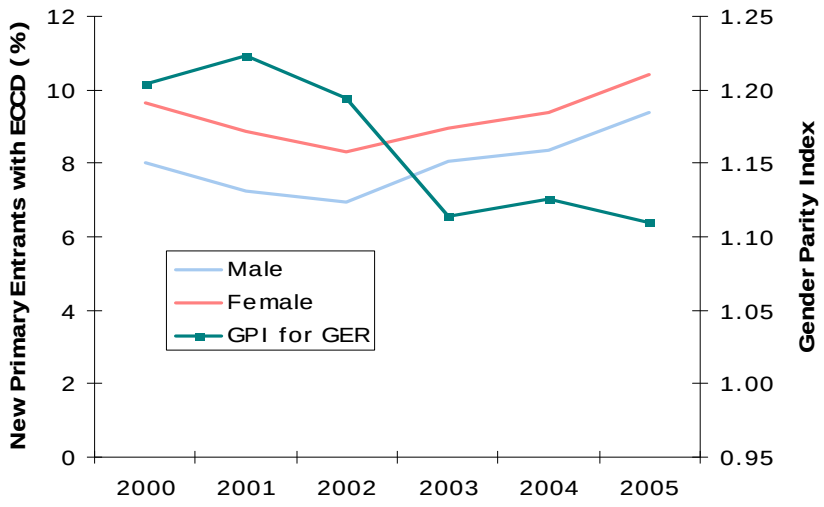


Figure 15 and Table 23 show a rise in the proportion of new primary school entrants with some ECCD experience estimated on the basis of the GERs. The increase of 8.8% in 2000/2001 to 9.9% 2005/2006 may seem relatively minor, but the implications of even this limited increase might be

considerable. The 'added value' of the ECCD experience to primary pupils' achievements, possibly contributing to lower repetition and drop-out rates as well as improved levels of basic skills may generate savings since the average time taken by a primary school pupils to complete the cycle could be reduced. This is one reason why ECCD is so important to the achievement of EFA goals.

Table 23: New Primary School Entrants with ECCD, 2000/01 to 2005/06

Year	Male	Female	Total	GPI for New Entrants
2000/01	8.0	9.6	8.8	1.20
2001/02	7.3	8.9	8.0	1.22
2002/03	7.0	8.3	7.6	1.19
2003/04	8.0	9.0	8.5	1.11
2004/05	8.3	9.4	8.8	1.13
2005/06	9.4	10.4	9.9	1.11

Source: MOE/ESITC
Note: These figures are estimated on the basis of the GERs

ECCD Teachers and Student/Teacher Ratio – The enrollment in ECCD kindergarten programs increased by 34 percent over the period 2000/2001 to 2005/2006, from 34,518 to 46,237 children as Table 24 below shows:

Table 24: Growth in Enrollment in ECCD, 2000-2005

Year	Number enrolled		
	Males	Females	Total
2000	16,748	17,770	34,518
2001	16,613	17,266	33,879
2002	17,985	18,350	36,335
2003	19,148	19,622	38,770
2004	21,045	21,377	42,422
2005	22,766	23,471	46,237

Source: MOE/ESITC

While enrolments have gone up 34 percent in 5 years the number of teachers has only increased by 29 percent. This has resulted in a gradual rise in the pupil/teacher ratio (PTR), resulting in a PTR of 17.1 nation wide in 2005/2006 compared to a PTR of 16.4 five years before.

Table 25 below shows that there remains a substantial variation in the pupil/teacher ratio across provinces with Louang Namtha having the highest PTR of 26.7 and Phongsaly having the lowest PTR of only 12.0 for the year 2005/2006 (see Figure 13 above as well).

Table 25: Enrollment, Population, GER, and PTR for ECCD, 2005/06

PROVINCE	Enrollment in ECCD (Kindergarten only)			Official age-group population(1000)			GER (%)			No. of Teachers	PTR
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
Vientiane Capital	5,825	5,836	11,661	18.3	17.7	36.0	31.9	33.0	32.4	744	17.5
Phongsaly	436	462	898	7.1	6.9	14.0	6.1	6.7	6.4	75	12.0
Luang Namtha	680	754	1,434	5.9	5.8	11.7	11.6	12.9	12.3	54	26.7
Oudomxay	662	721	1,383	12.1	12.2	24.4	5.5	5.9	5.7	85	16.8
Bokeo	712	720	1,432	6.0	6.0	12.0	11.8	12.1	12.0	69	21.1
Louang Prabang	1,590	1,631	3,221	16.4	16.5	32.9	9.7	9.9	9.8	173	18.9
Houaphanh	657	719	1,376	12.9	12.8	25.7	5.1	5.6	5.4	70	20.6
Sayaboury	1,930	2,048	3,978	11.0	10.8	21.8	17.5	19.0	18.2	211	19.2
Xiengkhouang	520	548	1,068	10.2	10.0	20.2	5.1	5.5	5.3	56	19.5
Vientiane Prov.	1,802	1,838	3,640	15.2	14.9	30.2	11.8	12.3	12.1	251	15.4
Borikhamsay	493	492	985	9.4	9.2	18.6	5.2	5.4	5.3	91	11.6
Khammouane	1,032	1,130	2,162	14.0	14.2	28.1	7.4	8.0	7.7	166	14.4
Savannakhet	3,540	3,768	7,308	32.2	32.3	64.5	11.0	11.7	11.3	450	17.1
Saravane	429	410	839	14.5	14.6	29.1	3.0	2.8	2.9	49	17.3
Sekong	191	137	328	4.3	4.2	8.5	4.5	3.3	3.9	31	12.5
Champasak	2,037	2,013	4,050	23.3	22.9	46.2	8.7	8.8	8.8	284	15.3
Attapeu	230	244	474	5.2	5.1	10.4	4.4	4.7	4.6	23	21.0
Total	22,766	23,471	46,237	218.1	216.1	434.2	10.4	10.9	10.6	2,882	17.1

Source: MOE/ESITC

Note for table 26: The annual school census questionnaire distinguished between children in crèche and those in kindergarten, but it does not distinguish between crèche and kindergarten teachers. Thus the enrollment figures here cover only kindergarten. In order to obtain an internally consistent estimate of the pupil/teacher ratio, however, the total ECCD enrollment (crèche plus kindergarten) is divided by the total number of ECCD teachers (crèche plus kindergarten).

Despite the pre-service training program, the proportion of trained teachers in kindergartens and crèches has remained around 83 percent. In 2000/01 there were 2,237 teachers at this level while in 2005/06 there were 2,882 teachers – see Table 26 below.

Table 26: ECCD Teachers and Percent Trained Pre-service, 1991/92 to 2005/06

Year	Enrollment (KG) (1000)			Teachers (KG + Crèche)		Trained Teachers (KG + Crèche) (%)			PTR
	Male	Female	Total	Number	% Female	Male	Female	Total	
1991/92	11.2	12.8	23.9	1,748	100.0	NA	82.0	82.0	14.8
2000/01	16.7	17.8	34.5	2,237	99.7	50	83.7	83.6	16.4
2001/02	16.6	17.3	33.9	2,264	99.6	50	83.2	83.0	16.1
2002/03	18.0	18.4	36.3	2,377	99.7	100	82.1	82.2	16.4
2003/04	19.1	19.6	38.8	2,507	99.5	85	83.8	83.8	16.6
2004/05	21.0	21.4	42.4	2,702	99.5	79	83.8	83.8	16.8
2005/06	22.8	23.5	46.2	2,882	99.4	53	83.9	83.7	17.1

Source: MOE/ESITC
Cautionary Note: in interpreting the PTR column see the Note attached to Table 25 above.

Less than one percent of ECCD teachers are men, many of them untrained. As Table 27 shows, the proportion of pre-service trained teachers varies from a low of 62 percent in Vientiane Capital City to a high of 100 percent in Louang Namtha, Saravane, and Attapeu provinces.

Table 27: ECCD Teachers and Trained Pre-service, by Province (2005/06)

PROVINCE	Total ECCD Teachers			Trained ECCD Teachers			% Trained Pre-Service		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Vientiane Capital	10	734	744	2	462	464	20	63	62
Phongsaly	0	75	75	0	74	74	-	99	99
Louang Namtha	0	54	54	0	54	54	-	100	100
Oudomxay	1	84	85	1	68	69	100	81	81
Bokeo	0	69	69	0	60	60	-	87	87
Louang Prabang	1	172	173	1	148	149	100	86	86
Houaphanh	0	70	70	0	69	69	-	99	99
Sayaboury	2	209	211	2	200	202	100	96	96
Xiengkhouang	0	56	56	0	49	49	-	88	88
Vientiane Province	3	248	251	3	222	225	100	90	90
Borikhamsay	0	91	91	0	77	77	-	85	85
Khammouane	0	166	166	0	137	137	-	83	83
Savannakhet	0	450	450	0	423	423	-	94	94
Saravane	0	49	49	0	49	49	-	100	100
Sekong	0	31	31	0	29	29	-	94	94
Champasak	0	284	284	0	260	260	-	92	92
Attapeu	0	23	23	0	23	23	-	100	100
Total	17	2,865	2,882	9	2,404	2,413	53	84	84

Source: MOE/ESITC

Public Expenditure on ECCD Programs – In 2005/2006 public expenditure on ECCD as percentage of total spending in education amounted to 3.1 percent, which is only slightly above recent previous years and the same as in 2000/01. See Chapter 2, Table 14 for full public expenditure amounts.

Health Links with ECCD – In the implementation of the various ECCD programs, MOE has been cooperating with the Mother and Child Health Centers (under the Ministry of Health, MOH) to promote breast-feeding and improve nutrition and primary health care for young children in rural and remote areas. In urban areas medical doctors are invited to provide yearly health checks to children in crèches and kindergartens and to make sure that children receive vitamin A supplements once a year. This link between health care practices and ECCD is not yet in operation in the rural areas despite data that indicates that children in rural and remote areas are more likely to be under-nourished. Stuntism is particularly rife in the poorest quintile – see Table 28 below:

Table 28: Poverty and Education-Related Health Indicators, by Quintile, 2006

Quintile	Percent of Children		Percent of Households	
	Moderately Stunted	Severely Stunted	Iodine < 15 ppm	Sanitary Disposal
Richest	19.1	5.2	6.4	98.3
Fourth	32.7	8.2	14.5	63.0
Middle	38.4	13.6	21.2	36.4
Second	45.0	19.0	23.1	19.7
Poorest	52.7	25.3	15.3	7.6
Total	41.2	16.7	15.8	45.0

Source: MICS III.

The Poverty, health and education nexus – Children's nutrition has a direct bearing on educational participation and learning. Research shows that low birth weight, reduced breastfeeding, stunting, and iron and iodine deficiency are associated with long term deficits in children's cognitive and motor development, and school readiness.

Data from MICS III show that in 2006 over 40 percent of all children aged 0 - 59 months were found to be stunted[24] and nearly 17 percent were severely stunted[25]. Data showed that gender disparities were minor as did it show no noticeable improvement between 2000 (MICS II) and 2006 (MICS III).[26] Figure 16 below shows stuntism correlates with household income in the predicted direction. Proper arrangements for sanitation also correlate with household income in the expected direction - the more money available for consumption, the higher the percentage of households that have proper sanitation arrangements

Iodine Deficiency – Iodine deficiency is the single most common cause of preventable mental retardation and brain damage in the world. Salt iodization is the most cost-effective way of delivering iodine supplement and of substantially improving cognition for children with insufficient iodine in their diet. Findings from MICS III indicate that in 2006 nearly all households (99.4 percent) used iodized salt.[27] However tests with household salt samples show that 15.8 percent households used salt with insufficient iodine (<15 ppm) to prevent children from growing up with iodine deficiency disorders (IDD). The data suggest that iodine deficiency is not related to region, rural or urban location, of income

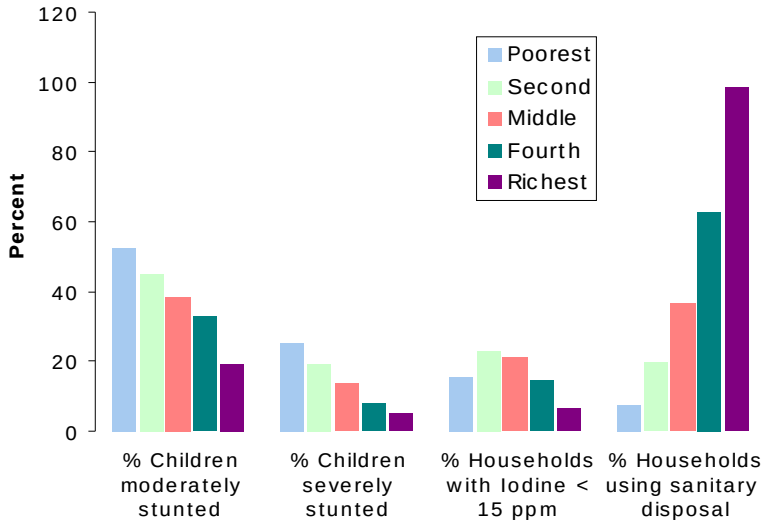
[24] Height for age is two standard deviations below the median of the reference population are classified as moderately stunted.

[25] Height for age is three standard deviations below the median are classified as severely stunted.

[26] The data actually suggest a slight worsening, but this could have been a result of sampling error.

[27] Current standards, stemming from the 1995 Decree on Universal Salt Iodization, require the concentration of iodine in salt to be >30 ppm (parts per million) at the producer level, and >15 ppm at the consumer level.

Figure 16: Poverty and Education-Related Health Indicators, by Quintile, 2006



Other important links between child health factors and ECCD are shown in **Annex 2**.

School Readiness Competencies (SRCs) – The Pre-school Division of the Department of Pre-school and Primary Education (formally called DGE) has developed a set of School Readiness Competencies (SRCs) to be used for monitoring and assessing the development of children in kindergarten and pre-primary classes and their readiness for going to primary education. SRCs will be piloted for their usability in the academic year 2007/2008 and are expected to be implemented nationwide in 2008/2009.

1.4 Significant Successes

Some major successes have been achieved in the ECCD sub-sector:

- MOE has been piloting a program since 2002 which adds a pre-primary class to existing primary schools in rural and remote areas. The pilot programs were found to be successful and a phased expansion nation-wide is intended. Pre-primary classes appear to be an affordable option for the expansion of ECCD programs since resources for ECCD will most likely be scarce and the private sector will not be able to create sufficient public and community ECCD facilities in rural and remote areas. The MOE will ensure that the community-managed and operated ECCD programs do not result in inequalities in access to a quality pre-primary education.

- The rapid growth in the number of privately owned and governed ECCD programs provides evidence that MOE policy to stimulate the private sector involvement has been successful in increasing access to ECCD programs in urban areas.

- The ECCD sub-sector has witnessed increasing coordination and cooperation between MOE and development partners through the Pre-Primary Division.

1.5 Remaining Challenges

Though there have been significant achievements there remain some major challenges:

- The development of a national holistic ECCD policy

- Only limited resource allocations have been possible to date, including quotas of teachers and the omission of pre-school accommodation in newly constructed schools. There remains an expectation that community-managed early learning centers will be developed to limit the costs to public education.

- As a result of the lack of financial resources for ECCD programs, as well as access to health and sanitation facilities and clean water for the vast majority, these facilities remain limited to urban and wealthy communities. The policy of establishing public and community ECCD programs in rural, remote, and ethnic communities has some way to go to correct the disparities in enrollment ratios between urban and rural areas.

- Despite advances during the past half decade, it is clear that little attention is given to the provision of ECCD educational services. The government is concerned that many children who are deprived of early childhood education are also affected by malnutrition, including micro-nutrient deficiencies. The combination greatly affects their school readiness and therefore hinders their right to obtain a quality education.

Section 2: Access and Participation in Formal Primary Education

EFA NPA Program 2 – EFA Goal 2
Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic groups have access to a complete, free and compulsory education of good quality

The GOL considers primary education to be the basic level of general education. It serves to provide children with the necessary basic knowledge of, amongst others - natural and social sciences, Lao Language skills, numeracy skills, health and environmental conservation. As stated in the EFA NPA, the GOL aims primarily to universalize primary education by 2015.

2.1 Core Indicators

Table 29: NPA Program 2 - Primary Education - Core Indicators, 2000/01 - 2005/06

Indicator	2000/1			2005/6		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1. Gross Intake Rate (GIR) in primary education (%)	142.2	121.8	**132.1**	127.0	117.3	**122.2**
2. Net Intake Rate (NIR) in primary education (%)	61.0	57.0	**59.0**	67.1	65.5	**66.4**
3. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in primary education	128.9	109.1	**119.1**	129.8	113.7	**121.9**
4. Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in primary education (%)	83.0	76.0	**80.0**	86.5	81.2	**83.9**
5. Survival rate to Grade 5 (%)	59.8	59.8	**59.9**	60.7	59.6	**60.2**
6. Transition rate to lower secondary education	NA	NA	NA	77	75	**76**
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
7. Percentage of trained teachers at primary education (%)	69.6	86.4	**76.9**	84.8	93.0	**88.7**
	2000/1			2005/6		
8. Pupil-teacher ratio at primary education	**30.1**			**32.1**		
9. Public expenditure on primary education as % of total public expenditure on education	**44.0**			**42.9**		
10. Repetition rates (RR) by grade in primary education (%)	2000/1			2005/6		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Grade 1	35.0	33.5	**NA**	34.0	32.3	**33.2**
Grade 2	21.5	17.9	**NA**	19.5	16.6	**18.2**
Grade 3	13.6	9.8	**NA**	13.7	10.5	**12.2**
Grade 4	9.2	5.5	**NA**	9.1	6.3	**7.8**
Grade 5	6.7	3.7	**NA**	5.5	3.3	**4.5**

Source: MOE/ESITC

2.2 Policy Development

Legislation on Primary Education – The Decree on Compulsory Education in 1996 (No.138/-PMO/96) makes primary education, lasting five years, *free and compulsory* for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. However, due to limited resources allocated to schools, contributions from communities and parents are necessary to support school operation, management and development.

As a result, the different levels of these contributions create variations in schooling circumstances (school facilities, availability of learning and teaching materials, etc.) between communities, particularly those in urban and rural areas. Even though the GOL has demonstrated a strong commitment to universal primary education as stated in the EFA NPA (Programme 2), the fact remains that an estimated 10 percent of children never attend school.

2.3 Analysis of Progress

Gross Intake Rate (GIR) and Net Intake Rate (NIR) – Table 30 shows that both GIR and NIR displayed a rising trend at the beginning of the decade, followed by a decline in 2003/2004. This pattern, however, needs to be seen in relation to changes in total enrollment over the period, shown in Table 31. The effect of the decline in new entry in 2003/2004 is seen in the enrollment decline in 2005/2006.

Table 30: Gross and Net Intake Rate in Primary School, 1991/92 to 2005/06

Year	Gross Intake Rate				Net Intake Rate			
	Male	Female	Total	GPI	Male	Female	Total	GPI
1991/92	121	100	111	0.83	30	28	29	0.95
2000/01	127	109	118	0.86	61	57	59	0.95
2001/02	130	111	121	0.86	61	58	59	0.95
2002/03	134	118	126	0.88	63	60	62	0.96
2003/04	121	111	116	0.92	60	59	60	0.99
2004/05	125	113	119	0.91	63	61	62	0.96
2005/06	130	119	125	0.91	67	66	66	0.98

Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 31: Primary Enrollments 2000/01 -2005/6 (in thousands)

Year	Male	Female	Total	GPI
2000/01	453.1	376.7	829.9	0.83
2001/02	465	387.9	852.9	0.83
2002/03	475.7	399.6	875.3	0.84
2003/04	478.4	406.2	884.6	0.85
2004/05	481.2	409.6	890.8	0.85
2005/06	480.7	411.2	891.9	0.86

Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 32: Enrollment by Grade, 2004/05

Grade	Male	Female	Total	GR
1	149,887	130,096	279,983	0.87
2	101,065	86,189	187,254	0.85
3	86,930	73,273	160,203	0.84
4	74,895	62,170	137,065	0.83
5	63,985	53,803	117,788	0.84
Total	476,762	405,531	882,293	0.85

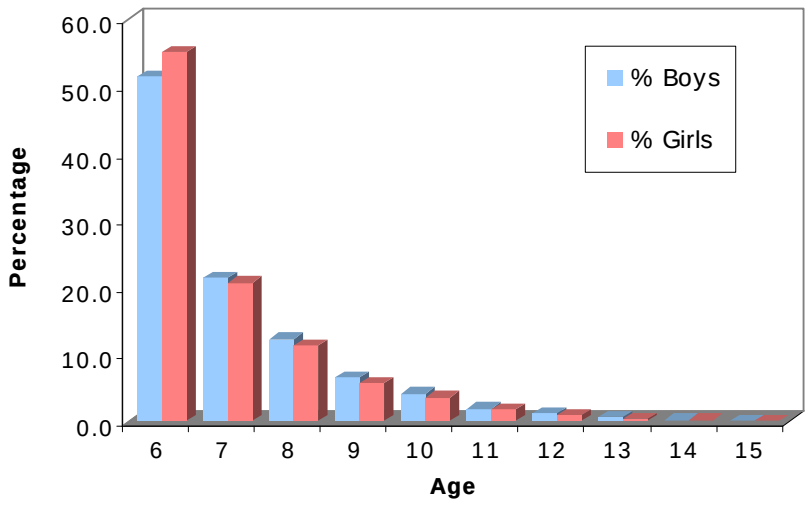
Source: MOE/ESITC

The fact that the GIR is over 100 while NIR is substantially lower than 100 is a reflection of the fact that *a substantial number of new entrants to primary schooling are outside the official starting age, 46.8 percent nationally* – see Figure 17 below.

There are provincial variations in GIR: In the five most extreme provinces (Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Houaphanh, Sekong, and Attapeu), more than two thirds of all new entrants are outside the official age of entry. Even in Vientiane Capital City and Champasak more than a quarter of all new entrants are outside the official starting age.

One reason for late admission is that many children, especially in remote communities, are not sent to school until they are several years older than the official school entry age because of the school too far away or too difficult to access for five-year-olds. Even in urban areas some parents to delay school entry for a year or two because they feel the child is not "school-ready".

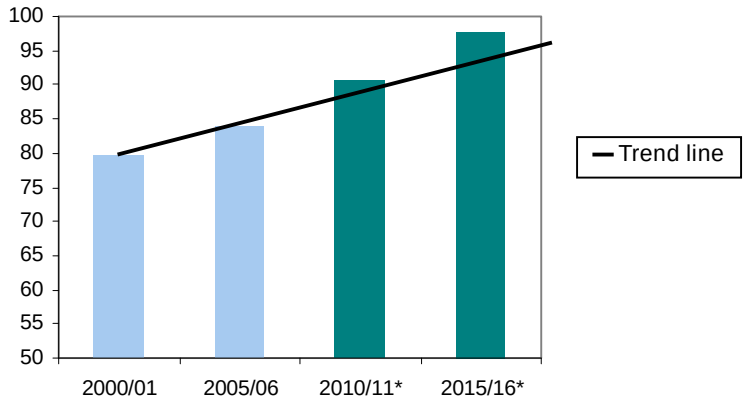
Figure 17: Enrollment in Grade 1 by Age, 2005/06



Gross and Net Enrollment Rates – Both gross enrollment rate (GER) and net enrollment rate (NER) have risen steadily between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006 – see Table 33 below. GER grew from 110 percent to 116 percent for the respective years, while NER grew from 80 percent to 84 percent in the same period. The increase has been somewhat higher for girls than boys, as reflected by the rising GPIs. In general over the period, the GPI has been higher for NER than for GER: *boys are more likely to go to school, but girls who go to school are more likely to be in the official age.*

Even though steady progress has been made, it has been too little in relation to the targets set out in the EFA NPA. Additional efforts and resources will be required to achieve an NER of 90.6 percent by the year 2010/2011 97.8 percent by 2014/16 – as seen in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18: NER progress since 2000/1 and projected trend



*** EFA NPA targets**

Experience elsewhere points to the **challenges of enrolling this last 10% of eligible children**.

Table 33: Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios in Primary School, 2000/01 to 2005/06

Year	GER				NER			
	Male	Female	Total	GPI	Male	Female	Total	GPI
2000/01	118	102	110	0.86	83	76	80	0.92
2001/02	120	102	111	0.85	84	76	80	0.91
2002/03	121	105	113	0.87	86	79	82	0.92
2003/04	120	105	113	0.87	85	79	82	0.93
2004/05	123	110	117	0.89	86	82	84	0.95
2005/06	123	109	116	0.88	86	81	84	0.94

Source: MOE/ESITC

Analysis of trends in intakes and enrolments – Enrolments are determined by trends in the school-age population, intake rates and the overall internal efficiency of the (primary) school sector, as reflected in repeaters and drop-outs – see Table 35 below. The school-age population is in turn strongly related to fertility rates. According to the 2005 population census, average fertility rates were respectively 2.04, 3.70 and 4.74 in urban, rural with access and rural without access areas. From 2000/2001 to 2004/2005, intakes have declined in the non-poor districts, stayed more or less constant in the poor districts and significantly increased in the poorest districts, as shown in Table 34 below.

Table 34: Change in Intakes in Districts, by Poverty Level between 2000/01 and 2004/05

	Females	Males
70 Non-poor districts	- 1,826	- 3,241
25 Poor districts	+ 41	- 571
47 Poorest districts	+ 4,085	+ 1,254
Total	+ 2,300	- 2,558

Source: Calculated from enrollment data by quintile and school level from LECS 3, and enrollment data from Annual Bulletins, MOE 2002/03.

In urban, non-poor areas, the trend is explained by the drop of births and school-age children, which may reflect the impact of family planning programs and increased level of girls' education.[28] By contrast, births have remained high in rural areas, especially in the poorest villages and districts. Progress of admissions in those areas reflects the impact of development projects which have targeted the poorest districts. Stability of intakes in the poor districts may mean *either* that projects have tended to focus too much on the poorest districts when the poor ones were as much in need of assistance, *or* that the number of school-age pupils has also started to decline as a result of falling fertility.

Table 35: Primary School Entry, by Gender and Province, 2005/06

PROVINCE	School Age Population		New Entrants, All Ages		New Entrants Official Age		GIR		NIR		% Not Official Age	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Vientiane Capital	6,351	6,077	7,876	7,191	5,475	5,312	124.0	118.3	86.2	87.4	30.5	26.1
Phongsaly	2,493	2,393	3,176	2,400	896	747	127.4	100.3	35.9	31.2	71.8	68.9
Louang Namtha	2,037	1,998	2,513	2,250	991	1,027	123.4	112.6	48.6	51.4	60.6	54.4
Oudomxay	4,160	4,137	6,960	6,447	2,013	2,132	167.3	155.8	48.4	51.5	71.1	66.9
Bokeo	2,023	1,993	2,567	2,290	1,161	1,054	126.9	114.9	57.4	52.9	54.8	54.0
Luang Prabang	5,575	5,542	8,511	7,495	3,509	3,363	152.7	135.2	62.9	60.7	58.8	55.1
Houaphanh	4,525	4,415	7,031	6,320	2,076	2,014	155.4	143.1	45.9	45.6	70.5	68.1
Sayaboury	3,894	3,792	4,428	4,017	3,233	3,041	113.7	105.9	83.0	80.2	27.0	24.3
Xiengkhouang	3,580	3,479	4,842	4,538	2,750	2,548	135.3	130.4	76.8	73.2	43.2	43.9
Vientiane Prov.	5,224	5,132	6,539	6,219	4,877	4,697	125.2	121.2	93.4	91.5	25.4	24.5
Borikhamsay	3,259	3,148	4,177	3,813	2,703	2,639	128.2	121.1	82.9	83.8	35.3	30.8
Khammouane	4,794	4,849	6,137	5,856	3,605	3,660	128.0	120.8	75.2	75.5	41.3	37.5
Savannakhet	11,348	11,227	12,641	10,867	6,563	6,202	111.4	96.8	57.8	55.2	48.1	42.9
Saravane	4,975	4,938	6,962	5,758	2,434	2,312	139.9	116.6	48.9	46.8	65.0	59.8
Sekong	1,353	1,327	1,960	1,744	621	573	144.9	131.4	45.9	43.2	68.3	67.1
Champasak	8,048	7,818	9,444	8,692	6,905	6,540	117.3	111.2	85.8	83.7	26.9	24.8
Attapeu	1,733	1,704	2,536	2,281	777	690	146.3	133.9	44.8	40.5	69.4	69.8
Total	75,372	73,969	98,300	88,178	50,589	48,551	130.4	119.2	67.1	65.6	48.5	44.9

Source: MOE/ESITC

Nationally and in the non-poor districts, male admissions have declined, while female admissions have increased everywhere except in the non-poor districts, showing that the number of non-admitted

[28] This trend was first detected in LECS3 population estimates, then in the 2005 population census results.

males is now limited and that progress in admissions since 2001 was mostly due to a reduction of the gender gap, especially in the poorest districts (see Table 34 above). The decline of female admissions in non-poor districts, when considered in association with the number of un-reached females in those districts, shows that there are still strong obstacles to achieving gender parity in primary education.

Table 36: Growth of New Admissions in Grade 1 by Gender, 2000/01 – 2005/06

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Females	84,559	88,529	89,499	87,497	87,018	88,178
Males	100,015	104,075	103,247	97,919	97,779	98,300
Total	184,574	192,604	192,746	185,416	184,797	186,478

Source: computed by ADTA from MOE EMIS

Repetition, Survival, and Drop-out Rates – As shown in Table 33 above, for the years 2000/2001 to 2005/2006 the GPI is higher for the NER than for the GER, reflecting the fact that *if* girls are enrolled in primary school, *then* they are more likely than boys to be within the primary official school age. This is a reflection of two factors. Although girls are less likely to *enter* primary school, they are *less* likely to *repeat* a grade, but they are slightly more likely to *drop out* and so ultimately they are *almost* as likely as boys to survive to grade 5.

Repetition Rates – In the period 2000/2001 to 2004/2005 only slight progress has been made in reducing repetition rates with the grade by grade repetition rates as shown in Table 37 below.

Table 37: National Repetition Rates

GRADE	2000/1		2005/6	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Grade 1	35.0%	33.5%	33.7%	31.9%
Grade 2	21.5%	17.9%	19.3%	16.5%
Grade 3	13.6%	9.8%	13.6%	10.4%
Grade 4	9.2%	5.5%	9.0%	6.3%
Grade 5	6.7%	3.7%	5.5%	3.3%

Source: ESDF Table 30, Appendix 1 to Situation Analysis

Similarly there has been almost no change in the gender distribution of repetition. In 2005/2006 approximately one third of all students enrolled in grade 1 repeated at least once – see Figure 19 below. In grade 1, repetition is nearly equal between girls and boys, but grade-by-grade, repetition becomes increasingly a "boys" problem.

Figure 19: Repetition Rate 2004/05

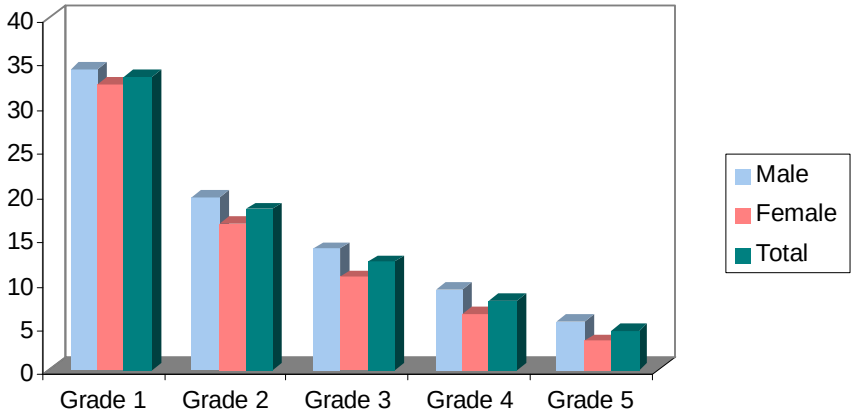


Table 38: Drop-out Rate, by Grade, 2004/05

Grade	Grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
Total	13.0	6.8	7.7	7.2	9.8
Male	12.7	6.7	7.8	6.4	10.0
Female	13.2	6.9	7.7	8.1	9.5
GPI	1.04	1.04	0.98	1.27	0.96

Source: MOE/ESITC

Drop-out Rates – In 2004/2005, as Table 38 shows, the drop-out rate was 13 percent in grade 1, falling to under 7 percent in grade 2 and gradually rising to almost 10 percent by grade 5. Some of the grade 1 drop-outs could appear later as "drop-ins", or new entrants.

Girls are dropping out more frequently than boys in grade 1, 2 and 4, an observation requiring further investigation. Furthermore, there are great variations between provinces with a difference of 14 percentage points between the lowest and highest scoring province, Oudomxsay (17.1 percent) and Sayabury (3.1 percent) respectively – see Table 39 below.

Table 39: Percent Complete Schools & Total Drop-out Rate, by Province 2004/05

PROVINCE	% Schools Complete	Dropout Rate (%)		
		Male	Female	Total
Vientiane Capital	88.1	7.3	6.5	7.0
Phongsaly	19.9	15.6	15.2	15.5
Luangnamtha	29.3	10.8	14.4	12.4
Oudomxay	31.5	15.7	18.6	17.1
Bokeo	27.5	11.3	10.2	10.9
Luangprabang	41.8	9.6	10.1	9.9
Huaphanh	31.1	8.9	8.9	8.9

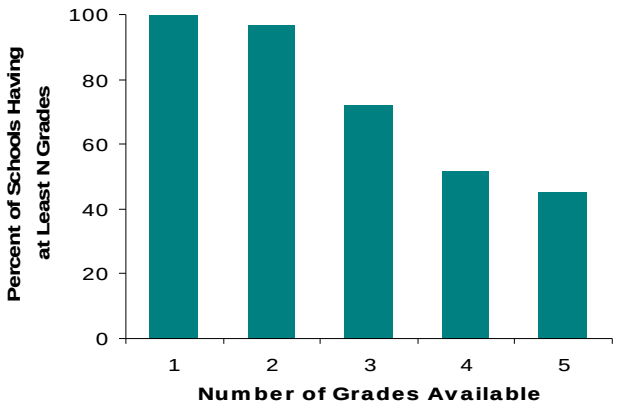
Sayabury	80.3	3.3	2.9	3.1
Xiengkhuang	35.5	3.6	7.9	5.6
Vientiane province	58.4	6.3	6.4	6.3
Borikhamsay	63.1	4.7	5.6	5.1
Khammuane	45.0	9.4	10.3	9.8
Savannakhet	42.6	10.1	9.4	9.8
Salavan	27.8	14.1	15.6	14.7
Sekong	47.5	14.1	13.0	13.6
Champassak	47.3	9.1	9.4	9.3
Attapeu	43.5	14.0	15.0	14.5
Total	44.2	9.2	9.6	9.4

Source: MOE/ESITC

Reasons for Drop-outs – In searching for reasons for the significant differences in drop-outs across the provinces the most probable links are to the higher proportion of incomplete schools and the impact of poverty in poorest and poor districts. Incomplete schools, from an analysis of the 2002/03 contained 25% of all primary school students, [29] clearly a significant proportion.

Figure 20 shows that of all primary schools, nearly three quarters operate three grades, but there is then a sharp drop-off, and just over half offer four grades and fewer than half offer all five grades.

Figure 20: Percent of Primary Schools with at Least "N" Grades, 2005/06



There has been a reduction of incomplete schools in the half decade – from 61 per cent to 57 per cent (incomplete schools may or may not use multi-grade teaching for the grades which are taught.) The significance of incomplete schools is heightened since there is a variation between provinces, which is closely correlated with variation in drop-outs as shown in Table 41, Table 42 and Figure 21 below.

Table 40: Complete and Incomplete schools 2000/1 - 2004/5

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Complete schools	3,197	3,335	3,468	3,651	3,660
Incomplete schools	4,958	5,097	5,019	4,878	4,881

[29] Situation Analysis , Appendix 1, Table 23

Total schools	8,155	8,432	8,487	8,529	8,541
% incomplete schools	61%	60%	59%	57%	57%

Source: ESDF estimates

Figure 21: Percent Complete Schools & Total Dropout Rate, by Province, 2004/05

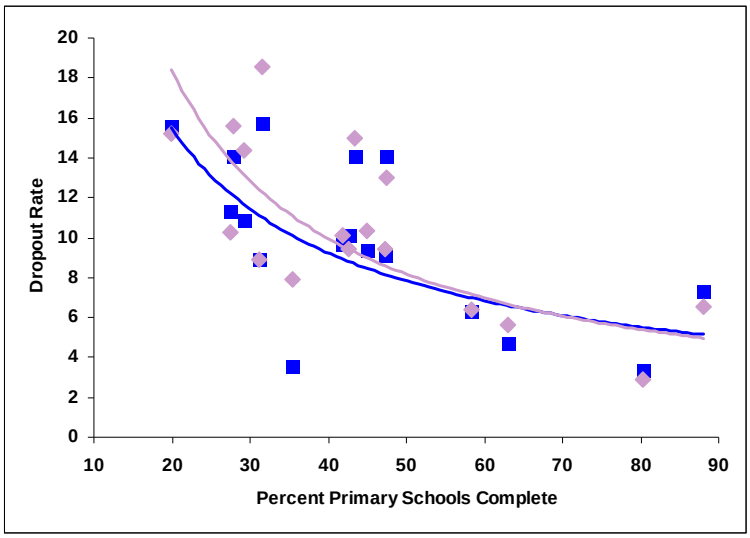


Table 41: Drop-out Rate by Grade, by Province 2004-2005

PROVINCE	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.
Vientiane Capital	9.7	8.7	3.6	2.8	3.7	3.4	5.3	3.8	14.9	14.0
Phongsaly	17.6	21.0	14.9	15.1	12.1	7.6	5.8	7.2	26.8	14.6
Luangnamtha	12.3	20.4	12.0	15.6	8.4	6.9	8.9	6.3	10.1	9.3
Oudomxay	27.9	30.6	9.8	12.4	9.0	7.8	4.1	7.8	9.7	8.0
Bokeo	14.0	11.2	8.7	9.1	10.3	10.7	6.0	7.1	16.0	12.2
Luangprabang	14.8	12.9	7.0	8.0	9.8	10.4	5.9	8.0	4.8	7.7
Huaphanh	15.3	14.5	3.2	4.6	6.2	4.6	5.8	8.3	6.7	4.1
Sayabury	4.1	4.4	2.6	3.0	3.8	2.4	3.0	2.7	2.9	1.1
Xiengkhuang	6.1	9.5	1.6	1.8	4.5	4.3	1.4	7.1	2.8	19.3
Vientiane Province	8.9	10.0	1.4	0.7	4.3	3.8	3.0	5.3	14.5	11.5
Borikhamsay	8.8	8.9	3.4	3.2	5.1	3.8	0.8	4.9	2.5	5.9
Khammuane	13.9	15.9	7.1	7.5	8.4	9.1	6.5	8.4	7.8	5.9
Savannakhet	8.1	7.3	9.6	8.8	10.9	10.9	12.7	11.9	12.8	11.7
Saravan	16.5	18.3	12.4	12.5	13.6	14.4	9.2	17.9	15.9	11.2
Sekong	17.8	13.6	9.9	9.0	12.1	15.9	8.9	13.2	17.3	13.4
Champassak	11.5	10.5	6.7	7.4	8.7	10.4	10.3	11.4	7.7	6.7
Attapeu	21.1	20.3	7.2	10.5	10.0	11.2	7.4	14.1	14.6	10.2
Total	12.7	13.2	6.7	6.9	7.8	7.7	6.4	8.1	10.0	9.5

Source: MOE/ESITC

From the evidence, two conclusions are suggested.[30] First, it would appear that girls are more sensitive to the absence of complete schools than are boys. This is evidenced by the fact that: (a) The trend line for girls (the pink line in Figure 21 above) lies mainly above the trend line for boys, and (b)

[30] Suggested but not demonstrated. Correlations across provinces can involve significant aggregation effects, which conflate or mix the effects of many variables, for example cultural variables.

For girls, more than half of the variance in dropout rates is explained by variation in the proportion of schools which are complete, while for boys the relationship is somewhat weaker.

Second, it would appear that that there is a "latent dropout rate" of some 4 to 5 percent that is independent of the existence of incomplete schools. That is, even if all primary schools were complete, there would still be a dropout rate of some 4 to 5 percent. This is evidenced by the fact that the trend line does not tend toward the axis, where the dropout rate is 0. Although incomplete schools are a major cause of high dropout rates, there are clearly other causes.

Accessibility – one cause of non-enrollment, and perhaps also of drop-out, is the ease of access to a school. There remains limited coverage of the school network, which does not reach the totality of the villages. According to the 2005 population census, there were 10,522 villages in the country, out of which 2,092 did not have a primary school, 4,704 had an incomplete school and 3,757 had a complete school (see Situation Analysis, ESDF, Table 20, Appendix 1). A village without school is not necessarily, though, a village without access to a school.

Survival / Completion Rate to Grade 5 – An average of just less than 8.0 years is required to produce a primary school graduate, because of repetitions and drop-outs during or after grade 1 and 2. The survival rate to grade 5 refers to *enrollment* in grade 5, not to *completion* of that grade. Table 42 below shows survival rates from 1991/92 compared to 2004/5.

Table 42: Survival Rate to Grade 5, 1991/92 to 2004/05

YEAR	Survival Rate (%)			
	Male	Female	Total	GPI
1991/92	49.7	45.1	47.7	0.91
2000/01	59.8	59.8	59.9	1.00
2001/02	61.9	61.6	61.8	0.99
2002/03	60.2	60.4	60.3	1.00
2003/04	61.8	59.9	61.0	0.97
2004/05	60.7	59.6	60.2	0.98

Source: MOE/ESITC

Based on the size of the 12 - year-old age group in the population, it is estimated that approximately 66% of females and 73% of males graduated from primary education in 2005-06 only marginally better for girls and lower for boys when compared to the 2000/01 figures - see Table 43, below.

Table 43: Primary completion rates by gender

	2000/01	2005/06
Females	65.2%	65.8%
Males	74.0%	72.9%
Total	67.9 %	69.7%

Source: computed by ADTA from MOE EMIS

In 2005, the primary completion rate (PCR) for girls in poorest districts was about half the PCR in non-poor districts, demonstrating the impact of: (1) the delayed development of girls' admissions in poorest districts; and (2) the differential repetition and dropout rates in poorest versus non-poor districts.

Those still to be reached by primary education – The number of children who have never been admitted to primary education still remains significant: considering the group of children aged 10-18, 8-9% of the boys and 14-18% of the girls, depending on the estimates[31], have never been to school, the proportion being much higher in poorest districts and for non Lao-Tai children. Over one third of all un-reached girls and 40 percent of all un-reached boys are in non-poor districts, showing that targeting poorest districts will not be enough to enroll all un-reached children.

Reasons for Never Attending School – The LECS 3 survey (Table 44 below) found that distance from the nearest school is one of the reasons for not attending primary school: 27 percent of children aged 9 - 18 years old who have never gone to school indicate *distance to primary school as the main reason*. By contrast, none reported distance as a reason for not attending lower secondary school.

Table 44: Reasons Given for Children Age 9-18 Never Attending School

Quintile	No Interest	School too Far	Language	Other
High (Q5)	45	16	11	4.2
High - Medium(Q4)	45	19	5	6.3
Medium (Q3)	38	26	7	9.6
Medium-Low (Q2)	35	25	5	14.5
Low (Q1)	34	34	4	23.3

Source: LECS 3, cited by King and van de Walle, page 43, Table A13.

Two surprising outcomes are found. First, "No Interest" is *positively* correlated to consumption quintile. It would seem that higher income families whose children have never attended school feel they have better things for their children to do than go to school.

Second, language is given more often by Q5 than Q1-Q4, probably also a reflection of opportunity cost – "rich kids can make it without going to school using a language they don't understand". "School too Far" is no doubt a reflection mainly of lack of schools in the most poorest and most remote, but it is also reflects cost of transportation, to which the poor are more sensitive. While this

[31] The LECS 3 estimates by E. King and D. Van de Walle for 2002/03 show 8.8% of boys and 18.1% of girls as having never been to school. The ESDF estimates, based on the 2005 census show 8.4% of boys and 14.4% of girls as never having been to school.

data is a snap-shot from the past and the school network has been extended to some extent, the importance of easy access and a schooling experience which creates "interest" for all levels of income cannot be overlooked in planning.

Schools Offering the Complete Primary Cycle – The reasons for schools being 'incomplete', in that they do not offer all 5 grades vary; sometimes because of insufficient numbers of teachers, something it is the result of a lack of sufficient classrooms, or a combination of both factors. In 2004/2005 a total of 57 percent of the primary schools were 'incomplete'[32]. Conversion of incomplete schools to complete schools is complex, depending on (projected) population size, availability of teachers and classrooms and the availability of funds to pay for possible additional teacher salaries and construction costs.

A strategy for dealing with the issue surrounding the high number of incomplete schools is to employ 'multi-grade teaching'[33]. For example, one teacher can teach grades 1 and 2, while another teaches grades 3 to 5. Multi-grade teaching allows incomplete schools to offer the full five year cycle of instruction, making them in effect complete schools.

Environment for learning in the School – For children to learn, a healthy, safe and protective environment is essential. Teachers also require healthy and attractive conditions in which to work. MOE data suggests that in 2005/2006 an estimated 40 percent of school buildings in the country are of temporary structure, and less than 20 percent of the primary schools nation-wide have fully functioning water supply and sanitary facilities.

Though there has been considerable support for school construction and renovation activities over the past decade with assistance from development partners most of this has been concentrated in urban and easily accessible areas. Hence, the demand for permanent or even semi-permanent structure classrooms is still high and further support is acutely needed, especially in rural areas.

[32] See Table 41 above

[33] Multigrade classes, in which teachers work with more than one curriculum grade at the same time, are used in situations where population density does not generate sufficient students for a full (primary) school.

2.4 Additional indicators

Additional indicators relating to the primary sub-sector are shown in Table 45 below:

Table 45: Additional primary level indicators

1. Age-specific enrollment ratio (ASER) in primary and lower secondary nominal age range [(a)] (%)

Age							
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
43.5	66.1	74.4	82.5	85.2	88.1	83.8	78.3

2. Promotion rate in primary and lower secondary grades (2004/05 to 2005/06) (%)

	Grade							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total	54.2	75.2	80.1	85.1	85.8	82.8	87.0	85.6
Male	53.6	74.0	78.6	84.6	84.5	81.6	87.2	83.6
Female	54.8	76.6	81.9	85.6	87.2	84.3	86.8	88.4

3. Drop-out rate in primary and lower secondary grades (2004/05 to 2005/06) (%)

	Grade							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total	13.0	6.8	7.7	7.2	9.8	14.2	11.0	10.5
Male	12.7	6.7	7.8	6.4	10.0	14.3	10.1	11.6
Female	13.2	6.9	7.7	8.1	9.5	14.0	12.1	8.9

4. Percent of schools offering complete primary education	44.2
5. Percent of schools offering mother-tongue instruction (other than Lao) [(b)]	NA
6. Percentage distribution of primary students by the travel duration from their home to school	NA
7. Existence of a School/Community Mapping or Child-Seeking Strategy	None

Source: MOE/ESITC, Census 2005

Notes:

(a) In Census 2005, from which ASER is calculated, the question about school attendance covers only children above age 5 years. This leads to an estimation bias the direction of which is not known. It is very common, however, that children begin school at age 6 or older, even in urban areas.

(b) According to the Education Law of 2000, all instruction in public schools is in the Lao language. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that some schools in ethnic minority areas also use the local language for instruction in the early grades.

2.5 Significant Successes

There are four major success stories in the development of primary education in the half decade, all of which reflect GOL policy thrusts:

- There are more schools (499) even after some closures, more classes (588) and more complete schools (42.9% of all schools had all 5 grades by 2005/06).
- The primary education sub-sector continues to show steady progress in enrollment rates.

- Substantial progress has been made toward gender parity in primary education. Nearly all indicators showed movement toward gender equality – see Section 8 Gender Parity and Equality.

- The increase in the proportion of both students and teachers of non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups in primary school has been marked. While the increase in enrolments has been 7.7% overall, in the poorest 47 Districts the increase has been 31%. A significant proportion of the increase in primary school enrollment in the past half-decade is due to enrollment of non-Lao-Tai ethnic group students.

2.6 Remaining Challenges

Alongside significant achievements, some major challenges still remain:

- There remain some 10 percent of children who have never attended school. Distance to school was found to be one of the major causes of never attending primary education. Expansion of access to 'child friendly' school facilities of the mainly poor, remote and ethnic communities has been slow and costly.

- The existence of many incomplete schools.

- It will be even more challenging to convince and show those, who indicated 'not interested' as the reason for them not attending primary school, the value of primary schooling.

- Repetition rates are extraordinarily high and are likely to even be under-estimated. Repetition by boys is higher than for girls.

- Drop-out rates are high, though actual drop-outs may be less since some students drop back into school later. The reasons for drop-outs are in part due to lack of perceived relevance, but also largely due to poor quality of instruction which arises from the lack of appropriate instructional methods and to the lack of instructional materials available to all students. The absence of textbooks and qualified, bilingual ethnic teachers is particularly a problem of poor, remote and ethnic group communities.

- High levels of repetition and drop-out represent inefficiencies within the school system that lead to wastage of financial and human resources in the education system. They are also a

cost to families of students who require two or more years to complete a single grade and cannot earn or contribute their labor to the household.

- Improvement of student performance is an even greater challenge, because student learning outcomes are dependent on many factors: material inputs as well as supportive family and community attitudes to schooling. It will be challenging for MOE to ensure that the required inputs are provided at school level to ensure improvements in learning outcomes. Also, social mobilization efforts are required to ensure that communities know their role as stakeholders in schooling.

Section 3: Access and Participation in Lower Secondary Education

EFA NPA Program 3 - EFA GOAL 2
Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic groups, have access to a complete, free, and compulsory education of good quality

In the Sixth NSEDP the GOL stresses the need to improve further the accessibility to quality lower- and upper secondary education to raise the number of students entering and completing secondary schooling and hence going on to tertiary education. For young people secondary education comes at a time when important decisions and choices are to be made, which have far reaching impacts on personal life and future academic and career orientations.

3.1 Core Indicators

Table 46: Goal 2 (UBE, Lower Secondary) Core Indicators, 2000/01- 2005/06

INDICATORS	2000/1			2005/6		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1. Gross Intake Rate (GIR) in Lower Secondary Education (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2. Net Intake Rate (NIR) in Lower Secondary Education (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3. Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Lower Secondary Education (%)	54.0	40.0	**47.0**	57.0	46.2	**51.7**
4. Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in Lower Secondary Education (%)	23.0	22.0	**23.0**	28.0	29.0	**28.0**
5. Survival rate to Grade 8 (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	**38.0**
6. Transition rate to upper secondary education (%)	78.8	77.3	**78.2**	75.8	77.4	**76.5**
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
7. Percentage of trained teachers at Lower Secondary Education (%)	69.6	86.4	**76.9**	84.8	NA	**3.10**
8. Pupil-teacher ratio at Lower Secondary Education (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	2000/1			2005/6		
9. Public recurrent expenditure on Lower Secondary as percent of total public recurrent expenditure on education (%)	**16.6**			**12.4**		
10. Repetition rates by grade in lower secondary education (%)	2000/1			2005/6		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Grade 6	NA	NA	NA	4.1	1.6	**3.0**
Grade 7	NA	NA	NA	2.7	1.2	**2.0**
Grade 8	NA	NA	NA	4.8	2.7	**3.9**

Source: MOE

There are notable gaps in the availability of information on the Indicators in Table 46. While the intake rates are illusive what is evident is the comparative growth of admissions of girls, 22 percent, and boys, 13 percent with the overall growth being 17 percent. As a result the GPI reached 0.81 in 2005/06.

3.2 Policy Development

The Compulsory Education Decree of 1996 covers only primary education. However, lower secondary schooling is one of the four priority sectors of the EFA NPA.

Whereas GOL investment resources are heavily committed to the universalization of primary schooling, private sector development, driven by social demand, is intended to be a major source of development for lower secondary education. Indeed, enrollment in private lower secondary schooling grew by an average annual rate of almost 16 percent between 1995/1996 and 2005/2006 and by over 8 percent between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006. Private secondary schools numbered 19 and had 2704 students in 2000/01 while in 2005/06 there were 34 schools and 6198 students. Even then the private sector accounted for only 3.0 percent of enrolment in 2005/2006 (down from 4.5 percent in 2004/2005).

To increase the quality of education and align the duration of lower secondary with international standards, MOE will add one extra year, grade 9, to the lower secondary education cycle in 2010/2011. This will result in four years of instruction at lower secondary education.

3.3 Analysis of Progress

Table 47: Transition Rates from Grade 5 to Grade 6

	Girls	Boys	Total
2001/02	73.80%	79.50%	**77.00%**
2002/03	75.60%	81.10%	**78.60%**
2003/04	75.50%	79.80%	**77.80%**
2004/05	75.50%	80.10%	**78.00%**
2005/06	74.80%	78.80%	**77.00%**

Source: ESDF Situation Analysis, Appendix 1, Table 46, amended

Table 48: New Admissions to Grade 6, 2000/01- 2005/06

	New Admissions, Grade 6		
	Females	Males	Total
2000/01	33,152	45,080	**78,232**
2001/02	35,626	47,275	**82,901**
2002/03	38,184	49,052	**87,236**
2003/04	38,890	48,949	**87,839**
2004/05	39,565	50,093	**89,658**
2005/06	40,579	50,846	**91,425**

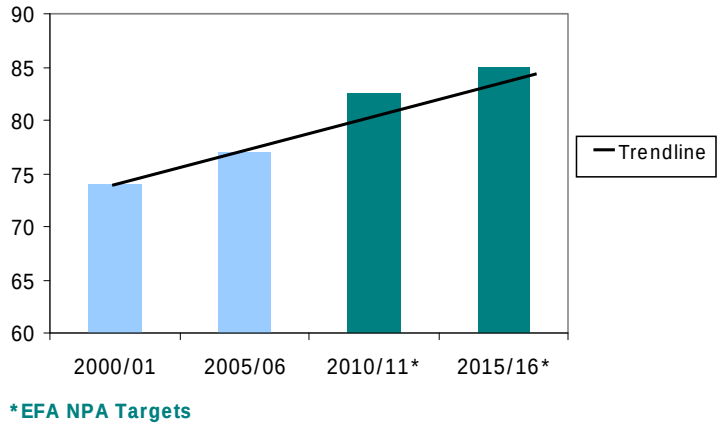
Source: ESDF Situation Analysis, Table 45.

Progress of admissions has been fast in lower secondary education, with an average annual increase of 2,600 new pupils in grade 6 (LSE) over past six years. See Table 48 above. However, the impact of demographic transition is now starting to show at lower levels in the most urbanized districts as

transition rates, as discussed below, have stabilized over the past four years and admissions in grade 6 are no longer increasing quickly (see Table 47 above and Figure 22 below).

Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary Education – The transition rate from primary- to lower secondary education over the period 2000/2001 through 2005/2006 shows only a slight increase, from 74 percent to 77.6 percent for the respective years. The transition rate rose slightly more for girls than for boys, as reflected in slight rise in the GPI from 0.93 in 2000/2001 to 0.95 in 2005/2006. If this trend in growth of transition rate were to continue then the EFA NPA targets of a national transition rate from grade 5 to grade 6 of 82.5 percent for the year 2010/2011 and 85.0 percent in 2015/16 are unlikely to be achieved.

Figure 22: Transition rate from Primary to Lower Secondary (projected)



The trend in transition from grade 5 to 6 is linked to both supply and demand factors:

(a) the expansion of supply has not kept pace with demand since Government has targeted primary education[34]; and

(b) the expansion of lower secondary education to a larger pool of student may have reached limits since the vast majority of urban pupils seem to have been already admitted into the lower secondary system.

With rural students facing financial and other constraints a heavy contribution from rural areas to the growth of national enrollments at this level seems unlikely.

Provincial transition rates for males and females combined vary considerably from a low of under 65 percent in Sekong province to a high of nearly 90 percent in Vientiane province, closely followed by Vientiane Capital City with a transition rate of nearly 87 percent. The GPI ranges from a low of 0.87 to a high of 1.16 – see Table 50 below.

[34] With the exception of the World Bank with EDP I project

Table 49: Enrollments in lower secondary schools by gender

	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Av. An. Increase	% Growth
Girls	75,396	81,569	89,685	97,468	103,429	105,336	106,088	5,115	140.7%
Boys	108,192	114,276	123,786	131,439	136,006	137,801	137,043	4,809	126.7%
Total	**183,588**	**195,845**	**213,471**	**228,907**	**239,435**	**243,137**	**243,131**	**9,924**	**132.4%**

Source: ESDF Situation Analysis Table 49, amended.

As a consequence of admission trends in grade 6, enrollments in lower secondary are now increasing at a reducing pace, as a study of Table 50 above shows. From 2000/2001 to 2005/2006 both GER and NER for lower secondary education increased by only 5 percent points, from 47 to 52 percent and 23 to 28 percent respectively, see Table 50 below. The increase was somewhat more for girls than for boys.

Table 50: Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary 2005, by Province

PROVINCE	Enrollment in Last Grade of Primary in 2004/05			New Entrants in 1st Grade of Lower Secondary in 2005/06			Transition Rate Primary to Secondary (%)		
	Total	% Fem	GPI	Total	% Fem	GPI	Total	Female	GPI
Vientiane Capital City	14,162	49.4	0.97	12,311	49.4	0.97	86.9	86.9	1.00
Phongsaly	2,786	42.5	0.74	1,814	46.1	0.85	65.1	70.7	1.16
Louang Namtha	2,631	42.4	0.74	2,116	40.9	0.69	80.4	77.7	0.94
Oudomxay	4,995	40.3	0.68	3,749	39.0	0.64	75.1	72.5	0.95
Bokeo	2,886	41.0	0.69	2,052	39.7	0.66	71.1	69.0	0.95
Louang Prabang	8,362	42.8	0.75	6,352	41.0	0.70	76.0	72.6	0.93
Houaphanh	6,031	41.6	0.71	4,989	40.7	0.69	82.7	81.0	0.96
Sayaboury	9,404	47.3	0.90	6,551	43.9	0.78	69.7	64.6	0.87
Xiengkhouang	6,736	44.2	0.79	5,772	44.7	0.81	85.7	86.8	1.02
Vientiane Province	9,942	46.7	0.87	8,931	45.3	0.83	89.8	87.2	0.95
Borikhamsay	6,172	46.5	0.87	4,791	44.0	0.79	77.6	73.4	0.90
Khammouane	7,834	46.7	0.87	5,652	43.9	0.78	72.1	67.9	0.90
Savannakhet	14,223	47.8	0.92	11,007	46.6	0.87	77.4	75.5	0.95
Saravane	5,204	42.2	0.73	3,631	39.1	0.64	69.8	64.6	0.88
Sekong	1,592	43.3	0.76	1,031	44.1	0.79	64.8	66.0	1.04
Champasak	12,894	47.3	0.90	9,252	45.2	0.82	71.8	68.6	0.92
Attapeu	1,934	44.9	0.82	1,424	43.3	0.76	73.6	70.9	0.93
Total	118,755	45.7	0.84	91,425	44.4	0.80	77.6	75.4	0.95

Source: MOE/ESITC

Note: Total for 2004/05 includes figures for Saysomboune Special Region, which was merged with other provinces and no longer defined when the 2005/06 data were collected.

For GER in 2005/2006, the GPI is substantially below parity at only 0.81; for NER, however, the GPI is 1.02 – see Table 51 below. This is a reflection of the fact that although boys are more likely to participate in lower secondary education, they are more likely than girls to be outside the official age

range. Boys are more likely than girls to repeat grades in primary school and are more likely to continue in lower secondary even if they are beyond the official age.

Table 51: Gross & Net Enrollment Ratios in Lower Secondary School, 2000/01 to 2005/06

Year	GER				NER			
	Male	Female	Total	GPI	Male	Female	Total	GPI
2000/01	54	40	47	0.74	23	22	23	0.99
2001/02	57	43	50	0.75	25	25	25	0.99
2002/03	60	44	52	0.74	28	26	27	0.95
2003/04	61	48	54	0.78	29	29	29	1.00
2004/05	62	48	55	0.78	29	30	29	1.02
2005/06	57	46	52	0.81	28	29	28	1.02

Source: MOE/ESITC

Variations by poverty level of Enrolment rates – Table 52 shows the extremes of participation in lower secondary education. Education service delivery is still uneven across the country while the level of resourcing, reflecting the quality of education, has not caught up with the rapid expansion of the system. As a result there is an imbalance particularly among poor people living in rural ethnic villages.

Table 52: GER for LSE by Consumption per capita quintile and Province for 2000/01

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Total
Best performing province (Vientiane Capital)	54.6	59.4	68.8	87.8	76.8	**73.6**
Lowest performing province (Phongsaly)	4.5	11.6	13.6	16.0	12.6	**10.7**
National average	**19.7**	**32.8**	**44.2**	**56.7**	**65.2**	**44.2**

Source: Schooling and poverty in Lao PDR; Elizabeth King and Dominique Van de" Walle; WB Report 39318-LA

Survival Rates to Grade 8 – Survival Rate to Grade 8 can be assessed from two different points of departure, namely from grade 1 or from grade 6. From 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 the survival rate from grade 6 to grade 8 was 75.8 percent in total (76.5 percent for males and 75.3 percent for females). Of course the grade 1 to grade 8 survival rate represents the compound effect of grade 1 to grade 5, survival rates the transition rate from primary to lower secondary, and grade 6 to grade 8 survival rates, resulting in an overall survival rate of 38.0 percent in total (39.8 percent for males and 35.9 for females).

Repetition Rates for Secondary Education – Repetition rates in secondary education are much lower than in primary school. The repetition rate for boys and girls combined is just under 3.0 percent in lower secondary and 2.2 percent in upper secondary. Repetition is still a "boy's problem" in lower secondary school. Boys are twice as likely as girls to repeat a grade.

Table 53: Transition Rate from Lower to Upper Secondary, 2000 to 2005 (%)

Year	Male	Fem.	Total
2000/1	78.8	77.3	78.2
2001/2	80.8	79.9	80.4
2002/3	85.0	82.4	83.9
2003/4	82.6	81.3	82.1
2004/5	77.8	77.1	77.5
2005/6	75.8	77.4	76.5

Source: MOE/ESITC

Transition Rate from Lower to Upper Secondary Education – The transition rate from lower secondary to upper secondary schooling has shown a decrease from 78.2 percent in 2000/2001 to 76.5 percent in 2005/2006 as shown Table 53. When compared with the trend in transition rate from primary to lower secondary schooling two features are particularly significant. First, the total transition rate between primary and lower secondary schooling is nearly the same as between lower secondary and upper secondary. Second, it is particularly significant that *the transition rate from lower- to upper secondary education for girls is in parity with the transition rate for boys, in fact ahead of boys in 2005/06*. Girls who complete lower secondary schooling are as likely as boys to continue to upper secondary. There are again striking variations in transition rates across provinces with a high of 89.2% in Vientiane Province and a low of 67.5% in Bokeo though even in Bokeo the girls' rate has a slight edge on that of boys.

3.4 Additional Indicators

Table 54: Goal 2 (UBE, Lower Secondary) Additional Indicators, 2005/06

INDICATORS	TARGETS
1. Age-Specific Enrollment Ratio (ASER)	NA
2. Promotion Rates (%)	
3. Drop-out Rate (%)	
4. Survival Rate by Grade	NA
5. Percent of Schools Offering Complete (LS + US) Sec Education (%)	31.6%
6. Percent of Schools Offering Mother-Tongue Instruction (%)	0
7. Percentage Distribution of Lower Secondary Students by the Travel Duration from their home to School (%)	NA
8. Existence of a School/Community Mapping or Child-Seeking Strategy	NA

Promotion Rates (%)

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Total	82.8	87.0	85.6
Male	81.6	87.2	83.6
Female	84.4	86.8	88.4

Drop-out Rate (%)

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Total	14.2	11.0	10.5
Male	14.3	10.1	11.6
Female	14.0	12.1	8.9

Source: MOE/ESITC.

Schools, Classes and Teachers - Lower Secondary Schools – The rapid expansion of secondary enrollments has not been accompanied by a parallel expansion in the number of secondary schools, but rather by a swift increase of the average size of secondary schools and the transformation of lower or upper secondary schools into complete secondary schools. Since the GOL has targeted primary education, fewer national resources have been devoted to secondary schools.

Such limited expansion under severe financial constraints has had two consequences:

(a) the average class size in secondary schools has increased noticeably; and

(b) there has been a significant transfer of primary teachers to secondary schools, since the number of quota teachers for lower secondary schools has only been increased to a very limited extent over the past three years (see further under NPA Program 6 - Increasing Quality)

3.5 Significant Successes

Though on a lesser scale than the achievements in primary education, secondary education has witnessed some significant successes as well:

- The EFA NPA has focused mainly on primary education, but involves the expansion of secondary schooling, driven in part by social demand to provide a significant portion of the resources needed for expansion. That policy has been highly successful, leading to rapid expansion of both lower and upper secondary schooling. As with primary schooling, substantial progress has been made toward gender equality, as shown by almost all GPI trends.

- The transition from primary to lower secondary grew from 74 percent to 77.6 percent, and the transition rate rose slightly more for girls than for boys, as reflected in slight rise in the GPI from 0.93 in 2000/2001 to 0.95 in 2005/2006.

3.6 Remaining Challenges

Several challenges remain:

- There persist marked levels of repetition and drop-out, representing low efficiencies within the school system. Addressing these low efficiencies of the lower secondary education subsystem will remain a great challenge for the coming years.

- On one hand, the lack of lower secondary school opportunities in some districts may represent a significant barrier to primary school completion, as has been observed elsewhere.

- On the other, the success of the universalization of primary schooling will inevitably increase the pressure for expansion of the secondary school system, beginning with lower secondary and continuing into upper secondary. This pressure, already expressed in the growing private sector provision of secondary education, can become a threat to social equity as primary schooling penetrates the more remote areas of the country where there are no primary schools today and therefore the provision of lower secondary education in these areas will also be demanding within the next decade.

- Through adding one grade, grade 9, to lower secondary education from 2010/2011, poor families may find it even more difficult to let their children complete (lower) secondary schooling. The additional year of opportunity costs might be too high for many, possibly resulting in increasing disparities between 'the rich' and 'the poor' in secondary schooling opportunities.

- Adding one grade to lower secondary will result in an additional need for classrooms, teachers, textbooks, materials, etc. It will be challenging to ensure that this reform is implemented on time and with adequate facilities.

Section 4: Youth and Adult Literacy

EFA NPA Program 4 - EFA GOAL 4
Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

The EFA NPA stated that "The main challenge is to achieve over 98% reported adult literacy rate and 61% tested basic adult literacy by 2015/16." Adult literacy rates are an important indicator for describing the status of education and human development more generally in a country. They measure the achievements of the education system over the past decades. Literacy levels determine to a large extent the ability of the country to reach the EFA goals agreed upon at the World Education Forum in Dakar (April 2000).

Realizing the importance of literacy for developing the nation, the EFA NPA includes the EFA program 4: Youth and adult Literacy. The purpose of the program is to increase learning opportunities for children not enrolled in school, school drop-outs, youth and adults and in so doing, increase the adult literacy rate and reduce poverty. Non-formal Education (NFE) programs are the means to provide outreach services to those groups that are not in or have dropped out of the formal schooling system.

A case exists for inclusion of HIV/AIDS/STDs and Reproductive Health awareness programs under life skills or for regarding such a program as part of wider "literacy". Under MDG 6, Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases, the relevant indicator is "the proportion of the population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS".

4.1 Core Indicators

Table 55: Core Indicators - Youth and Adult Literacy

INDICATOR	2000/1			2005/6		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1. Self-reported adult literacy rate (15 years and above) (%)	77.0	60.9	**68.7**	82.5	63.2	**72.7**
2. Self-reported youth literacy rate (age 15-24 year olds)* (%)	83.6	77.1	**80.3**	89.2	78.7	**83.9**
3. Gender parity index for self-reported adult literacy (15 years and above)	NA	NA	**0.79**	NA	NA	**0.77**
4. Public expenditure on literacy and NFE as a percentage of total public expenditure on education (%)	**1.9**			**0.5**		
5. Knowledge of HIV prevention practice among young people and adults	**NA**			**15% primary 80% secondary**		

Sources (see next page)

Sources: for indictors 1 - 3 Data from the LNLS is used, Table 5.3 and 5.4: 2005 data is from the report of the census; for 2001, the reported rates were calculated using the database from the LNSL 2001. LNLS gives Literacy by intervals of 5 years.

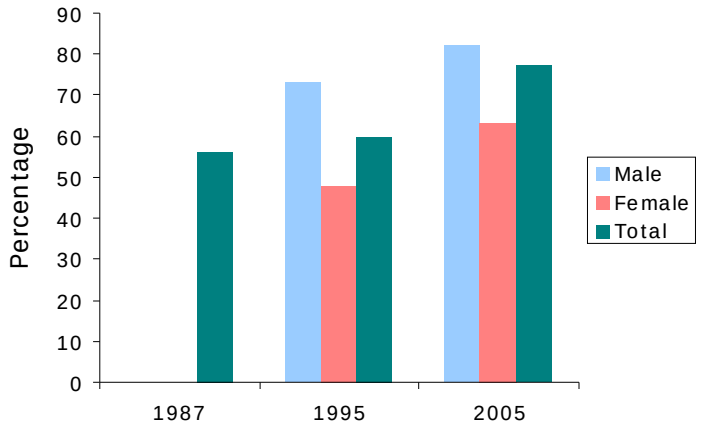
While literacy among adults 15+ years has advanced in the half decade by 4 percentage points, female literacy is stilling lagging. The GPI was 0.79 in 2001 while it fell to 0.77 in 2005. Taking the narrower age group of adults there is some difficulty in comparing figures. Again for adults aged 15-24 years-old, there is an overall improvement with men outpacing women. The GPI fell from 0.90 in 2001 to 0.88 in 2005. Not too much can be read into these figures since the LNLS data is based on a sample and literacy data reported in 5 year intervals. Public expenditure on "literacy" as such is not identified. The NFE share of total recurrent spending on education has fallen to one quarter of its 2000/01 level. NFE also covers Program 5, Skills Development for Disadvantaged groups.

4.2 Policy Development

Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees all Lao citizens the right to education. Virtually all official documents related to sector development emphasize the importance of eradication of illiteracy. Most recently, the Sixth National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) declares that "Education and literacy are prerequisites for the introduction and adoption of modern productivity enhancing technologies and for competing in both domestic and world markets."[35]

4.3 Analysis of Progress

Figure 23: Literacy rates by Gender 1987 - 2005



Source: LECS1, Census 1995, Census 2005

Literacy – The national definition for a "literate person" is someone who can read and write simple sentences in Lao and who can do four basic arithmetic calculations with totals less than

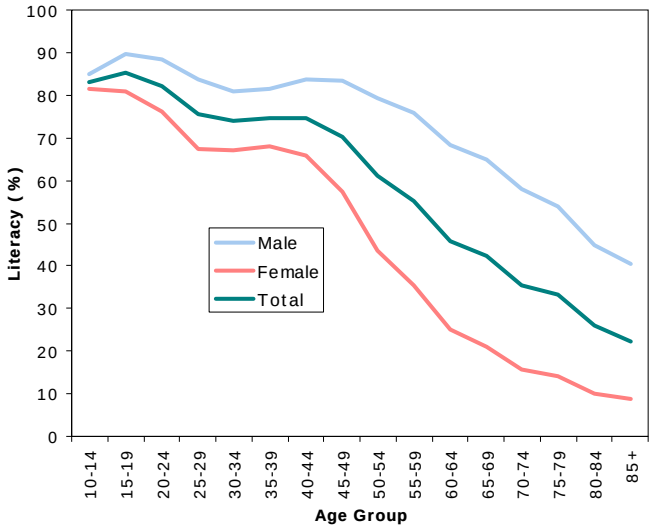
[35] NSEDP, p 94.

1000. The (self-reported) literacy rate in 1987 was estimated at 56 percent[36]. The 1995 population census estimated the literacy rate at 73 percent for males, 48 percent for females and 60 percent for the combined male and female population.[37]

The 2005 census estimated the literacy rate for persons aged 15 and over at 82 percent for males, 63 for females, and 77 for males and females combined. This would suggest that over the 18 year period 1987 to 2005, illiteracy at large has declined by an average of some 1.5 to 2 percentage points per year. This development represents the combined effects of rising school enrollment ratios and literacy programs conducted by DNFE, the latter effect being relatively small.

Caution is required in being too optimistic over the actual literacy rates - see Table 58 below for "tested" literacy rates.

Figure 24: Self-Reported Literacy Rates by Age Group and Gender, 2005



Self-reported Literacy – Self-reported literacy rates, according to the 2005 census, are relatively high (over 80 percent) among young persons under 25 and moderately high (approximately 75 percent) among persons over 25 and under 45 – see Table 56 below. Among persons over the age of 60, fewer than half are literate.

[36] "Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Lao PDR", UNICEF

[37] For all three datasets, the literacy was self-reported. In the 1995 and the 2005 census instruments, the question asked was "Can (name) read and write Lao?" The response alternatives were Yes/No, except children under age 6.

Table 56: Self-Reported Literacy Rate by Age and Gender

Age	Total	Male	Female	GPI	Age	Total	Male	Female	GPI
10 - 14	83	85	81	0.95	50-54	61	79	44	0.56
15-19	85	90	81	0.90	55-59	55	76	35	0.46
20-24	82	89	76	0.85	60-64	46	68	25	0.37
25-29	75	84	67	0.80	65-69	42	65	21	0.32
30-34	74	81	67	0.83	70-74	35	58	16	0.28
35-39	75	82	68	0.83	75-79	33	54	14	0.26
40-44	75	84	66	0.79	80-84	26	45	10	0.22
45-49	70	83	57	0.69	85+	22	41	9	0.22

Source: Calculated by Inthasone Phetsiriseng from Population and Housing Census 2005data

Among Lao-Tai children aged 11 to 16 years reported illiteracy is 16 percent, with no reported difference between boys and girls, see Table 57 below.

Table 57: Number of Children Aged 11-16 by Literacy

	Boys			Girls		
	Literate	Not Literate	% Not Literate	Literate	Not Literate	% Not Literate
Lao-Tai	321,623	62,388	16	311,703	59,353	16
Other	252,853	144,658	36	220,958	162,965	42

Source: National Census 2005

What emerges clearly from Table 58 below is that literacy is significantly higher in urban than in rural areas; much higher for men than for women and significantly higher for those in the Lao-Tai linguistic groups than for others. Among other children of the same age group illiteracy rates are significantly higher, especially among girls. A comparison of Table 56 above and Table 58 below shows that self-reported literacy rates are significantly higher than measured functional literacy rates.

Table 58: Functional Literacy in Lao PDR (Population Age 15-59)

Category	Basic Literacy			Functional Literacy			Secured Functional Literacy		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Laos	54	37	45	45	30	38	37	25	31
Urban	72	57	64	65	50	58	60	46	52
Rural	50	32	41	41	26	33	32	20	26
Lao-Tai	64	48	56	56	40	48	48	34	40
Mon-Khmer	45	29	37	36	23	29	29	17	23
Sino-Tibetan	32	20	26	26	16	21	22	15	18
Hmong-Iu Mien	50	13	32	39	12	26	29	7	18

Source: Lao National Literacy Survey 2001, Table 4.14.

Table 59: Reported and Tested Literacy Rates, Age 15-24, in 2001

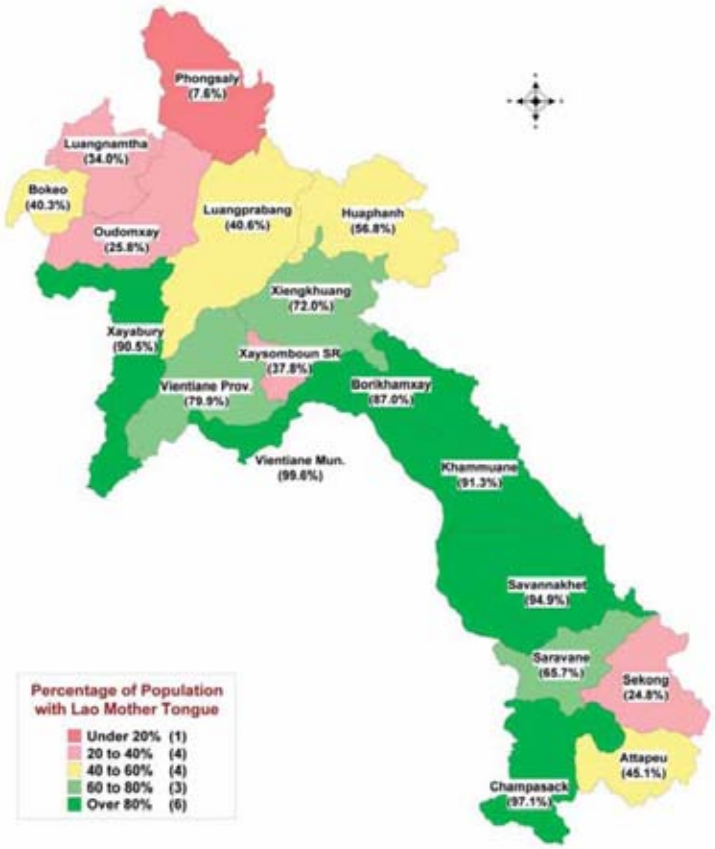
Age	Reported	Tested		
		Basic	Functional	Secured
15-19	80	51	43	36
20-24	76	51	44	37
15-24	79	51	43	NA

Source: Lao National Literacy Survey 2001

Table 59 shows some results of the Lao National Literacy Survey 2001 (LNLS) which tested over 6,000 individuals between the ages of 15 and 59 for literacy skills in 2001. Tested literacy comprised reading and writing skills in the Lao language and numeracy skills.

Classification of attainment of basic, functional, or secured functional literacy was based on minimum level scores in these three skill areas. Tested functional literacy rates were substantially lower than self-reported literacy rates. For instance, in the age group of 15 to 19 years old, 80 percent self reported to be literate, while when functionally tested the age group scored remarkably lower at 43 percent. Less than one third of the adult population in the country as a whole had reached "secured functional literacy". In the urban areas, more than half of the adult population had reached secured functional literacy, while in rural areas just under a quarter had attained that level.

Figure 25: Percentage of Population with Lao Mother Tongue



Ethnic Differences in Literacy – Ethnic differences in literacy rates vary considerably, as Table 58 above shows. Of those surveyed of the Lao-Tai ethnic groups, 48 percent showed to be functionally literate, while the Sino-Tibetan ethnic group scored much lower with a functional literacy rate of 21 percent. The survey clearly shows that for all forms of literacy (self-reported literacy, basic literacy, functional literacy and secured functional literacy) the Lao-Tai by far scored much better than the other ethno-linguistic groups.

Table 60: GPI for Functional Literacy

Category	Basic	Functional	Secured
Laos	0.69	0.67	0.67
Urban	0.79	0.77	0.77
Rural	0.64	0.62	0.62
Lao-Tai	0.75	0.71	0.71
Mon-Khmer	0.62	0.62	0.59
Sino-Tibetan	0.62	0.62	0.68
Hmong-Iu Mien	0.26	0.31	0.24

Source: Lao National Literacy Survey 2001, derived from Table 4.14

Gender disparity in urban areas is less than in rural areas, where literacy rates are substantially lower – see Table 60 above. Among the Lao-Tai ethno-linguistic groups, gender disparity is relatively low as shown by a GPI of 0.71 for functional literacy. However these gender disparities are much higher for the other ethnic groups, with the Hmong-Iu Mien ethnic group in particular showing a very low GPI of 0.31 for functional literacy.

Non-Formal Education Programs – In 2005/2006 44,357 people participated in literacy programs. There is no comparable data for 2000/01[38]. The fact that women are more likely than men to participate in literacy programs is partly due to lower literacy rates among women and also possibly partly because of higher interest in literacy among women. The non-formal primary, lower- and upper secondary and professional training programs are shown in Table 61 below.

[38] According to LNSL, page 9, Chronology of Non-Formal Education and Literacy in Lao PDR, in the 6 year period 1992-97, 268,402 multi-ethnic people of aged 15-40 became literate, including 155,232 women. On a pro-rata basis approximately 45,000 persons became literate each year.

Table 61: Enrollment in Non-Formal Education Programs 2005/06

	Literacy	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Professional Training
Total	44,357	96,955	1,890	4,278	3,826
Male	19,692	43,428	1,277	3,235	1,840
Female	24,665	53,527	613	1,043	1,986
% Female	55.6	55.2	32.4	24.4	51.9
GPI	1.25	1.23	0.48	0.32	1.08

Source: MOE/DNFE

Estimated HIV Prevalence Rate – Based on the information of reported cases of HIV/AIDS, it has become clear that labor migration has been a significant contributing factor to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Lao PDR. Out of the 2,182 cumulative reported HIV cases (December 2006), 517 or around 25% were identified as migrant laborers.[39] Although Lao PDR has a low estimated HIV prevalence at 0.1%, the country is surrounded by neighbors with higher estimated HIV prevalences such as Thailand (1.4%), Cambodia (1.6%), Myanmar (1.3%) and even Viet Nam (0.5%) (Source: UNAIDS 2006). Hence both in and out migration may contribute to increased vulnerability and risk.

Knowledge of HIV prevention practice among young people and adults – Young people are particularly at risk and schools provide an ideal opportunity to promote awareness and encourage behavior change. In 2001 with the support of UNICEF and UNFPA, RIES developed a Reproductive health/HIV/AIDS/STIs[40] and drugs education curriculum, using a 'lifeskills' approach for integration into the core subjects in primary schools, lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

In 2007 a baseline survey on knowledge, attitudes and practices in eight provinces among eighth grade students was undertaken. The survey showed that the overall knowledge of pupils on HIV/AIDS is relatively good, but lacking on other STIs. Overall, boys and girls have about the same level of knowledge on HIV transmission and prevention. However, the results suggested that girls have more misconceptions on transmission and about people with HIV/AIDS than boys. Between 30 and 40 percent of all students regard themselves as at risk of acquiring HIV through sexual activity.

[39] Centre for HIV/AIDS/STIs, Ministry of Health, 2007

[40] STI = sexually transmitted infection

By 2007 MOE integrated the Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs education, using a lifeskills approach, into the core subjects of secondary and primary schools, reaching 80 percent of secondary schools and 15 percent of primary schools in 11 provinces.

The pre-service training for teachers in teachers colleges, a training in teaching reproductive health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs education curricula using a 'lifeskills' approach, has been incorporated into 8 teachers colleges.

4.4 Additional Indicators

Table 62: Goal 4 (Literacy) Additional Indicators, 2005/06

INDICATORS				TARGETS
1. Number of literacy related programs (%)				NA
2. Number of literacy programs facilitators (%)				NA
3. Percent distribution of facilitators who attended training programs (%)				NA
4. Percent of facilitators who are teaching in the local language (learners' language) (%)				NA
5. Number of learners participating in literacy programs		Total	Male	Female
	Number	44,357	19,692	24,665
	Percent	100	56	44

Source: MOE/ESITC

4.5 Significant Successes

During the first five years of the decade three significant successes were achieved:

- Literacy rates have risen considerably among the population. This is largely a consequence of rising participation rates in primary education but to some extent also a consequence of adult NFE programs.

- Evidence has shown good results with complementing Lao Language teaching for ethnic children in the primary curriculum. Ensuring that teachers are trained and facilitated to better teach Lao language to ethnic children has been found of great value for primary students that do not speak Lao at home.

- The integration of Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs into the education curriculum, using a lifeskills approach. Large numbers of students are now being educated every year on these important issues.

4.6 Remaining Challenges

- Sustained literacy will remain a challenge for many years to come. There are two reasons: (a) The low quality of primary schooling; and (b) The scarcity of interesting and attractive reading material for both children and adults.

- For the most disadvantaged group – women living in rural areas without access to roads – the challenge of ensuring lasting literacy will be substantial.

- With a high percentages of the population not having a basic literacy level in the Lao language, many children are deprived of the opportunity of being sufficiently 'home schooled' in the basics of Lao language before entering the school system.

- For the sake of nation building and social, economic, and cultural integration, it is important that children and adults of other ethno-linguistic groups learn to read, write, speak Lao and to understand spoken Lao. Given the demographic, linguistic and pedagogical complexities involved, it is not likely that any one approach to Lao language teaching will suit the needs of all communities.

- The existing literacy rates are such that the 2015/ 2016 targets are unlikely to be achieved on the present trends. It would require an annual increase in self-reported literacy of a full two percentage points per year for the decade from 2005/06 for this target to be attained. This is unlikely since the rural and ethno-linguistic groups will be harder to make literate than the urban Lao-language peoples whose rates are respectable. Moreover, the large difference between self-reported and tested literacy rates means that there can be no complacency in seeking ways to accelerate progress to the literacy targets.

- In primary schools - only 15 percent of schools have been reached through integrating *Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs education* into the core subject "World Around Us" for Grade 4 and 5. For final year Primary Students in rural areas where many children do not progress to secondary school, this may be the only opportunity to receive essential information on these issues. With only 85 percent of students being reached in primary education and many not continuing their studies after primary education it will be

very difficult to reach the "*proportion of 70 percent of 15-24 year old women who know how to prevent RTIs/STIs"*[41].

- MOE will integrate the *Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs education curriculum* into the reform of the national lower and upper secondary school curriculum, starting in 2008. It will be important that this curriculum is mainstreamed and given sufficient emphasis and resources. Thus, during the period from 2007 to 2015, there is a need to provide clear policy directives (eg by making the topic a compulsory and graded course) and to build commitment among the teacher workforce to ensure they are indeed teaching the Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS/STIs and drugs education curriculum using a lifeskills approach. With many newly graduated teachers not receiving training in these issues within their curriculum it will be challenging to ensure these topics continue to be taught.

  An additional challenge is to ensure that the quality of training and teaching is sufficiently high - many teachers have low levels of comfort and/or are embarrassed by talking about sex and sexuality.

[41] Millennium Development Goal 6: Combat HIV AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases, Target 7, 20b.

Section 5: Skills Development Program for Disadvantaged Groups

EFA NPA Program 5 - EFA Goal 3
Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

Life skills and lifelong learning programs aim for all young people and adults to be able to gain the knowledge and develop the values, attitudes and skills that will enable them to develop their capacities to work, to participate fully in their society, to take control of their own lives and continue enjoying a lifetime of learning.

5.1 Core Indicators

Table 63: EFA Goal 3 (Life Skills) Core Indicators, 2005/06

INDICATORS			
1. Self-reported youth literacy rate (15-24 years) (%)	**Total**	**Male**	**Fem.**
	83.9	89.2	78.7
2. Gross enrollment ratio in technical and vocational education and training (TVET)	**Program**	**2000/1**	**2005/6**
	Vocational	NA	NA
	Technical	NA	NA
3. Designated curriculum time in education systems to develop children and young people's knowledge, skills and attitudes for health.		NA	
4. Transition rates between primary and secondary systems and secondary to higher education systems.		NA	

Source: MOE/ESITC

Definition of lifeskills – Lifeskills are "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO definition). In particular, lifeskills related to psychosocial competencies help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and cope with emotions and stress to manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Lifeskills may be directed toward personal actions or actions toward others, or may be applied to actions that alter the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health and wellbeing.

The term **livelihood skills** refers to capabilities, resources and opportunities for pursuing individual and household economic goals: in other words, income generation. Livelihood skills include technical and vocational abilities (carpentry, sewing, computer, typing, programming, animal husbandry, etc.); skills for seeking jobs, such as interviewing strategies and business management, entrepreneurial, and money management skills.

The "Education Strategic Vision by 2010 and 2020", issued by the MOE in 2000, links education to broader socio-economic development issues. The GOL's focus on life skills development and lifelong learning is through EFA Program 5: Skills Development for Disadvantaged Groups. Skills development, together with other support activities (improved technologies, product development, development of market linkages, etc.) is seen as being crucial to diversify production, enhance product quality and increase productivity.

5.2 Policy Development

A coordinated, multi-sectoral General Education, Non-formal Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy is responsive to national and global market trends and opportunities. The latest strategy paper establishes the following policies:[42]

- Positioning Integrated Vocational Education and Training (IVET) as the main national human resources development (HRD) strategy, linking general education to employment.
- Based on current and future socio-economic development needs, formalizing and operationalizing IVET, especially formulation of formal, non-formal and apprenticeship training programs and the use of diversified training providers, as well as standardizing trades testing and certification.
- Formulation of an industry cooperation program and the application of a labor market and demand oriented IVET development concept with corresponding legal and regulatory provision.
- Formulation of time-bound qualitative development concepts.
- Formalizing a special priority program to establish the dual cooperative training concept on national levels.
- Developing and mandating specific building and equipment standards for the construction, furnishing and equipping of TVET centers as well as minimum standards for accreditation of private training institutions and dual cooperative training places.
- Organizational analysis and rationalization of functions and organizational structures of MOE at national, provincial and district levels.

[42] MOE. "Policy and Strategy Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training 2005-2020." MOE: Vientiane, May 2006.

- Formulation of a Vocational Training Act to regulate all IVETS activities, including regulations and guidelines for implementation.

5.3 Analysis of Progress

Formal Education – Since 2002, the Department of General Education in cooperation with RIES and the Department of Teacher training have integrated life skills into the school curriculum, particularly in the "World Around Us" for Grades 4 and 5 and in lower secondary into Geography, Population Education, Natural Science, Biography and Technology. Under support from UNICEF and UNFPA, life skills are currently being taught in 15% of the primary schools and 80% of secondary schools in 11 provinces (as mentioned in Program 4).

Table 64: Number of trainees in basic skills through NFE Centres

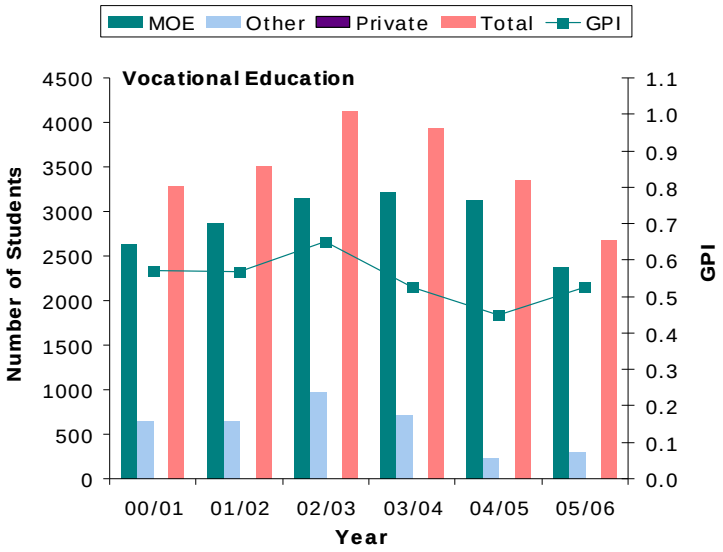
Year	Total	Female	Male
2000 - 01	1,423	768	655
2001 - 02	4,646	2,062	2,584
2002 - 03	2,074	1,009	1,065
2003 - 04	3,788	2,043	1,745
2004 - 05	4,550	2,207	2,343
Total	**16,481**	**8,089**	**8,392**

Source: MOE

Non-formal Education – In 2004-2005 there were 9 basic skills training centres: 2 in Vientiane Capital and 1 each in Phongsaly, Luangnamtha, Oudomxay, Saravan, Luangprabang, Huaphanh and Sayaboury. Basic vocational skills training are provided through vocational skills training centres and mobile teams. The training programmes are tailored to the needs of the learners and operate free of charge. After the training, the trainees are able to use the skills they have learned to generate income for their families. The Non-Formal Education Department has developed basic vocational skills courses in Carpentry, Food Processing, Sewing, Weaving, Small Enterprise, Tourism and others.

Vocational Education & Training – In 2005/2006 Lao PDR had a total of 12 Vocational Training Institutions, not only schools under the authority of MOE but also those under the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Information and Culture. These institutions amounted for a total of 2,675 students, while in 2000/2001 the same number of institutions was attended by 3,288 students. Though the number of Vocational Training Institutions is the same at the beginning and end of the mid-decade, the student population has shown a significant decrease in numbers – see Figure 26 below.

Figure 26: Vocational Education and Training 2000/1 to 2005/6

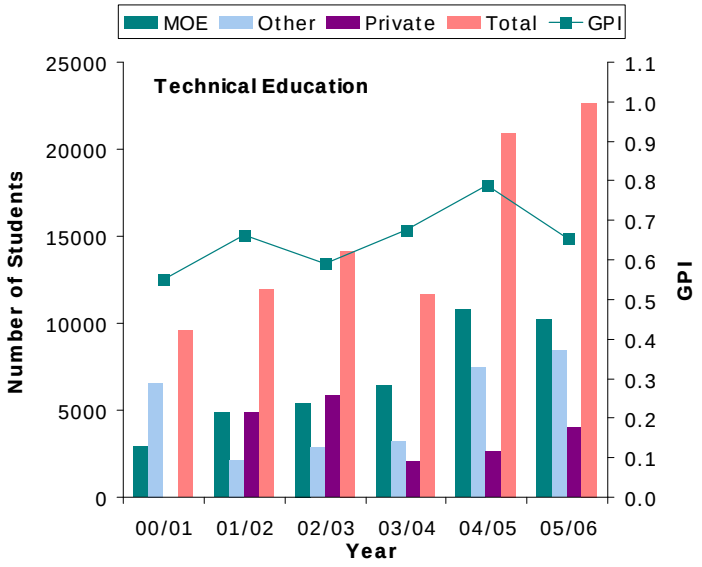


Vocational Training Programs for Grade 8 and Grade 11 Graduates – Total enrollment in all kinds of vocational and technical education and training programs has grown remarkably over the past half decade, at an average annual growth rate of 14.6 percent.

TVET and gender – In almost all programs, girls are significantly under-represented. In total, less than one third of all vocational education students are girls. A trend towards gender balance has improved very little over the past half decade.

Technical Education & Training – MOE has 17 Technical Education Institutions with a total of 10,219 students in 2005/2006. These institutions have flourished since the beginning of the decade, when there were only 5 institutions and 2,949 students. – see Figure 27 below.

Figure 27: Technical Education &Training, 2000/01 to 2005/06



The institutions offer two or three year programs intended for grade 11 graduates. In these programs as well, girls are significantly under-represented, with just one third of the total enrollment – see Table 65 below.

Table 65: Technical Education Institutions and Enrollment under MOE, 2005/06

School	Program	Enrollment				
		Total	Female	Male	% Fem	GPI
Pakpasack Technical School	11+3	1,929	1,046	883	54.2	1.18
Km3 Technical School	11+2	546	4	542	0.7	0.01
Luang prabang Technical School	11+2	581	164	417	28.2	0.39
Vientiane Technical School	11+3	1,510	713	797	47.2	0.89
Savannakhet Technical School	11+3	668	87	581	13.0	0.15
Politechnic School	11+3	889	139	750	15.6	0.19
Dong Kham Xang Ag. Tech. School	11+3	551	167	384	30.3	0.43
Pakse Technical School	11+2	1,513	229	1,284	15.1	0.18
Telecommunication School	11+3	222	79	143	35.6	0.55
Bolikhamsay Technical School	11+3	404	215	189	53.2	1.14
Sayabuly Technical School *	11+3	353	108	245	30.6	0.44
Bokeo Technical School	11+3	329	137	192	41.6	0.71
Mitaphab Vientiane Hanoi Tech. School	11+3	369	181	188	49.1	0.96
Xieng Khuang Technical School *	11+3	73	35	38	47.9	0.92
Huaphanh Technical School *	11+3	77	28	49	36.4	0.57
Oudomxay Technical School *	11+3	122	37	85	30.3	0.44
Attapeu Technical School *	11+3	83	34	49	41.0	0.69
Total		10,219	3,403	6,816	33.3	0.50

Source: MOE/ESITC

Apart from those of the MOE there are 16 Technical Education Institutions under the authority of other ministries, accounting for a total of 8,419 students in 2005/2006.

Again, there has been considerable growth from 10 institutions with a student population of 6601 in five years before. The programs are quite varied in program, duration, and gender distribution.

- Programs under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are dominated by male participants.
- Art programs under the Ministry of Information and Culture are even more strongly dominated by boys, while the dance program is dominated by girls.
- Health school programs under the Ministry of Health are dominated by girls, while Ministry of Finance programs are more balanced.

The private sector provides Lao DPR with a further 14 Technical Education Institutions, providing a service for 4,020 students in 2005/2006. Here the growth is even more astonishing as only five years earlier there were no private Technical Education Institutions – see Table 66 below.

Table 66: Technical Education Institutions and Enrollment, Other Ministries, 2005/06

Ministry and School	Program	Enrollment				
		Total	Female	Male	% Female	GPI
Ministry of Forestry & Ag. (Total)		1,734	516	1,218	29.8	0.42
Luang Prabang Agriculture Tech. School	11+3	644	188	456	29.2	0.41
Champassack Agriculture Tech. School	11+3	693	241	452	34.8	0.53
Bolikhamsay Forestry Tech. school	11+3	397	87	310	21.9	0.28
Ministry of Information & Culture		504	83	421	16.5	0.20
Vientiane Capital Art School	8+4	86	10	76	11.6	0.13
Luang Prabang Art School	8+4	166	16	150	9.6	0.11
Savannakhet Art School	8+4	196	15	181	7.7	0.08
National Music and Dance School	8+4	56	42	14	75.0	3.00
Ministry of Health		2,495	1,740	755	69.7	2.30
Vientiane Capital Health School	11+3	1,063	699	364	65.8	1.92
Luang prabang Health School	11+3	455	318	137	69.9	2.32
Savannakhet Health School	11+3	377	269	108	71.4	2.49
Khammouane Health School	11+3	240	191	49	79.6	3.90
Champassack Health School	11+3	360	263	97	73.1	2.71
Ministry of Finance	11+3	3,680	1,493	2,187	40.6	0.68
Dong Kham Xang Finance Tech. School	11+3	1,629	674	955	41.4	0.71
Luang Prabang Finance Tech. school	11+2	307	164	143	53.4	1.15
Pakse Finance Tech. School	11+2	1,653	606	1,047	36.7	0.58
Banking school	11+2	91	49	42	53.8	1.17
Private Institution (14 Institutions)		4,020	1,731	2,289	43.1	0.76
Total		12,433	5,563	6,870	44.7	0.81

Source: MOE/ESITC

Table 67: Goal 3 (Life Skills) Additional Indicators, 2005/06

1. Youth unemployment rate					NA	
2. Availability and utilization of school and community based counseling services for young people					NA	
3. National education standards and benchmarks include social, emotional, and behavioral skills					NA	
4. Number of incidences of reported violence in schools					NA	
5. Participation of young people and adults in accredited NFE programs	Programs Completed					
		Literacy	Primary	Lower Sec.	Upper Sec.	Pro-fessional
	Total	44,357	96,955	1,890	4,278	3,826
	Male	19,692	43,428	1,277	3,235	1,840
	Female	24,665	53,527	613	1,043	1,986

Source: MOE/ESITC

5.4 Significant Successes

TVET has accomplished a number of significant successes:

- The development of the technical and vocational education and training policy and strategy, undertaken mainly since the beginning of the decade.

- The fact that implementation is lagging should *not* be seen as failure. The economy is still in a state of transition, even if it is on the uphill slope. The challenge of TVET in transitional economies is to *get the labor market connection right*. Many kinds of TVET involve substantial investment and recurrent costs. Incurring such costs prior to getting the labor market connection right can lead to great wastage of financial and human resources.

- At the broad policy level, this challenge has now been met, and the establishment of the tripartite National Training Council (NTC) in 2002 represents a major advance and will enable the development of appropriate regulatory environment, programs and standards that will support employment, growth and development.

5.5 Remaining Challenges

Several challenges remain:

- The revision and development of TVET programs serving today's labor market as well as tomorrow's. Getting this market connection right will be a continuous challenge if TVET is to become an attractive option for further learning. In this context the lack of qualified trainers and instructors, teaching and learning materials and lack of management in TVET will continue to be significant challenges.

- The strict separation between general education and TVET provides a real challenge for improving the relevance of educational services provided in both sub-sectors. The separation between both education systems makes the transition from one to the other difficult, and therefore TVET is often regarded as being an unattractive option for further study.

- While EFA NPA Program 5 targets the "disadvantaged" there is too little evidence that the various TVET programs have yet succeeded in reaching the disadvantaged.

- Evidence shows it will remain a considerable challenge to establish and promote gender neutral and inclusive TVET programs.

- In the developing Lao economy careers will seldom be life-long and skills and competencies demanded on the labor market will change many times over the economically active period of a person's life. It is therefore essential to create a workforce that is able to adapt and make timely career decisions in the face of changing needs in the labor market.

Section 6: Improve the Quality and Relevance of Formal Primary and Lower Secondary Education

EFA NPA Program 6 - EFA Goal 6
Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living. This objective is reflected in EFA NPA 6 through which the MOE aims to improve the quality and relevance of both formal primary and lower secondary education.

6.1 Core Indicators

Table 68: Goal 6 (Quality) Core Indicators, 2005/06

INDICATOR	2000/1			2005/6		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1. Survival rate to Grade 5 (%)	59.8	59.8	**59.8**	60.7	59.6	**60.2**
2. Primary School teachers having the required academic qualifications	69.6	86.4	76.9	84.8	93.2	**88.7**
3. % of school teachers with required qualification by national standards*	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
ECCD	**50**	**83.2**	**83**	**53**	**83.9**	**83.7**
Primary Education	**34.4**	**53.3**	**42.8**	**46.8**	**62.0**	**53.9**
Lower Secondary Education	**22.9**	**31.3**	**26.1**	**29.9**	**37.9**	**33.1**
Complete Secondary Education	**58.7**	**56.6**	**57.8**	**64.8**	**63.8**	**64.4**
4. Pupil-teacher ratio	2000/1			2005/6		
Primary Education	**30.1**			**32.1**		
Secondary Education	**23.3**			**25.8**		
5. Pupil-class ratio	2000/1			2005/6		
Primary Education	**30.9**			**32.4**		
Secondary Education	**NA**			**48.5**		
6. Pupil-textbook ratio	2000/1			2005/6		
Primary Education	**0.48**			**0.22**		
Secondary Education	**NA**			**NA**		
7. Public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure	**10.1**			**14.0**		
8. Public expenditure on education as % of gross domestic product	**2.3**			**3.2**		
9. Public expenditure per pupil as % of GDP per capita**	2000/1			2005/6		
Primary Education	**3.2**			**3.23**		
Lower Secondary	**3.4**			**3.4**		
10. Percentage of schools with improved drinking water sources	**NA**			**NA**		
11. Percentage of schools with adequate sanitation facilities	**NA**			**NA**		

Notes for Table 69

Source: MOE/ESITC
** Figures from Table 26 and Table 70*
*** Figures from Table 62, Appendix 1 of ESDF Situation Analysis*

6.2 Policy Development

Student Learning Outcomes – Assessment of learning outcomes takes several different forms at different levels.[43] Schools assess students' learning outcomes monthly, per semester and yearly. Examinations in grades 1 through 4 are set by the School Principals and the teachers. The DEB is responsible for preparing the primary leaving examination papers and for organizing examinations, including formal and non-formal education and for issuing certificates for successful students.

The Provincial Educational Service (PES) is responsible for preparing examination papers and organizing examinations for lower secondary level including formal and non-formal schools and for issuing certificates to successful students.

Leaving examinations for teacher students and vocational students are supervised by the concerned departments, and the relevant educational organizations are responsible for organizing examinations and issuing certificates.

In March 2006, the Research Institute for Educational Sciences (RIES) initiated a pilot sample survey of student learning outcomes – see Table 80 below on "The Outcomes of Primary School" The first national Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) tested grade 5 pupils (in 3 subjects – Maths, Lao and The World Around Us). RIES plans to repeat and widen a second round and aims to develop its competence of assessing student learning outcomes, with the long term goal of participating in international studies.

Holistic Approach to Schooling – Support to the education sector has in the past been characterized by interventions which focused on one or two specific problems. While these interventions can be successful in addressing particular issues their impact is often limited due to the fact that other interrelated problems have been overlooked. MOE has therefore introduced a 'holistic approach to schooling' to improve quality of and access to education. This holistic approach to schooling, also referred to as Child Friendly Schools (CFS), is characterized by 6 dimensions:

[43] GOL. Ministry of Education, No. 1500/DOP.02. Decree on Implementing the Decentralization in Education Sector. Vientiane, March 03, 2002, § 2.3.5, Learning Assessment, Final Examination and Certificate Issuance.

1. Inclusive of All Children
2. Effective Teaching and Learning which is Relevant to Children's Lives
3. Healthy, Safe and Protective Environments
4. Gender-responsive Environments
5. Pupils, Parents and Community Members Participation
6. School Management and Leadership

The aim of this holistic approach to schooling is to guarantee that all school-age children complete the basic education cycle and receive relevant knowledge in an active and participative manner. A Child Friendly School builds on the notion that 'the total is more than the sum of its parts'. Further the 'school community' (school staff, community members and students) is encouraged to collaborate in improving the quality of 'their school'.

School Self Assessment Tools Linked to School Planning – As part of its Child Friendly School strategy the MOE is in the process of setting up systems to conduct yearly School Self Assessments (SSA) at school level. The SSA aims to help the 'school community' identify the current situation in school and prioritize needs for improvement. These priorities feed into a School Development Plan (SDP) which gives direction to the school community on how to address these problems.

School Health Policy – In 2005 the GOL formulated the Education and Health Vision 2020[44]. The MOE and MOH have agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Health Promoting Schools as part of a School Health Policy. The national Schools Health Policy aims to improve the health status of children in pre-primary and primary schools. It consists of 5 components: Personal Health and Life Skills; Health School Environment; Health and Nutrition Services; Control and Prevention of Common Diseases; and School and Community partnership. Strategy Guidelines, Indicators and Checklists for Accreditation have also been prepared to ensure effective implementation.

The School Health Policy addresses the third dimension of the holistic approach to schooling, 'Healthy, Safe and Protective Environments'. The implementation of this policy is of key importance since evidence suggests that for many children the health situation is an urgent concern, particularly for those children living in rural and remote areas.

Instructional Materials – The primary responsibility for both procurement and distribution of materials is held by the Instructional Materials Unit (IMU) of the Department of Finance (DOF). The officers carrying out this function are usually teachers, untrained in the specialized field of work. The IMU lacks computer links and human resources that could improve the provision of management information and thus long-term planning. In addition there are warehousing and transportation problems.

Supervision – MOE has the overall responsibility for management and supervision of schools. Supervision and inspection are provided by the PES and DEB. Decree No. 62/PM[45] gave MOE authority to establish or abolish grassroots educational organizations, define the organization and role of PES and DEB, appoint and discharge education officers at all levels, and issue as necessary various educational decisions, rules, orders, regulations and notices.

In practice, however, power is shared between the Provinces and the MOE, see Chapter 2, Budgeting and Planning.

[44] Education Vision aims for universal literacy, compulsory education, and universal lower secondary education. For Health vision 2020 aims to free the health care services in Lao PDR from the state of underdevelopment and to ensure health care services coverage, justice and equity in order the quality of life of all ethnic groups.

[45] Prime Minister's Decree Related to Organization of the Ministry of Education No. 62/PM of 07April 2008 replaced Decree No. 167/PMO, dated 9 September, 1999

6.3 Analysis of Progress

Teacher Qualifications – Since 1999-2000, primary teachers have been required to obtain 8 years of formal schooling, followed by 3-years of pre-service teacher training (8+3) or 11 years of formal schooling, followed by 1-year of pre-service teacher training (11+1). From 2008-09, the 11+1 programme will be upgraded to 11+2 and mainstreamed into all Teacher Training Schools (TTSs)/ Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). Therefore, the overall required qualifications for primary school teachers are those who have obtained 8+3 or 11+1 teaching certificates.

Lower and upper secondary teachers are required to obtain 11 years of formal schooling, followed by 3-years of pre-service teacher training for lower secondary teachers (11+3) and 4- or 5-years of pre-service training for upper secondary teachers (11+4 and 11+5). The 3-year programmes are currently offered in five TTCs for the following seven courses: Natural Science, Social Science, English, French, Lao Language, Mathematics and General Science, whereas 4-/5-year training programmes are provided by the Faculty of Education and National University of Laos (NUOL). Hence the required qualifications for lower secondary teachers are those who have obtained 11+3 teaching certificates and upper secondary teachers are those who have obtained 11+4 or 11+5 teaching certificates. As part of the pre-service teacher training, students are required to complete a 3-month practical training.

There are in-service teacher upgrading centres in every province. However, training is currently institutionalized only for primary school teachers. Training for secondary school teachers is organized on an ad-hoc basis in the context of donor projects. Once training for secondary teachers is mainstreamed, TTCs and TTSs will be facilitating courses for both primary and lower secondary teachers in cooperation with teacher upgrading centres. Within 3 years starting from 2007, it is expected that 3,000 secondary school teachers will have received their in-service training.

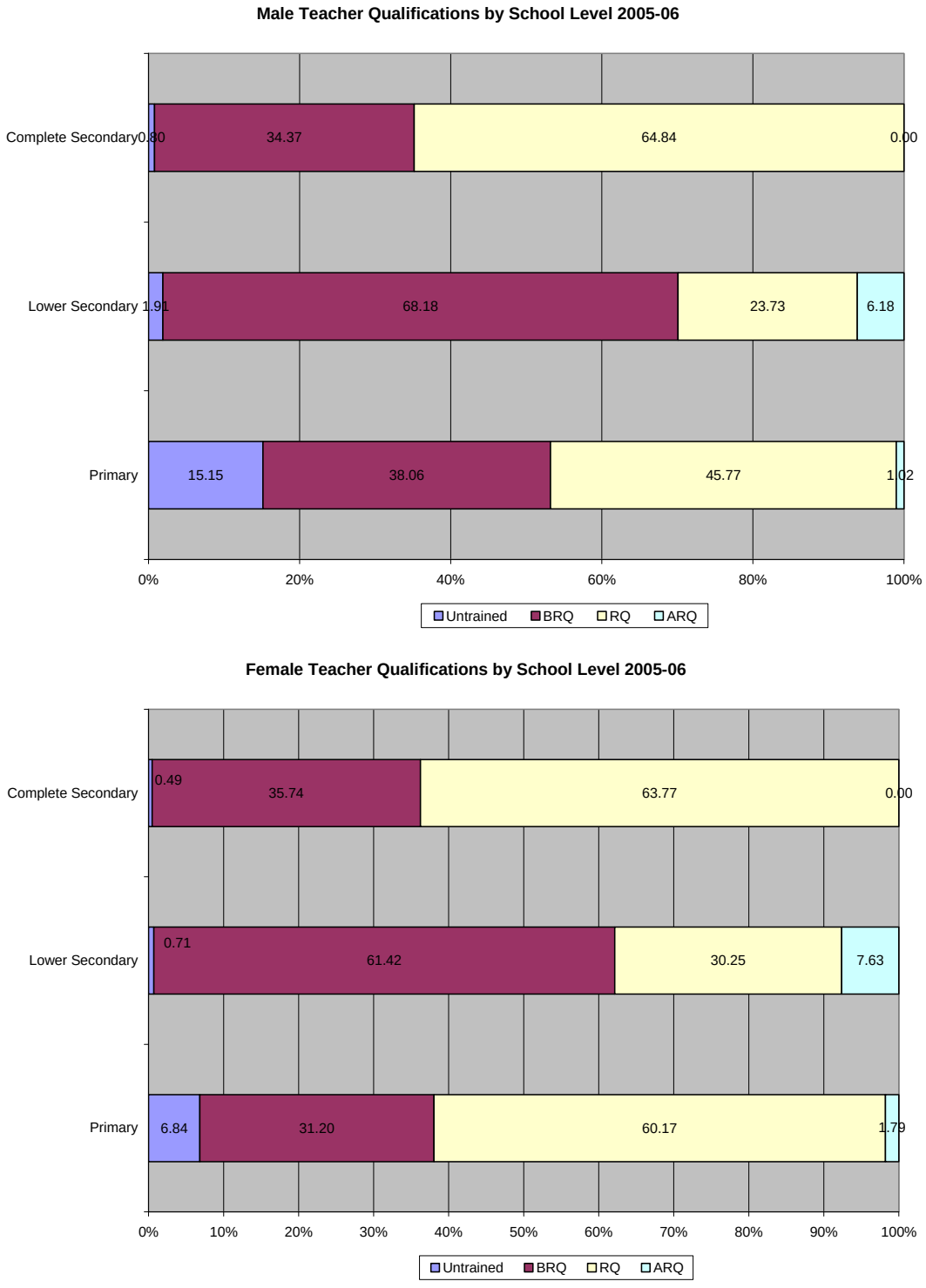
Table 69: Teacher Qualifications, by Gender and School Level, 2005/06

School Level	Untrained			BRQ			RQ			ARQ		
	M	F	GPI	M	F	GPI	M	F	GPI	M	F	GPI
Primary	15.2	6.8	0.45	38.1	31.2	0.82	45.8	60.2	1.31	1.0	1.8	1.77
Lower Secondary	1.9	0.7	0.37	68.2	61.4	0.90	23.7	30.3	1.27	6.2	7.6	1.23
Complete Secondary	0.8	0.5	0.62	34.4	35.7	1.04	64.8	63.8	0.98	0	0	NA

Source: Calculated by Inthasone Phetsiriseng from ESITC 2005-06 data,

(BRQ: Below Required Qualification, RQ: Required Qualification, ARG: Above Required Qualification).

Figure 28: Teacher Qualifications Distribution by Gender and School Level 2005-06



Source: Inthasone Phetsiriseng, generated from ESITC 2005-06 data.

ECCD – The vast majority of the kindergarten and pre-primary class teachers in Lao PDR have undergone a one year pre-service training at a teacher college. There are two systems of pre-school pre-service training:

1. One year pre-service training (11+1) Certificate level 4 (post-secondary non-tertiary).
2. A 30 week in-service training (in ELPS Project) equivalent certificate level.

After completion of the pre-service training the teachers are awarded with a Teachers Certificate at post-secondary non-tertiary level (level 4). Further in-service training is provided on an occasional basis. The lack of higher education opportunities for pre-primary teachers seriously hampers the development of pre-primary education since many teachers are forced to study for other fields where they can increase their salaries

The salaries for ECCD teachers working in public schools are less than those of their colleagues holding the bachelors degree. As the level of salary is based on the level of training (certificate or degree), the ECCD teachers are paid at primary teacher salary level. For the school year 2005/2006 the average salary of an ECCD teacher amounted to Kip 5.555 million a year while the salary for a public primary teacher is only slightly higher at Kip 5.563 million per year.

Primary Level – The inefficiency of primary education is strongly related to the quality of the teachers. In 2005-06, 11.6 percent of primary teachers had never gone through a pre-service teacher training programme (15.2% for male and 6.8% for female). Furthermore, 34.9 percent of primary teachers are below the required qualification level (38.1% for male and 31.2% for female). Though many of them have undergone in-service teacher training through the teacher upgrading programme, their qualifications remain the same (the only difference being they receive an increase of one step higher in their salary scheme). Therefore, although the teacher upgrading programme has been effective in some ways, it does not provide sufficient incentives to attract untrained teachers. Due to the high attrition rate of primary school teachers and ineffective teacher deployment policy in rural remote areas, untrained teachers are contracted to fill these posts. Thus though the primary teacher in-service training programme has been institutionalized and remains an important teacher training programme, it has not been able to keep up with the pace of the high teacher attrition rates in rural remote areas.

Secondary Level – During the past few decades, due to the rapid expansion of primary education, there has been an increasing demand for lower secondary education, and hence for lower secondary teachers. To address this issue the MOE implemented the 8+3 lower secondary teacher training programme i.e. 8 years of formal schooling and 3-years of pre-service teacher training. Although

these teachers were certified to teach in lower secondary schools, the quality of teaching was low, particularly teachers in the natural science subjects who struggled due to their limited knowledge of the subject matter. Foreseeing the problem, since 2000, the MOE replaced the 8+3 lower secondary teacher training programme by the 11+3 programme i.e. lower secondary teachers are required to obtain 11 years of formal schooling, followed by 3-years of pre-service teacher training. By 2005-06, 49 percent of the lower secondary trained teachers were still of the 8 + 3 programme (50 percent for male and 48 percent for female). Nevertheless, there were also 13 percent of 11+1 and 3 percent 5+4 primary trained teachers promoted to teach in lower secondary schools. 1 percent of the lower secondary teachers were untrained. In total 66 percent of teachers in lower secondary schools are below the required qualifications (68 percent for male and 61 percent for female). Similarly, 35.0 percent of lower secondary teachers (34.4 percent male and 35.7 percent female) are below the required qualifications (see Table 69 and Figure 28 above). The issue of these high percentages of teachers below the required qualifications in secondary schools is a major challenge in terms of improving lower secondary education as well as for the expansion of the 4-year lower secondary education system.

Table 70: Primary Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR), 2000/01 to 2005/06

	Pupils	Teachers	PTR
2000/01	828,113	27,475	30.1
2001/02	852,857	28,403	30.0
2002/03	875,300	28,571	30.6
2003/04	884,629	27,646	32.0
2004/05	890,821	27,586	32.3
2005/06	891,881	27,776	32.1

Source: MOE/ESITC

Pupil Teacher Ratio in Primary Schools – In the primary education sub-sector there has been an increase of 2 pupils per teacher between 2000/2001 (PTR of 30.1) and 2005/-2006 (PTR of 32.1) – see Table 70 opposite. The increase occurred mainly between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 when the number of primary school teachers declined by 925. As observed there are great provincial differences with Phongsaly having the lowest PTR of 26.9 and Oudomxsay having the highest PTR of 46.4 in 2005/2006.

Analysis by Poorest, Poor, and Non-poor Districts – Regarding quality and poverty levels, the conclusions are less clear-cut: (a) Pupil/teacher ratios (PTRs) for three of the 5 years are higher in poorest districts, as shown in Table 71; (b) Teachers are less trained in the poorest districts: (c) Textbooks, teacher guides and supplementary instructional materials have been targeted only at the poorest districts; (d) Teacher upgrading and in-service training programs are mostly targeted to poorest districts.

Table 71: Pupil/Teacher Ratio in Primary Schools in Districts by Poverty Level

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
70 Non-poor districts	30.0	30.0	30.3	30.7	30.8
25 Poor districts	31.1	30.3	30.5	32.6	32.4
47 Poorest districts	29.8	30.1	31.7	34.5	35.9
Total	30.1	30.0	30.6	31.9	32.2

Source: MPOE/ESITC. Template of districts categorized by poverty level

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Secondary Schools – With the rapid expansion of secondary education, the PTR has risen by 2.5 students per teacher resulting in a national average PTR of 25.8 for the year 2005/2006. There were, however, great provincial differences with Attapeu having the lowest PTR of 18.9 and Borikamsay having the highest PTR of 35.3 in 2005/2006. Although the PTR in secondary school was lower than the target set in TESAP i.e. 27 students per teacher, the average class sizes were still high with 45.7 for lower secondary school and 53.4 for upper secondary (see Table 73 below). The increases of the average class size in the upper secondary education indicate the lack of subject teachers particularly in mathematics and natural sciences. Therefore, the low PTR does not necessary mean that there are adequate teachers in secondary education. The distributions of teachers by subject matter are uneven i.e. there are far more teachers in social sciences than teachers in mathematics and natural sciences. The congestions in upper secondary schools can be reduced by providing more teachers in the areas of mathematics and natural sciences and additional classrooms where needed.

Table 72: Pupil Teacher Ratio in Secondary Schools 2005

LEVEL	Ratio
Lower Secondary	23.0
Upper Secondary	28.3

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Table 73: Average Class Size in Secondary Schools 2005/06

Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary	
Grade 6	47.8	Grade 9	54.0
Grade 7	45.1	Grade 10	53.4
Grade 8	43.7	Grade 11	52.7
LS Total	45.7	US Total	53.4

Source: ESITC

Teacher Education Strategy and Action Plan (TESAP) 2006-2015 – TESAP was approved by the Government's Cabinet Meeting in February 2006 and outlines overall goals, directions, objectives and targets. It consists of five strategic areas which aim to support the EFA NPA. The TESAP emphasizes policy analysis for improvement of management of the teacher education

system, improved instructional methodology, provision of an effective system for continuing professional development and enhanced status and incentives of teachers and teacher educators in order to ensure sufficient teachers to match the enrollment rates in general education.

The scope of the TEIs will be widened to enable all TEIs to provide all programs and to provide in-service teacher training and upgrading programs. At least one TEI will be upgraded to be able to offer a Bachelors of Education (B. Ed.) degree for pre-school and lower secondary school teachers.

Table 74: Target Professional Standards for 2015

Target Professional Standards 2015		
Level	***%***	***Target***
Pre-school	3	5+3 level (Training)
	80	8+3, 11+1, or 11+2
	15	11+3 (Tertiary)
	2	11+5 (Bachelor)
Primary	75	8+3, 11+1, or 11+2 level
	15	11+3 (Tertiary education)
	10	11+5 (Bachelor degrees)
Lower secondary	70	11+3(Tertiary education)
	30	11+5 (Bachelor degrees)
Upper secondary	15	11+3 (Tertiary education)
	77	11+5 (Bachelor degrees)
	5	Masters degree
	3	PhD degree

The overall directions of TESAP focus on the improvement of management of the teacher education system, including adequate teacher production and distribution at all levels to meet the needs of education growth and in accordance with the NSEDP and EFA NPA. TESAP emphasizes providing teachers with adequate conditions and facilities to perform their teaching tasks and responsibilities. Teachers are placed at the centre of decision making related to quality improvement. TESAP aims to ensure that teachers receive continuous and systematic upgrading related to their teaching subjects in order for them to become highly skilled teachers and to raise the status of teachers by improving their professional quality and providing appropriate policies for extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. TESAP includes operational plans together with scheduling for implementing activities, quarterly and annual budgets.

Access to Textbooks – Access to textbooks has been particularly problematic over the past half decade, especially for primary schooling – see Figure 30 and Table 75. Under the first Education Development Project[46], three sets of new primary school textbooks and teacher guides were produced and distributed – "Lao language", "Mathematics", and "World Around Us". The target was one set of books for two students, and this target appears to have been met in 2000/01.

[46] Externally financed by the World Bank

Figure 29: Number of Sets of Textbooks per Primary School Student, 2000/01 - 2005/06

The last printing was in 2000. As a consequence, there was a shortage of textbooks and teachers' guides in remote areas.

Table 75: Number Textbooks per Primary School Student, 2000/01-2005/06

YEAR	Sets of 3 per Student
2000/01	0.47
2001/02	0.50
2002/03	0.45
2003/04	0.29
2004/05	0.27
2005/06	0.22

Source: MOE/ESITC

In 2006, GOL and a consortium of development partners agreed to finance a new round of textbooks. Revision of the existing primary school textbooks and subsequent production and distribution is now under way, financed by the Second Education Development Project and MOE has agreed on regular re-printing and distribution of primary school textbooks[47].

Declining Total Fertility Rates – One of the most profound changes occurring in Laos over the past decade is the *decline in fertility rates*, which was found in the 2005 census and the Lao Reproductive Health Survey 2005 to be *substantially faster than anticipated*. It had been observed in recent years in some of the major towns that the number of primary school teachers required was declining, because enrollments were declining, as a result of the falling numbers of school age children.

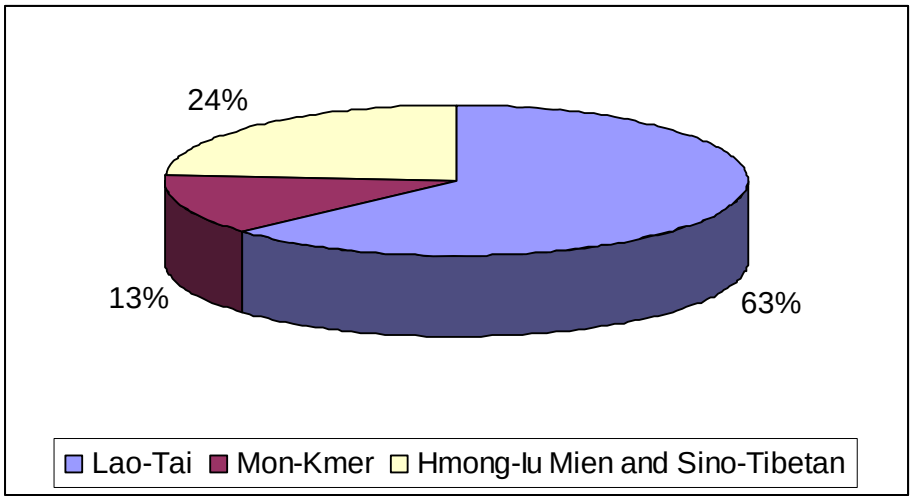
Declining Total Fertility Rates (TFR) and the Ethnic Composition – At least as significant as the overall decline in fertility rates was differential *ethnic composition of the decline*. In the urban areas, the fertility rate has stabilized at just over 2.04, which is close to the fertility rates in Europe and

[47] According to financing policy, primary school textbooks are sold on the market in the urban areas: but, they are provided free of charge to schools in rural and remote areas.

possibly even below the population replacement rate in Laos on account of the relatively high mortality rate.

In the rural "on road" areas, the fertility rate is still relatively high at 3.70. In rural "off road" areas (that is, in remote and often ethnic communities), the fertility rate is also still quite high at 4.74. Here is an obvious, if complex and diffuse, linkage with ethnicity. There are significant implications for education policy.

Figure 30: Composition of Primary School Students by Main Ethnic Groups



Ethnic Composition and Education – In the past half-decade (2001/02 - 2005/06), the percentage of the number of primary school Lao-Tai students declined by 7.6 percent to a composition percentage of 62.6 percent in 2005/2006. During the same period the percentage of the number of Mon-Khmer rose by 6.6 percent to a composition percentage of 24.5 percent, while the percentage of the number of the Hmong-Iu Mien and Sino-Tibetan students rose by 4.3 percent to a composition percentage of 13.0 percent – see Figure 30 above and Table 76 below. The figures indicate that during the past half-decade, there was a significant increase in the enrolment of ethnic children in primary schools.

Table 76: Composition of Primary School Students by Main Ethnic Groups

Number	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
Lao -Tai	607,976	594,927	597,184	594,566	582,146	571,030	558,010
Mon-Khmer	148,481	154,076	168,124	184,844	196,141	207,117	218,164
Hmong-Iu Mien & Sino-Tibetan	72,239	76,824	84,947	93,562	102,637	109,980	115,618
Total	828,696	825,827	850,255	872,972	880,924	888,127	891,792
Percent							
Lao -Tai	73.4	72	70.2	68.1	66.1	64.3	62.6
Mon-Khmer	17.9	18.7	19.8	21.2	22.3	23.3	24.5
Hmong-Iu Mien & Sino-Tibetan	8.7	9.3	10	10.7	11.7	12.4	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: MOE, Annual Bulletin, 1999/2000 – 2005/06

Meanwhile a similar but more irregular development occurred for primary school teachers. For teachers, however, the changes were smaller. The percentage of the number of Lao-Tai teachers declined by 0.5 percent. During the same period the percentage of the number of Mon-Khmer teachers rose by 0.3 percent, while the percentage of the number of Hmong-Iu Mien and Sino - Tibetan teachers rose by 0.2 percent. The figures indicate that during the past half-decade, there has been an increase in the number of ethnic teachers teaching in primary schools.

Figure 31: Composition of Primary School Teachers by Main Ethnic Groups

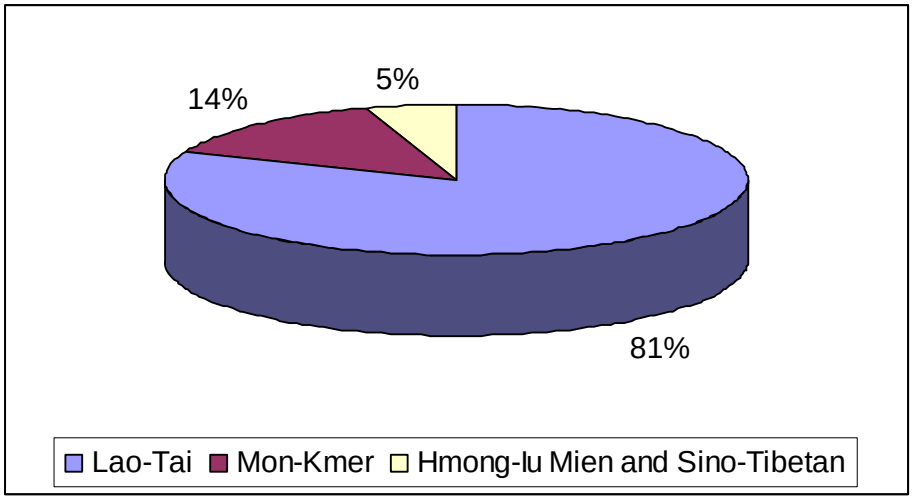


Table 77: Ethnic Distribution of Teachers by the Three Traditional Categories

Number	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
Lao -Tai	22,810	22,479	23,016	22,980	22,189	22,342	22,447
Mon-Khmer	3,459	3,587	3,893	4,002	3,970	3,736	3,888
Hmong-Iu Mien and Sino-Tibetan	1,250	1,319	1,409	1,518	1,422	1,439	1,457
Total	27,519	27,385	28,318	28,500	27,581	27,517	27,792
Percent	**99/00**	**00/01**	**01/02**	**02/03**	**03/04**	**04/05**	**05/06**
Lao -Tai	82.9	82.1	81.3	80.6	80.5	81.2	80.8
Mon-Khmer	12.6	13.1	13.7	14	14.4	13.6	14
Hmong-Iu Mien and Sino-Tibetan	4.5	4.8	5	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: MOE, Annual Bulletin, 1999/2000 – 2005/06.

In 2005--/2006 the proportion of the teachers from Lao-ŒTai group to the students of the same language group was 40/1,000 while the figures of 5 years ago was 1,000/38 (see table 78 below).

Table 78: Proportion of teachers per 1,000 students by 3 major linguistic groups

	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
Lao -Tai	38	38	39	39	38	39	40
Mon-Khmer	23	23	23	22	20	18	18
Hmong-Iu Mien	17	17	17	16	14	13	13

Source: MoE, Statistics book 1999/2000 – 2005/06.

Sources of Disparity – The reasons for the existing disparities in access to primary schooling today are complex and inter-related. Lao PDR is a poor, largely rural, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic society. Compared with less remote communities, more remote communities are less likely to have close access to schools, they tend to be poorer and they tend to be predominantly ethnic groups. Each of these factors alone contributes to low participation rates, late entry into school, high repetition rates and early departure from school. Together they account for most of the geographic variation, that is, between provinces, between districts within provinces, between communities within districts and even between families within communities.

The effects of the factors described above are not uniform. For example, it is *not* the case that all ethno-linguistic groups display low participation rates, late entry into school, high repetition rates,

and early departure from school. All ethnic groups vary considerably in culture, including attitudes toward education and in degree of economic and social integration. This adds to the complexity and leads to three important conclusions.

- First, different communities have different needs, so there can be no "one-size fits all" interventions.
- Second, if interventions do not closely match the needs of the community, they will not be effective; stakeholder based identification of appropriate interventions is needed.
- Third, because multiple factors are involved (poverty, remoteness, and culture), integrated multi-sectoral approaches are more likely to be effective than "stand-alone" single-sector approaches.

6.4 Additional Indicators

Table 79: Goal 6 (Quality) Additional Indicators, 2005/06

INDICATORS	TARGETS
1. Percent of pupils who have mastered nationally defined basic learning competencies (%)	NA
2. School life expectancy	NA
3. Instructional Hours: • Primary education • Secondary education	NA
4. Percentage distribution of teachers who attended the in-service training programs by type and duration (%)	NA
5. Percent of teachers trained in multi-grade teaching methods (%)	NA
6. Pass rates for national examination scores (%)	NA
7. Percent of schools with libraries or reading centers (%)	NA
8. Percent of primary school going children who have intestinal worm (helminth) infestation (%)	> 50%
9. Rate of incidence of violence reported in schools (%)	NA

Source: MOE/ESITC

The Outcomes of Primary School – Students who stay the course are expected to have learned how to read and write i.e. have basic literacy in Lao; be numerate and to have knowledge and understanding of the world. Using a sample of schools[48] a grade 5 national achievement survey was conducted in 2006 by the National Research Institute for Educational Sciences, NRIES. Some conclusions of the survey are quoted below.

[48] 362 schools 7350 pupils, and 459 of their teachers. Data collection was conducted in March 2006.

In the subjects Lao language and the World Around Us, the results were as might be expected: but, in mathematics the achievement was very low – see Table 80 below. 65 percent were assessed to be at the pre-functional level in mathematics. There were large differences in achievement in all three subject areas among provinces. There were hardly any differences between boys and girls. But there were differences between pupils from different home backgrounds (as measured by level of parental education and possessions in the home).

Lao-Tai tended to score higher than other ethnic groups. Pupils in private schools scored much higher than pupils in state schools. Pupils in schools with school heads who were female scored higher than those in schools with a male head, even after the effect of the home backgrounds of pupils had been removed. The variation in achievement was very different among schools.

Table 80: Percentages of pupils reaching functionality levels in Lao language, mathematics, and the World Around Us

Functionality		Lao Language	Mathematics	World Around Us
		%	%	%
Independent	Reached the level of reading & mathematics to enable independent learning in Grade 6	17.0	1.0	42.1
Functional	Reached the level for functional participation in Laos society	78.4	33.6	42.0
Pre functional	Not reached the level considered to be a minimum for functional purposes in Laotian society	4.6	65.4	15.9

Source: ESDF Situation Analysis (adapted) Table 5.

The large variation among provinces in average scores was matched by variations in the availability of school resources. Some provinces had relatively low resources and others high. In terms of human resources (teachers and school heads) there was more variation between schools within provinces than between provinces. Because of the low number of schools in the sample in some provinces the report suggests that in those provinces an audit is undertaken of the resources in the schools.

Textbooks and Teachers' Guides – The report also provides a detailed picture of textbooks available in primary schools over the past two years. Textbooks have been differentiated depending whether they belong to the pupils or have been provided by the school. At national level, and considering all primary grades, there were between 3 to 4 pupils per textbook for Lao Language and Mathematics, and 10 for the World Around Us.

The picture is worse, though, when looking at the availability of textbooks provided by the school by poverty level, since there are more textbooks available in non-poor as compared with poor and poorest districts.

6.5 Significant Successes

During the first five years of this decade Lao PDR has witnessed some significant successes in both access to and quality of education:

- There is a Teacher Education Strategy and Action Plan, TESAP. It promises important improvements in the remainder of the decade and beyond.

- The quantitative improvement in primary school teacher qualifications over the past half decade. The fact that a very high proportion of secondary school teachers are qualified is a further significant achievement.

- The first World Bank supported Education Development Project (EDP1) was successful in providing schools and textbooks, especially in poor communities, and the second project (EDP2) is in the process of providing the same kinds of outputs.

- The LABEP Ethnic Teacher Group Training program was found successful as the graduates from the program on average were viewed as better than graduates from the normal program. In spite of low education levels of the trainees on entry, the graduates from these programs were found well suited for teaching in grade 1 to 3.

- As part of the Teacher Upgrading Program MOE, with support from development partners, has been successful in providing training of over 9100 unqualified teachers in poor, remote and ethnic group communities since 1992.

- For the first time the outcomes of Primary Education have been tested objectively using a sample of schools and of students.

6.6 Remaining Challenges

These significant successes are matched by equally significant challenges:

- The persisting large disparities in core indicators across districts along with evidence, from the sample survey carried out by NRIES, of significant variation in learning outcomes of primary education across schools.

- Poor achievement in mathematics which could have a serious effect on the skill and competency levels of the labor force for a global economy.

- The existence of considerable variation in the input levels of textbooks.

- The gradual upgrading of the education and training level of the existing stock of primary school teachers in order to improve teaching and learning methods will be an enduring challenge.

- The task of providing qualified primary school teachers to these remote communities and other communities where unqualified teachers are serving will also be a major challenge. This problem is exacerbated by the practice of "informal promotion" of qualified primary school teachers to be lower secondary school teachers.

- It is essential for the MOE to develop innovative policies towards newly graduated teachers preferring not to return to their communities and teach. The fact that many graduates prefer other jobs than that of teaching is particularly problematic for ethnic and remote areas where the teachers are most needed.

Section 7: Management and Administration

EFA NPA Program 7
To increase the effectiveness of the education planning, administration and management system

The MDA exercise did not entail a full investigation of the management of the NPA since the development of the ESDF is intended to undertake just such a review. However, there are two areas which have surfaced during the review of the six preceding NPA programs. These are issues concerned with monitoring and evaluation and human resource development.

7.1 Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring and evaluation activities range from checking whether a project activity has been completed, to establishing the values of agreed indicators, to qualitative studies which try to explain why programs are functioning well or not, to impact evaluation where the outcomes of the education process are researched and accounted for.

It has been observed in each of the NPA Programs that there is a lack of regular monitoring and supportive supervision from PES and DEB staff at school level. Three factors seem to be present at pre-school, primary, secondary and NFE levels:

(1) The lack of sufficient numbers of provincial and district technical staff to provide support;
(2) The skills and knowledge of provincial and district technical staff is sometimes inappropriate; and
(3) Provincial and district technical staff are hindered by a shortage of funds for monitoring and supervision.

Taken together these shortcomings hinder the GOL's aim of improving the quality of education. Teachers and school administrators require regular support from the provincial and district staff. At present monitoring and evaluation activities are spread over all departments of the MOE. In brief, these are:

1. There is a Steering Committee for Projects which, through its secretariat within the Department of Planning and Cooperation, undertakes "higher" level monitoring eg to check that project activities are in line with loan agreements, whether covenants are being met.

2. EMIS activities already have a central place in the MOE – the Education Statistics and Information Technology Center (ESITC). This center provides the overall system indicator values for each project.

3. But, at present M&E is undertaken within departments and within projects as part of routine administrative arrangements. It is realised that there is a growing need for technical skills and knowledge to guide and direct M&E efforts.

4. Plans are well advanced to recruit a firm for the period 08/09 to set up an M&E system. The task of preparing the new M&E system has been given to the Education National Inspection Committee which eventually become a department of the MOE.

The MDA exercise revealed, in the lack of clear historical tracking of the values of EFA indicators, that further institutional strengthening of EMIS and the ESITC is necessary. An effective EMIS is required to deliver to users in the MOE and elsewhere reliable data in a timely way and in formats which are "user-friendly"[49].

M&E also should include the processes and outcomes of education. To undertake studies in these areas require advanced social science research skills. So far the RIES has, with external assistance, undertaken a study of student learning outcomes at grade 5. No study of the processes of learning and teaching has been conducted.

7.2 Human Resource Development

Human resource development at all levels is one which the on-going development of the ESDF will address. However, in relation to M&E the work for this report has highlighted not only the need for enhanced skills and additional staff within the ESITC but also across the other Departments. The MOE has in hand the commissioning of a capacity for M&E within a new department. There will also be a need for persons to be appointed or assigned within each department and at PES level to undertake both routine monitoring and special studies which will add to understanding the trends in indicators and to be able to assess what kind of interventions will be appropriate. The development of such skills takes time and commitment.

[49] The MOE commissioned a report, Stocktaking And Diagnostics Of Education Management Information System In Lao PDR, in 2007.

Section 8: Gender Parity and Equality

EFA Goal 5

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

The EFA NPA argued that there were two Strategic and Cross-Cutting Issues for EFA.

- The first was 1 Developing relevant deconcentrated organizational structures and capacity for education management. This became Program 7 and was addressed in the previous section.
- The second is Gender Equity. Throughout the previous sections on Programs 1 – 7 consideration of gender has been suffused in the accounts of progress, successes and challenges.

However, such is the importance of achieving gender equity to the social and economic development of the nation that this additional section will attempt to take an overview of what has been achieved and what and how to make further progress.

The MDG 3 is to *promote gender equality and empower women*. The target is to: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. The progress indicators include two which are within the education sector:

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old

Note: The second target is addressed under Program 4, Youth and Adult Literacy.

Gender-based discrimination remains one of the most intractable constraints to realizing the right to education. Without overcoming this obstacle, Education for All cannot be achieved. Girls are a majority among out-of-school children and youth. The education of girls and women has a powerful trans-generational effect and is a key determinant of social development and women's empowerment. Hence, progress in increasing girls' participation in basic education is of the utmost importance.

GOL recognizes that it will not be able to realize the goals of reducing poverty and improving national education, health and population indicators without the active participation of all women,

and particularly poor and ethnic women. Therefore the GOL considers gender to be a strategic and cross-cutting issue for achieving the targets set out in the EFA NPA.

8.1 Core Indicators

Table 81: Goal 5 (Gender) Core Indicators, 2000/01 to 2005/06

INDICATORS		GPI Value	
		2000/1	2005/6
1. Literacy		0.79	0.77
2. GER in ECCD		1.07	1.04
3. GIR in primary education		0.86	0.91
4. NIR in primary education		0.95	0.98
5. GER in primary education		0.86	0.88
6. NER in primary education		0.92	0.94
7. Survival rate to Grade 5		1.00	0.98
8. GER in secondary education		0.74	0.79
Lower secondary education		0.74	0.81
Upper secondary education		0.70	0.75
9. NER in secondary education		1.00	1.13
Lower secondary education		0.96	1.02
Upper secondary education		1.38	1.41
10. Transition rates			
Primary to Lower Secondary education		0.93	0.95
Lower Secondary to Upper secondary education		0.98	1.02
		2000/1	2005/6
11. Percentage of female teachers in primary education		43.8%	46.8%
12. Percentages of female enrollment		2000/1	2005/6
Primary education		45.4%	46.1%
Lower Secondary education		41.7%	43.6%
Upper Secondary education		39.9%	42.3%
Vocational and Technical education *		35.7%	38.7%
13. Percentages of repeaters**		2000/1	2005/6
Primary Education	Boys	21.8%	19.3%
	Girls	19.1%	17.0%
Lower secondary education	Boys	3.7%	1.4%
	Girls	3.9%	1.8%
Upper secondary education	Boys	2.1%	2.2%
	Girls	0.6%	0.8%
Vocational and Technical education	Boys	NA	NA
	Girls	NA	NA

Notes:

* Includes vocational training institutions under MOE, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Culture and Information and technical training institutions under MOE, Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, and 14 private institutions.

** This shows what percentages of boys and girls who repeat at these levels ie for 2000/1 – there were 453,144 boys enrolled in Grades 1 to 5. 95,757 of these were repeaters ie 21.1%

8.2 Policy Development

Legislative, policy and institutional reform, in conformance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – Gender equality is an important national goal. It is reflected in the Constitution, which guarantees all Lao citizens equality before the law, irrespective of sex, social status, education, faith and ethnic groups (Article 35) and equal rights in the political, economic, cultural and social fields and family affairs (Article 37). It is also reflected in major international commitments, such as the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is reflected in the establishment of a National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW). The Education Law gives all Lao citizens the right to education without discrimination for their ethnicity, origin, religion, gender, age and social status. The NGPES establishes a gender mainstreaming strategy for poverty reduction. Further the GOL has ratified the Law for the Development and Protection of Women,

Gender review of education plans, curriculum and textbooks – In order to ensure gender mainstreaming in education in primary education, all curriculum developers both for formal and non-formal education were trained. This resulted in gender sensitive supplementary materials (through LABEB) and the new primary curriculum and textbooks (under EDPII). Gender Training Workshops were conducted for senior MOE, PES and DEB officials, TTCs and TTSs directors/deputy directors, teacher trainers, school administrators and teachers of targeted primary schools.

8.3 Analysis of Progress

General Trends – Apart from the indicators listed in Table 81 above, gender distributions and GPIs, as well as the main social disparities, are described for all EFA NPA Programs 1 – 6 below.

GPI Trends and Projections – Virtually all GPIs are moving toward parity. The observed trends have been statistically projected to 2015 to assess the likelihood of reaching gender parity by that date, where the interpretation of "parity" in practice ranges between 0.97 and 1.03.[50] Table 81 above and those below contain the *GPIs for the indicators, not the indicators themselves*. The values of the indicators are given under each of the 6 Programs. Projections are only extrapolations of current trends.

ECCD – During the reporting period GPI for GER has moved progressively towards gender parity, from 1.07 in 2000/2001 to 1.04 in 2005/2006 (see Figure 32 and Table 82 below). It is estimated that parity in GER for ECCD will be reached by 2015. Unless the trend changes, however, it is likely that

[50] Simple log-linear projection from 2000/2001 was used

there will remain a small gender bias in the distribution between public and private providers of ECCD services.

Figure 32: GPIs for ECCD

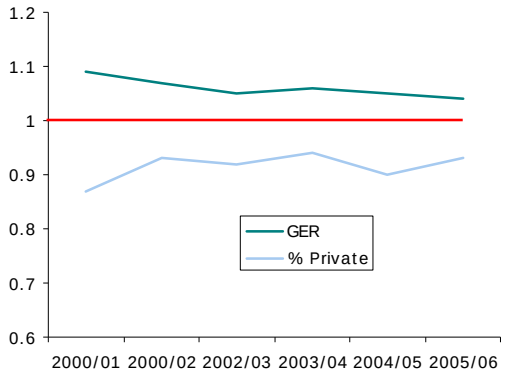


Table 82: GPIs for ECCD

Year	GER	% Private
1991/92	1.20	0.78
2000/01	1.09	0.87
2001/02	1.07	0.93
2002/03	1.05	0.92
2003/04	1.06	0.94
2004/05	1.05	0.90
2005/06	1.04	0.93
Projection 2015	1.00	0.95

Source: MOE/ESITC.

Primary School – From Table 83 below it can be seen that although almost all of the indicators for primary school show GPIs that are *approaching* parity over the period 2000/2001 to 2005/2006, when projected to 2015/2016, the only indicator which is projected to actually *reach* parity by 2015 is the Net Intake Ratio (NIR), which reaches 0.99. Survival to Grade 5 Rate has varied slightly around 1.0.

Table 83: GPIs for Various Indicators at Primary Level

Year	Gross Intake Ratio	Net Intake Ratio	GER	NER	Survival to Grade 5 Rate (%)
2000/2001	0.86	0.95	0.86	0.92	1.00
2005/2006	0.91	0.98	0.88	0.94	0.98*
Projection 2015	0.95	0.99	0.90	0.95	0.96

*Source: MOE/ESITC. See indicators under Program 2. * This figure is actually the 2004/5 rate.*

The projected values of most of the indicators appear plausible. In the case of the Survival to Grade 5, the projected value is less plausible since it has varied up and down over the past half decade. Although the NIR reached parity already in 2005/2006, the GER and NER lag behind.

Thus although girls and boys are now *equally likely to enter primary school*, as boys repeat more often, their enrollment rates are higher than for girls. Caution is needed in the interpretation of these trends, however, as is discussed below.

Table 84: GPI for GER by Age by Grade, 2005/06

	Age									
Grade	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	0.98	0.89	0.82	0.79	0.77	0.79	0.75	0.71	0.68	0.68
2	1.18	1.03	0.91	0.81	0.77	0.75	0.70	0.69	0.62	0.48
3	-	1.20	1.05	0.92	0.83	0.76	0.71	0.65	0.65	0.47
4	-	-	1.21	1.07	0.98	0.86	0.74	0.68	0.60	0.49
5	-	-	-	1.28	1.11	0.97	0.82	0.75	0.59	0.43

Source: MOE/ESITC and estimation based on 2005 census

Table 84 above shows the GPI for the enrollment ratio in the age-by-grade distribution of students in primary school. Several notable observations can be made in that table.

- First, in only three cells (age 6, grade 1; age 10, grade 4; and age 11, grade 5) is "gender parity" ($0.97 \leq GPI \leq 1.03$) achieved.[51] There is quite systematic variation among the "off-diagonal" cells (age above or below the official age for the grade).

- The second observation is therefore that in *all* "above diagonal" cells (age greater than the official age for the grade), the GPI < 1.0 (boys predominate where age is greater than the official age for the grade). Moreover, the further "off-diagonal" (to the right) the cell is from the diagonal (the higher the age level relative to the official age), the lower the GPI.

- The third observation is that in *all* diagonal cells except for the first (age 6, grade 1) and in *all* "below diagonal" cells, GPI > 1.0; girls predominate among students who progress regularly through primary school without repetition or who even possibly progress more rapidly.

The highest points (GPI > 1.0, $GER_{girls} > GER_{boys}$) appear in the lower age range and in all grades. In fact, the higher GPIs appear in the upper grades. The lowest points (say GPI < 0.8, $GER_{girls} < GER_{boys}$) appear in the upper age range at all grade levels.

In summary, among 6-year-old children in grade 1, GER is at parity. For every year of age and every grade after that point, disparities grow, as girls continue on track and boys repeat one or more grades and fall further and further behind.

The low GPIs in the "above diagonal" cells do not represent any "disadvantage" for girls. They represent only the simple fact that boys are more likely to repeat grades than girls.

[51] This usage is recommended by UNESCO & UNICEF, "Guidelines for the Asia and Pacific Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment: Identifying and Reaching the Unreached", Bangkok: UNESCO, 2006.

Table 85: GIR, NIR, GER, NER & Survival Rate in Primary, 2005/06

	Male	Fem.	Total	GPI
GIR	130	119	125	0.91
NIR	67	66	66	0.98
GER	123	109	116	0.88
NER	86	81	84	0.94
Survival	61	60	60	0.98

Source: MOE/ESITC.

The story is summarized in Table 85. The total number of children entering grade 1 is substantially greater than the number of children in the relevant age cohort (GIR), and boys substantially out-number girls (GPI = 0.91). The number of entrants in the official age range is only a little more than half the total number of entrants (NIR), but there is parity in the NIR. Similarly, although the GER shows substantial disparity, the NER shows less disparity, and ultimately girls and boys who begin grade 1 are almost equally likely to reach grade 5.

Table 86: Primary completion rates by gender

	2000/01	2005/06
Females	65.2%	65.8%
Males	74.0%	72.9%
Total	67.9 %	69.7%

Source: computed by ADTA from MOE EMIS

In other words, the fact that the GPI for the GER is below parity is due in large part to the fact that enrollments of boys are inflated by boys repeating grades more often than girls. The first point and major point of gender disparity in primary schooling occurs at *entry* into primary school. If girls enter school, they are almost as likely as boys to reach grade 5 (see Table 86 above).

General Secondary School – Two of the general secondary GPI indicators show parity, namely NER for lower secondary (1.02) and the transition rate between lower and upper secondary. The GPI for the transition from primary to lower secondary was relatively high in 2005/2006, at 0.95 which is a minor improvement compared to five years prior (0.93). The GPI for GER is low at 0.82, though a considerable improvement compared to the GPI of 0.74 in 2000/2001. The GPI for NER is slightly greater than 1.02 in 2005/2006 (0.96 in 2000/2001). The GPI for the transition rate from lower to upper secondary is at parity (1.02) in 2005/2006, as it was five years earlier. The GPI for the GER at upper secondary level is quite low at 0.75 - a small improvement to the GPI of 0.70 in 2000/2001. The GPI for NER at upper secondary level is very high at 1.41 (1.38 in 2000/2001).

Table 87: Transition, Enrollment, and Survival Rates, Secondary Level, 2005/06

	Male	Female	Total	GPI
Transition primary to Lower Secondary	79	75	77	0.95
GER Lower Secondary	57	46	52	0.81
NER Lower Secondary	28	29	28	1.02
Grade 1 - Grade 8	39.8	35.9	38.0	0.90
Grade 6 - Grade 8	76.3	75.3	75.8	0.99
Transition to Upper Secondary	75.8	77.4	76.5	1.02
GER Upper Secondary	39	30	35	0.75
NER Upper Secondary	13	18	16	1.41

Source: MOE/ESITC. See indicators in Chapter 3, Sections 2 and 3.

The GPI values in Table 87 above suggest that boys are somewhat more likely than girls to enter lower secondary schools, but to do so outside the official age range, in large measure because they tend to leave primary school late due to repetition. Girls who enter lower secondary school are just as likely as boys to reach grade 8. Girls who complete lower secondary school are just as likely as boys to enter upper secondary school.

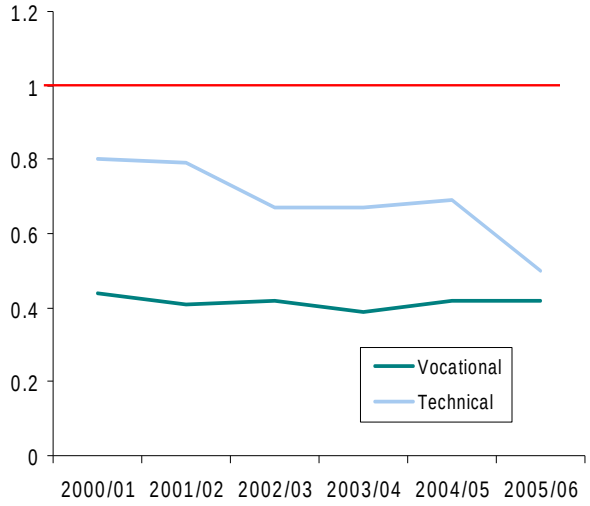
Table 88: GPIs for Enrollment in TVET, 2000/01 - 2005/06

Year	Vocational	Technical
2000/01	0.44	0.80
2001/02	0.41	0.79
2002/03	0.42	0.67
2003/04	0.39	0.67
2004/05	0.42	0.69
2005/06	0.42	0.50
Projection 2015	0.40	0.47

Source: MOE/ESITC.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training – Vocational and technical education and training is distinguished by its high level of gender disparity, as shown in Figure 32 and Table 88. Not only are the gender disparities high, with gender ratios of substantially below 1.0, but they are actually increasing (gender ratios declining). In particular, the projections to 2015 suggest that *unless there are some considerable changes in TVET policy, gender disparities will rise.*

Figure 33: GPI for Enrollment in TVET, 2000/01 - 2005/06



Disparities in Participation – There are widespread disparities in access and outcomes. The vast majority of richer, urban pupils who want to do so are already completing primary school and progressing to secondary school. In addition, the size of this group is declining under the impact of falling urban birth rates. By contrast, children from low income, ethnic groups (especially women from ethnic groups) and

rural areas display prominently different enrollment trends. Children of Lao-Tai ethnic groups, male and non-poor children are all more likely to be in school than those of other ethnic groups, female and poor children (with the exception of urban girls, who do better than their fellow males). Table 89 provides evidence of where the "unreached" are.

Table 89: Mean Primary school enrollment rates for children aged 6-12 by ethno-linguistic family, gender and urban/rural location, 2001.

Ethno-linguistic Groups	Urban		Rural	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Lao-Tai	90.4	91.9	82.1	80.7
Mon-Khmer	80.1	75.0	61.4	57.4
Hmong-Iu Mien	87.8	84.5	66.0	48.3
Sino - Tibetan	86.5	100.0	38.7	32.7
Other	NA	NA	47.3	30.0

Source: Schooling and poverty in Lao PDR; Elizabeth King and Dominique Van de" Walle; WB Report 39318-LA

Table 90: Participation, by Population Characteristics (Percent)

	Urban				Rural			
	Lao-Tai		Non Lao-Tai		Lao-Tai		Non Lao-Tai	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total	90.4	91.9	89.4	90.8	82.1	80.7	60.1	52.0
Non-poor	92.7	93.4	91.8	92.5	86.8	85.6	65.8	59.5
Poor	82.0	85.9	82.4	85.1	71.3	70.2	54.9	45.7

Source: Elizabeth King and Dominique van de Walle, Schooling and Poverty in Lao PDR, World Bank, 2005.

As Table 90 above shows, leaving income differences aside, the age-specific participation rates range from 92 percent for urban Lao-Tai girls to 52 percent for rural non Lao-Tai girls, a range of 40 percentage points. When income is taken into account, the participation rates range from 93 percent for non-poor children (boys and girls) in urban areas to less than 46 percent for poor, non Lao-Tai rural girls – almost a 50 point difference.

Table 91: Net Enrollment Rate by province and gender (2002-03)

LOCATION	6-10 NER		11-15 NER	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
Lao PDR	70.3%	73.20	70.40	81.9%
North	61.10	67.5%	62.8%	79.7%
Center	78.0%	77.5%	77.40	86.00
South	69.4%	73.4%	66.4%	75.2%
Urban area	90.5%	88.40	86.8%	89.8%
Rural area with access	72.2%	75.1%	70.90	81.80
Rural area without access	49.6%	55.6%	48.9%	71.5%

Source: ESDF, Situation Analysis Table 19, adapted.

Table 91 shows that rural girls living in rural areas without access to a road are the least likely to enroll. Interestingly if they do enroll in primary school they have a good chance of enrolling in lower secondary as observed in the very similar rates at both levels.

Teacher Education – GPIs for enrollment in teacher education vary substantially with level. That is, no men are enrolled in the pre-school teacher education program, but at primary and lower secondary level, more men are enrolled in teacher education than women. Within primary teacher education programs, the gender ratio is higher in the longer courses and higher still in the program for lower secondary teachers, as shown in Table 92 below.

Table 92: GPI for Enrollment in Teacher Education

Program	Total enrollment			GPI
	Total	Female	Male	
Pre school (11+1)	364	364	0	-
Primary (5+4)	278	117	161	0.73
Primary (8+3)	1,416	657	759	0.87
Primary (11+1)	1,905	903	1,016	0.89
Lower Sec. (11+3)	11,775	5,644	6,131	0.92

Source: MOE/DTE. See Chapter 2, Section 6.

Teachers – Gender distributions of teachers, for primary and general secondary schooling and TVET are shown below in Figure 34 and Table 93 below. The gender distribution of primary and general secondary school teachers has moved consistently toward parity. The gender distribution of TVET teachers, however, has not shown a consistent trend and has shown virtually no improvement over the past half decade.

Figure 34: Gender Distribution of Teachers, by Sub-sector, 2000/01 – 2005/06

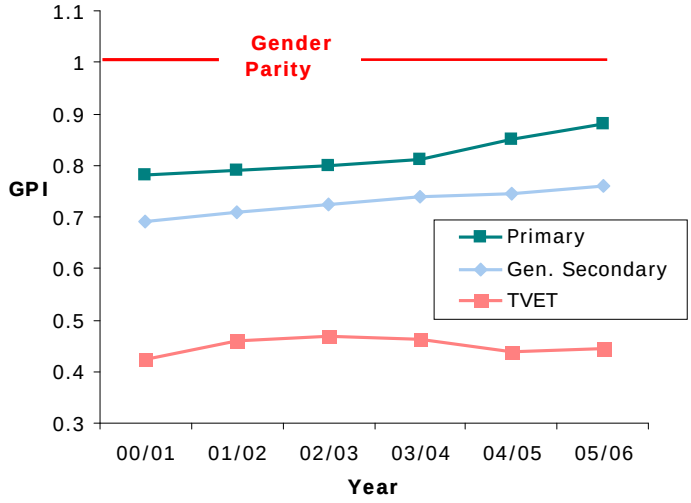


Table 93: Gender Distribution of Teachers, by Sub-sector, 2000/01 – 2005/06

YEAR	Primary		General Secondary		Vocational & Technical	
	% Female	GPI	% Female	GPI	% Female	GPI
2000/01	43.8	0.78	40.9	0.69	29.8	0.42
2001/02	44.2	0.79	41.4	0.71	31.5	0.46
2002/03	44.4	0.80	42.0	0.72	31.9	0.47
2003/04	44.9	0.81	42.5	0.74	31.6	0.46
2004/05	45.9	0.85	42.7	0.74	30.5	0.44
2005/06	46.8	0.88	43.2	0.76	30.8	0.45

Source: MOE/ESITC.

8.4 Significant Successes

Several notable successes have been achieved concerning gender equality:

- The most significant success in gender development has been generally clear and consistent improvement in nearly all student and teacher-related GPIs.

- Projects like LABEP and BEGP have shown that targeted actions at ethnic minority children, particularly girls, ethnic PAs and teachers (again mainly females), were able to make considerable contributions to achieving gender parity.

- Marked improvements in the ethnic distribution of primary school students and teachers have been shown.

- Gender training, research and studies have positive impacts on education planning and administration.

8.5 Remaining Challenges

Even though significant successes have been achieved during the reporting period, several challenges remain:

- There is still a significant gap in female participation which grows from primary (46 percent of enrolments are girls), to lower secondary (44 percent girls), to upper secondary (42 percent girls). Moreover, girls living in rural areas without access to roads are very much less likely to be in school.

- For TVET under the responsibility of MOE, only a third of the places are filled by females and the trend in the past half-decade has been irregular. Ensuring that more girls make the

transition to higher levels of education, especially TVET, from each of these sub-sectors will form a great challenge for the MOE and other ministries as multiple factors are causing the gender disparities.

- It will be particularly challenging to raise the awareness of community leaders, parents and children and youth of the importance of education, particularly in some of the ethnic, remote and rural communities.

- Changing the inequality between the number of female and male teachers and school administrators will be very difficult to achieve, especially for ECCD and TVET. Only a recruitment policy which is gender-responsive will, in the long run, remove the gender disparities among teachers and school directors.

- Gender mainstreaming and integration into education efforts nationwide will be a big challenge. This includes monitoring and evaluation of its progress.

- Development of policies and strategies related to gender equality and ethnic, inclusive and human rights education will need to be a priority action in the next decade as well as efforts to enhance gender parity and equality in terms of education administration at all levels.

There remains the issue of progressive (quantitative) indicators being unable to share light on 'gender specific treatment' at school level. Ensuring that, the sometimes less vocal, girls are as likely as boys to answer a question posed by the teacher is just one example of gender sensitive behavior that is not always to be seen at school level. Changing these often unintended, though culturally rooted behaviors is challenging to say the least.

Section 9: The Achievement of EFA as a Whole

EFA Development Index (EDI)

Composite index aimed at measuring overall progress towards EFA. At present, the EDI incorporates four of the most easily quantifiable EFA goals - universal primary education as measured by the net enrolment ratio, adult literacy as measured by adult literacy rate, gender parity as measured by the gender specific EFA index and quality of education measured by the survival rate to grade 5. Its value is the arithmetical mean of the observed values of these four indicators.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, Education for All by 2015, Will we make it? 2007, UNESCO. Glossary p.391

While each of the six EFA goals is individually important, it is also useful to have means of indicating achievement of EFA as a whole. At present, the EFA development Index (EDI), developed by UNESCO for EFA Global Monitoring, is used to measure the overall EFA achievement. This does not yet include goals 1 and 3 as neither of them has a suitable quantitative target for 2015.

In accordance with the principle of considering each goal to be equally important, one indicator is used as a proxy measure for each of the four EDI components. Since the components are all expressed as percentages, the EDI value can vary from 0 to 100% or, when expressed as a ratio, from 0 to 1.

The closer a country's EDI value is to the maximum, the greater the extent of its overall EFA achievement and the nearer the country is to the EFA goal as a whole.

Universal primary education

The indicator selected to measure UPE achievement (goal 2) in the EDI is the total primary net enrolment ratio (NER), which reflects the percentage of primary-school-age children who are enrolled in primary school. Its value varies from 0 to 100%. A NER of 100% means all eligible children are enrolled in school in a given school year, although not all of them will necessarily complete it.

Adult literacy

The adult literacy rate is used to measure progress towards part of goal 4. The adult literacy rate used in this report is reported literacy rate from the Population and Housing Census 2005 - the best currently available data used nationally.

Quality of education

Among the feasible proxy indicators available, the survival rate to grade 5 seems to be the best available for the quality of education component of the EDI.

Gender

The fourth EDI component is measured by a composite index, the gender-specific EFA index (GEI). Ideally the GEI should reflect the whole gender-related EFA goal, which calls for 'eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education in 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality'.

The GEI is calculated as follows:

GEI = 1/3(primary GPI) + 1/3 (transformed secondary GPI) + 1/3 (transformed adult literacy GPI)

Calculating the EDI

The EDI is the arithmetic mean of its four components: total primary NER, adult literacy rate, GEI and survival rate to grade 5.

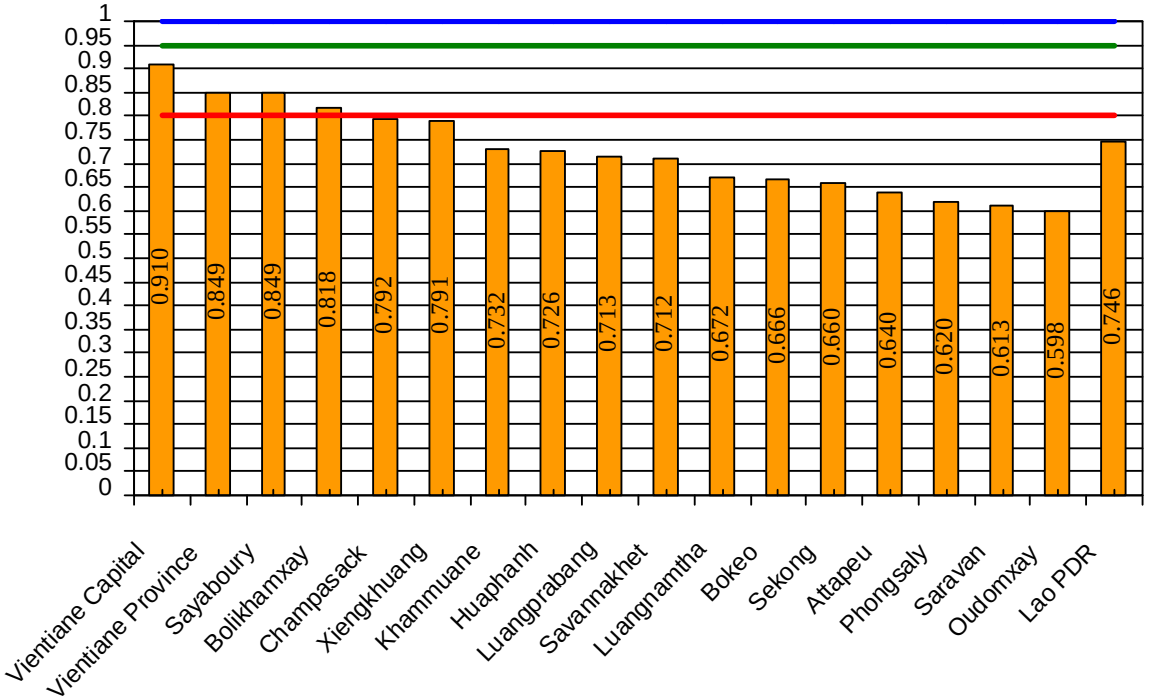
EDI = 1/4(total primary NER) + 1/4(adult literacy rate) + 1/4(GEI) + 1/4(survival rate to grade 5)

High EDI = 0.95 to 1 (very near to achieving EFA goal)

Medium EDI = 0.80 to 0.94 (near to achieving EFA goal)

Low EDI = below 0.80 (quite far to achieving EFA goal)

Figure 35: The EFA Development Index by province 2005/06



Source: Somkhanh Didaravong and Inthasone Phetsiriseng, generated from ESITC data base 2005-06 and Population and Housing Census 2005

The national EDI average is 0.746. Based on the EFA Global Monitoring Report, Lao PDR is categorized in the Low EDI countries ranking 108 out of 129 countries. Similar to Lao PDR are: India ranking 105 (0.797), Iraq ranking 106 (0.793) and Bangladesh ranking 107 (0.759). Countries in the region categorized in the Medium EDI are: Cambodia ranking 103 (0.807), Myanmar ranking 94 (0.866) and Vietnam ranking 79 (0.899).

None of the provinces in Lao PDR have achieved the overall EFA goal. Only a few provinces have medium EDI, namely Vientiane capital, Vientiane province, Sayaboury and Bolikhamxay. Champassack and Xiengkhuang have achieved Medium EDI but the rest still lie in Low EDI. Despite the considerable investment and efforts which have been put into disadvantaged areas in provinces with high ethnic populations, Oudomxay has the lowest EDI followed by Saravan, Phonsaly, Attapeu, Sekong, Bokeo and Luangnamtha. At the same time, highly populated provinces such as Savannakhet and Luangprabang will need to put more emphasis on basic education.

Table 94: Progress by province against key EFA indicators

Province	EDI	Primary NER	Adult literacy Rate (census 2005)	Survival rate to grade 5	Gender-Related EFA Index(GEI)	GPI for primary	GPI for secondary	GPI for adult literacy
Vientiane Cap.	0.910	0.942	0.917	0.847	0.935	0.938	0.942	0.924
Phonsaly	0.620	0.676	0.431	0.593	0.780	0.731	0.976	0.634
Luangnamtha	0.672	0.736	0.506	0.702	0.745	0.836	0.782	0.616
Oudomxay	0.598	0.750	0.559	0.377	0.704	0.883	0.687	0.542
Bokeo	0.666	0.793	0.581	0.579	0.711	0.817	0.703	0.615
Luangprabang	0.713	0.837	0.672	0.581	0.763	0.874	0.723	0.693
Huaphanh	0.726	0.906	0.647	0.606	0.745	0.856	0.728	0.653
Sayaboury	0.849	0.922	0.804	0.820	0.847	0.895	0.796	0.851
Xiengkhuang	0.791	0.922	0.727	0.691	0.826	0.882	0.857	0.738
Vientiane Prov.	0.849	0.994	0.797	0.758	0.848	0.910	0.832	0.802
Bolikhamxay	0.818	0.940	0.772	0.737	0.825	0.915	0.771	0.790
Khammuane	0.732	0.836	0.699	0.586	0.806	0.896	0.788	0.735
Savannakhet	0.712	0.773	0.685	0.559	0.831	0.875	0.863	0.754
Saravan	0.613	0.699	0.616	0.423	0.713	0.814	0.665	0.660
Sekong	0.660	0.712	0.617	0.546	0.765	0.901	0.759	0.634
Champassack	0.792	0.862	0.818	0.637	0.851	0.930	0.801	0.823
Attapeu	0.640	0.672	0.639	0.476	0.775	0.891	0.764	0.669
LAO PDR	0.746	0.839	0.727	0.616	0.801	0.882	0.812	0.767

Low Indicator: Far away from achieving EFA Goal
Medium Indicator: Quite near to achieving EFA Goal
High Indicator : Very near or already achieved EFA Goal

Source: ESITC data base 2005-06.

It is very interesting to observe in Table 94 above that Phongsaly's GPI for secondary education has been achieved. This indicates that during the past decade (1995-2000), investment in primary education has been fruitful, particularly in girls' enrolment in primary schools. This cohort of girls has continued to enroll in secondary schools and are unlikely to drop out. Girls' secondary education has improved significantly. Conversely, Phongsaly PES must put more efforts to improve adult literacy as well as the primary NER and survival rate to grade 5. In other words, they must improve access and quality of primary education. Vientiane province is the only province that has achieved primary NER. Similarly, like other provinces, they have to accelerate literacy programmes to reach illiterates as well as increase access to quality primary education at the same time as putting more efforts into gender equality in all components of the EDI.

Chapter

4

The Way Forward – Achieving EFA by 2015

1. Overview

Implementing 5-4-3 system of schooling constitutes the fundamental challenge

The mid decade assessment indicates that some progress has been made in expanding primary and secondary education opportunities. Equally, there are a number of promising innovative strategies, especially related to addressing the problem of incomplete schools, stimulating demand for education and strengthening community governance that will help inform future strategy. Nevertheless, the Government recognizes that the implementation of its 5-4-3 system of schooling can only be achieved if a number of fundamental challenges are addressed.

The key challenge, especially for the poorest families, will be to stimulate demand for increased primary and secondary education opportunities through assuring easier access, demonstrating schooling is relevant and leads to income generating opportunities and taking measures to address direct and indirect cost barriers to schooling. A related challenge will be to take steps to improve the internal efficiency of primary education in order to allow progression of the majority of students into secondary and post-secondary education. Without an assured throughput of well prepared students, the Government's objective of expanded technical and higher education opportunities, relevant to an increasingly knowledge based and service economy, is potentially constrained.

2. Key Strategies

Assuring Expanded Access to Early Childhood Care and Development Opportunities – International experience demonstrates that access to early childhood education, especially for five year olds, improves their readiness for formal primary school and improves the likelihood of smooth progression through primary grades. In order to expand these opportunities MOE will:

i) formulate affordable expanded access strategies, especially for currently poorer and underserved districts, through kindergarten/reception classes within primary schools and community based play group models of provision;
ii) increase the number of institutions, public and private, where training opportunities exist for those who want to enter ECCD, including for teachers and community ECCD organizers; and
iii) maintain an effective public/private partnership in ECCD provision, alongside strengthened quality assurance systems and provision of advisory services and essential instructional materials.

Assuring Equitable Access to Quality Primary Education – Access to, and participation in, primary education remains uneven, especially amongst the poorest families and where incomplete primary schools are most prevalent. In order to improve equitable access, MOE will:

i) formulate affordable and cost-effective strategies and programs that ensure optimum levels of progression through primary schooling, linked to provision of essential learning materials and other quality assurance measures;
ii) rapidly eliminate incomplete primary schools through a combination of incentives and facilities expansion and school rationalization;
iii) adopt strategies and programs to promote the value of primary education and rigorous regulation of age of entry at six years;
iv) develop affordable measures to reduce direct and indirect cost barriers for enrolment and sustained participation in primary schooling; and
v) ensure that there are sufficient teachers who are distributed fairly across the Provinces, Districts and schools, with the remotest schools being given priority in staffing. This will result in more equitable distribution and retention of better qualified teachers, especially in currently underserved districts and schools.

Expansion of Lifelong Learning Opportunities – Innovative approaches are needed to provide improved access to formal, and particularly non-formal education opportunities, especially for those who have never attended school or dropped out during primary and secondary education cycles. To tackle these issues MOE will:

i) establish sustainable institutional and organizational arrangements for village level lifelong learning (e.g. community learning centers), including management capacity development;
ii) increase the ways in which school drop-outs can conveniently resume their education (ie re-entry into lifelong learning programs) and for their qualifications to be regarded as equivalent to formal schooling.
iii) expand innovative models of adult literacy service delivery, building on lessons learned from current community based models;
iv) formulate innovative strategies for expansion of informal skills training opportunities, including informal apprenticeship models, increasingly delivered through village CLCs.

Assuring Gender Parity in Accessing Education Opportunities – There have been improvements in gender parity during the past years, however females are consistently underrepresented at different levels and types of education provision. To address this fundamental issue of gender disparity MOE will:

i) adopt innovative strategies that begin to mitigate against social, cultural and cost barriers for girls accessing and progressing through primary and secondary education;
ii) increase the provision of innovative strategies and programs of non-formal and informal primary and secondary education and skills training opportunities that are easier for older females to access; and
iii) increase the provision of female teachers in currently underserved areas, especially within secondary schools, given the strong correlation between the presence of female teachers and retention of female students.

3. Conclusion

Progress has been achieved in all of the EFA NPA programs but considerable changes in policies and strategies, as outlined above, need to urgently be made if Lao PDR is to reach the EFA and MDG targets. Two key inter-related opportunities offer the mechanisms to develop and implement these changes:

Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) – the information and analysis presented in this MDA report will feed directly into the on-going process of formulating the ESDF. It is imperative that the approaches to addressing the fundamental challenges, as highlighted above, are systematically and comprehensively incorporated into the framework to develop policies and strategies which will make a significant impact on the rate of progress towards MDG and EFA targets. Particular attention will be paid in the ESDF to reducing access barriers (especially the direct costs of education) and on addressing the high repetition and drop-out rates.

Strengthening Education Partnerships in Strategy/Program Formulation and Implementation – The broad policy directions and strategies outlined above will be addressed in greater detail through the ESDF. The development of this framework will require a strong and long-term partnership between Government, development partners, private providers and community groups. One of the overarching challenges will be to ensure that the Education Sector Working Group is sustained as an effective forum for education partnership and a way of securing the effectiveness and impact of education resources in achieving EFA and ESDF objectives and targets.

Annex 1 - Implementation

This annex outlines the implementation arrangements for each of the 7 NPA Programs examined in Chapter 3.

Early Childhood Care and Development

The Pre-School Division, under the MOE Department of General Education (DGE) previously, is responsible for both formal and non-formal early childhood and educational development. The target population covers all children aged 3 months to 5 years old in Lao PDR. The Division is staffed with one Head of Division and several technical staff. The Division is responsible for:

- Development of an ECCD policy, a strategy, a decree allowing for implementation, an ECCD Master Plan of Action, and new programs;
- Administrating crèches, kindergartens and early childhood education centers in the formal and non-formal system;
- Advising, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the curriculum and teaching-learning methodology at country level;
- Advocacy with communities to increase their involvement in implementing ECCD programs; and
- Coordinating with all stakeholders, PES, communities, and development partners, to support the implementation of the ECCD Master Plan of Action.

Formal early childhood and educational development programs[52] focus on public and private crèches, kindergartens, and pre-primary classes[53] in primary schools. Support has been provided by UNICEF, Save the Children UK (SCUK), and Save the Children Norway (SCN) for the period 2005-2008. Non-formal programs focus on child development for 2- to 5-year-old children in a holistic manner.

At the provincial level, the General Education Section of the PES is responsible for crèches, kindergartens and pre-primary classes. The Section consists of ECCD, primary education and

[52] Category 0 in the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

[53] In line with the EFA NPA, from 2002 MOE onwards started piloting pre-primary classes in primary schools in rural and remote areas to better prepare the children for going to primary education.

secondary education staff and educational supervisors. The ECCD technical staff implements, monitors, and supervises the ECCD programs in the districts of the province.

According to MOE guidelines, each district should have one ECCD technical staff member as part of the General Education Unit of the DEB, who is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and supervision of the ECCD Programs. The ECCD technical staff works directly with pre-primary teachers in crèches, kindergartens and pre-primary classes in primary schools. In practice, however, the ECCD related tasks are often born by the district primary education technical staff member, who frequently lacks the required training and qualification to do so.

Primary Education

The Primary School Division of the Department of General Education (DGE) is responsible for primary education. The target population covers all children aged 6 through 10 years old in Lao PDR. The Division is staffed with a Head of Division and several technical staff. The Division is responsible for:

- Development of a primary school policy, a strategy, and a decree allowing for implementation;
- Development of a primary school Master Plan of Action;
- Administration of primary schools in the formal system;
- Advising, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the curriculum and teaching-learning methodology at country level;
- Development and implementation of new and appropriate primary school programs;
- Advocacy with communities to increase their involvement in primary school programs; and
- Coordination with all stakeholders, PES, communities, and donor agencies, to support the implementation of the primary school Master Plan of Action.

Lower Secondary Education

The Secondary School Division of DGE is responsible for lower secondary education. The target population covers all children aged 11 through 13 years old. The Division is staffed with one Head of Division and three technical staff. The Division is responsible for:

- Developing a lower secondary school policy, a strategy, and an implementation decree;
- Developing a lower secondary school Master Plan of Action;
- Administrating lower secondary schools in the formal system;

- Advising, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the curriculum and teaching and learning methodology at a macro level;
- Developing and implementing new and appropriate lower secondary school programs;
- Advocacy with communities to increase their involvement in lower secondary school programs; and
- Coordinating with all stakeholders, PES, communities, and donor agencies, to support the implementation of the lower secondary school Master Plan of Action.

Youth and Adult Literacy

In addition to its role in the provision of life skills and life-long learning DNFE is also responsible specifically for the eradication of illiteracy for ethnic groups nationwide, especially for women and disadvantaged populations in remote areas, and to provide basic education for all.

Skills Development Program for Disadvantaged Groups

Responsibility for delivery of services for life skills and lifelong learning is shared between the Department of Non-Formal (DNFE) and the Department of Higher, Technical, and Vocational Education (DHTVE).

Through DHVTE the TVET system comprises both government and private sector education and training institutions, offering:

- Three-year programs for preparing skilled workers at upper secondary level after graduation from lower secondary school (8+3) but also admitting upper secondary school graduates; and
- Two or three year programs for preparing technicians at post-secondary level after graduation from upper secondary school (11+2 and 11+3).

MOE and the provincial and district education authorities, through DNFE, provide four types of non-formal education.

- Literacy training for out-of-school youth and adults, usually organized at village level and given in evenings and weekends;
- General upgrading programs for the adult population, enabling them to obtain primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary equivalencies in full-time compressed programs, for example three years for primary education;

- Upgrading courses for civil servants at both the provincial and district levels, but sometimes using special facilities, primarily for upgrading qualifications to lower and upper secondary level; and
- Skills development programs that are linked to literacy programs for illiterate adults and out-of-school youth oriented toward income generating activities.

Quality and Relevance of Formal Primary and Lower Secondary Education

The Department of General Education is responsible for primary and secondary education. Further, nine of the thirteen objectives of 'EFA Programme 6: Improve the Quality and Relevance of Formal Primary and Lower Secondary Education' of the EFA NPA relate specifically to teachers and their professional preparation, providing clear evidence of the MOE's appreciation of the link between teacher qualification and quality education services.

At the central level, pre-service teacher preparation has long been the responsibility of the Department of Teacher Education (DTE), while in-service teacher education and training was the responsibility of DGE. With the support of the Teacher Training Enhancement and Status of Teachers projects, TTEST, all professional preparation of general education teachers is now the responsibility of DTE. At the provincial level, pre-service preparation of pre-school, primary, and lower secondary school teachers is the responsibility of the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). Professional preparation of upper secondary school teachers is the responsibility of NUOL, Faculty of Education (FOE).

In-service continuing education of qualified teachers and upgrading of unqualified teachers is delivered by several providers; practice differs in different provinces and districts. Most commonly, in-service continuing education is provided by Pedagogical Advisors (PAs), and upgrade education and training is delivered by PAs or trainers in the Teacher Upgrading Program (TUP), sometimes in province-based or district-based Teacher Upgrading Centers (TUCs).

Gender Parity and Equality

Gender mainstreaming is the adopted process for ensuring gender equality in the long run. All line departments are responsible for gender policy in their respective sub-sectors. Within DGE, and under the Basic Education Girls Project (BEGP), the Gender and Ethnic Minority Education Unit (GEMEU) provides support for gender mainstreaming in general education and acts as the focal point for UNESCO for the Gender Education Network in Asia (GENIA). In particular it supports and coordinates support to major projects (as it did to LABEP and the Basic Education Girls Project).

In addition to MOE gender policy support and coordination, the Education and Sector Working Group, ESWG, provides a forum for raising issues relating to gender equality in education. The Vice Minister serves as the Chair person of the ESWG and a Cabinet Officer of the Lao Women's Union participates as a full member.

Since GOL does not use program budgeting, there is no specific gender program financing. Most externally financed development projects, however, are based on a gender mainstreaming policy, and many also have specific gender equality development objectives, activities, capacity building and research.

Annex 2 – ECCD and Health

This annex gives further information on important connection between health and education of young children.

Under-five Mortality – The Lao Reproductive Health Survey (LRHS) 2005 indicates that for every 1000 children born alive, 68 die before they have reached their fifth birthday. Compared to the direct estimate derived from the 2000 LRHS (for the year 1997), which is 104 death per 1000 live births, such a rapid decline within five years seems improbable. It is feared however that this strong decline of infant mortality may be exaggerated.

The indirect estimate using the proportion dying of children ever born and children still living derived from the 2005 LRHS, is 88 per 1000 live births. The numbers of children ever born and still living are usually better reported than information derived from birth histories, because women are able to report better the number of children they have born and how many among these children are still living at the time of survey. Thus, it is suggested that policy makers and program planners use the estimates of infant and child mortality resulted from the indirect estimates. There is no indirect estimate resulting from the LRHS 2000, leaving an unresolved analysis on this indirect, estimated indicator.

Proportion of Infants with Low Birth Weight – Weight at birth is an indicator not only of a mother's health and nutrition but also the newborn's chances for survival, growth, long-term health and psychosocial development. Low birth weight (less than 2,500 grams) carries a range of grave health risks for children. Babies who were undernourished in the womb face a greatly increased risk of dying during their early months and years. According to MICS III in 2006, of the 23 percent of infants who were weighed at birth, 12.6 percent were estimated to weigh less than 2500 grams, with only minor variations in regions of living.

Vitamin A Supplementation Coverage Rate – Vitamin A is essential for eye health and proper functioning of the immune system. In Lao PDR while vitamin A is largely consumed in the form of fruits and vegetables, daily per capita intake is often insufficient to meet dietary requirements. Current international recommendations call for high-dose vitamin A supplements every four to six months, targeted to all children between the ages of six to 59 months living in affected areas. Providing young children with two high-dose vitamin A capsules a year is a safe, cost-effective, efficient strategy for eliminating vitamin A deficiency and improving child survival. Giving vitamin A to new mothers who

are breastfeeding helps protect their children during the first months of life and helps to replenish the mother's stores of vitamin A, which are depleted during pregnancy and lactation.

According to the MICS III in 2006, 52.4 percent of the children aged 6 to 59 months failed to receive a high dose of vitamin A in the last six months, compared with an estimated 54.9 percent in 2000, which suggests a worsening since 2000. For children who received a high dose of vitamin A in the last six months, there are substantial regional differences: 18.0 percent for households in the North, 18.0 percent in the Center, and 26.3 percent in the South. It is clear that more targeted actions are required nation-wide by GOL and donor agencies to increase the distribution of vitamin A.

Proportion of Immunized One-Year Old Children – Immunization is one of the most important and cost-effective interventions that health systems can provide and is essential to save children's lives. It is an affordable means of protecting whole communities and reducing poverty. Immunization has saved over 20 million lives world-wide in the last two decades. Table 95 shows that the proportion of one-year old children who had received all four kinds of immunization (BCG, DPT, polio, and measles) had increased in 2006 by 9.4 percentage points.

Table 95: Proportion of Immunized 1-Year Old Children in 2000 and 2006

Year	BCG *	DPT 1 **	DPT 2	DPT 3	Polio 1	Polio 2	Polio 3	Measles	All	None
2000	56.1	45.7	35.8	22.3	53.4	31.5	23.8	28.3	18.0	29.6
2006	63.2	63.8	54.5	42.6	66.3	55.9	42.0	39.9	27.4	31.6
Increase	7.1	18.1	18.7	20.3	12.9	24.4	18.2	11.6	9.4	2.0

Source: 2000, MICS II; 2006, MICS III.
*Notes: *BCG = Anti-tuberculosis Bacille Calmette-Gurin (BCG) vaccine*
***DPT = Combined Diphtheria, Pertussis (Whooping cough) and Tetanus*

Proportion of Population Using Improved Drinking Water Sources – The availability of clean and safe drinking water can be a matter of life or death. Without access to safe drinking water women and children, particularly in rural areas are at risk of contracting diseases and drinking contaminated water laced with harmful chemical, physical and radiological contaminants. According to the MICS III 52 percent of the population in Lao PDR used safe drinking water in 2006 compared to 42 percent in 2000, which is a substantial improvement in only a limited time period. Breakdowns of the population using safe drinking water sources by geographical area indicate significant discrepancies between urban and rural areas. Urban areas reported 70 percent of their population using safe drinking water whereas rural areas with and without roads reported 50 percent and 36 percent respectively.

In recent years several donor supported GOL projects, including the Provincial Infrastructure Project (World Bank, 1998-2006) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement Project (ADB, 1999-2005), have managed to improve the water facilitation infrastructure in urban areas. Unfortunately too little has been done to improve the water supply infrastructure in rural areas, depriving a large part of the population of improved drinking water sources.

Proportion of Population Using Adequate Sanitation Facilities – Providing basic sanitation facilities and hygiene education in villages can save lives as inadequate disposal of human waste and personal hygiene is strongly associated with a range of diseases including diarrheal diseases and polio. According to the MICS III in 2006, 45 percent of the population of Lao PDR used improved sanitation facilities for excrete disposal. This is a modest 5 percentage point increase since 2000. There are however substantial rural - urban differences in use of improved sanitary facilities: 83 percent for households in urban areas, 38 percent for households in rural areas with road connections, and 16 percent in rural areas without road connections.

Further there are also dramatic income related differences. While 84 percent of the richest quintile of the population used sanitary means of human waste disposal, only 6 percent in the poorest quintile did so. Although improvements have been made during the last six years, in 2006 discrepancies in the use of adequate sanitation facilities based on wealth, region and area of living continue to affect the people of Lao PDR.

Proportion of Children 0-6 Months Exclusively Breastfeeding – As reported in the Lao Reproductive Health Survey (LRHS), exclusive breastfeeding, with no other food or water supplementation, is especially important for a baby's health during the first six months after birth. The LRHS reported exclusive breastfeeding of babies less than 6 months old: at 12.8 percent for babies 0 to 1 month old, 11.5 percent and for 2 - 3 month olds, and 9.9 percent for 4 - 5 month old babies. There is also indication that other food was given very early to the babies. A similar pattern is also seen among babies born to young mothers aged 15 to 19 years old, but with only 6.7 percent given exclusively breast feeding. The percentage decreases as the mothers get older.

Birth Registration Rate – The international Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that every child has the right to a name and a nationality and the right to protection from being deprived of his or her identity. Birth registration is a fundamental means of securing these rights for children. In 2006 (MICS III) 72 percent of the births of children under five years in Lao PDR were registered compared to 59.2 percent in 2000. There hardly is any variance based on the gender of the child; however children in the North are somewhat less likely to have their births registered (60 percent)

than children living in the Center (75 percent) or South (84 percent) of the country. The lack of awareness by parents that the child needs to be registered and possibly the lack of access to clinical pre-natal and post-natal care appear to be the main reasons among those whose births are not registered.

Annex 3 – EFA Analysis Framework

Introduction

The "Guidelines for the Asia and Pacific Mid-Decade Assessment: Identifying and Reaching the Unreached" provided the basis for the analysis in this report.

With the over-arching theme of identifying "unreached" populations and areas of greatest inequity, the EFA MDA emphasizes the need for *greater disaggregation*. While the Dakar EFA Reports included male/female breakdowns, and occasional references to urban/rural, the Lao PDR EFA MDA report breaks data down further on the EFA core indicators by geographic regions (provinces and districts), by ethnicity, by private/public, by age and socio-economic status and disability where data is available.

The indicators used are divided into three types for each of the 7 NPA Programs: **(1) Core Indicators; (2) Policy Development; and (3) Additional indicators**. The core indicators require quantitative data sets at as many levels of disaggregation as possible. Comparisons between 2000/1 and 2005/6 data have been used wherever possible but significant gaps remain. Policy development indicators are new and are designed to provide more substantive, qualitative responses on topics such partnerships, capacities and policies. Lastly, the Additional Indicators allow for more detailed reporting using refined data sets where these are available.

Data Sources

To analyze and address the situation of "the excluded", it is also necessary to improve data collection beyond the standard use of the annual school surveys which are entered in the EMIS. Therefore additional data sets have been used, including the National Population Census 2005 data, the Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys (MICS), Lao Expenditure and Consumption Surveys (LECS), the Lao Reproductive Health Survey (LRHS) and Public Expenditure Review (PER).

Discussions about the variance of the data obtained by the various sources, continues to be a topic for debate amongst GOL and development partners. Part of these discussions revolve around the agreement that the quality of EMIS data needs further improvement.

Variance of Data

EMIS data collection is based on school reporting. The education data and indicators obtained from census and surveys are based on the reporting of a respondent from the household. As such, the nature of the data collection is different. However, if both data collections are carried out at the same time, using the comparable calculation methods with same definition and from the same area, the data and indicators should approximately be the same or within the acceptable range.

There are several reasons for variations in education data from EMIS and household-based census, surveys or studies. The most common factors are:

(1) The *use of different definitions of indicators and calculation* procedure;

(2) The *timing of the data collection* – following the international standards, EMIS collects education data at the "beginning of school-year" (collection starts on 30 September). Surveys may collect data at any time throughout the year, based on other factors. The Census 2005 and the LRHS are examples of this. There will be greater differences in data sets the longer the time lag. Differences are more pronounced in regions with higher drop-outs: for example, with the drop-out rate of 20 percent, enrollment ratios from EMIS and from a survey conducted at the middle of school-year will differ by at least 10 percent. Moreover, several surveys were conducted during the end-of-school year vacation period. At that time, young children reaching the school entrance age are yet to be enrolled. The impact is that gross and net intake rates will certainly be lower than they should be.

(3) The *day of household interview* – if a household interview was conducted during the school holidays (Sundays, official government holidays, festive days, etc.), the respondents normally report fewer children as "attending school" and sometimes fewer "enrolling".

(4) The *questionnaire design* – if the enrollment and attendance questions are placed within a long household questionnaire, there is a tendency of interviewer's bias affecting the data collection by, for example, being impatient, asking question after question rapidly, or by filling in the answer based on judgement rather than the actual answer. Again, it is more likely that incorrect answers will be elicited from an exhausted respondent if "education" is placed at the end of long questionnaire.

(5) The *setting of the question* – "Does (name of the child) go to school?", "Is (name of the child) enrolled in a school?" and "Was (name of the child) enrolled in a school any time during this school-year?" will yield different results. The first question refers to the attendance and the

second and third questions refer to the enrollment. To get a correct enrollment figure, a question like the third one should be set. The difference in total enrollment may be about 5 percent, depending on the magnitude of absenteeism and the day of interview (and may differ more if the interview is conducted during the school holidays).

(6) The *accuracy of population data* – calculation of several access indicators requires school-age populations. EMIS normally uses school-age populations (projections) from the national statistical center (NSC). MOE can neither guarantee nor control the quality nor accuracy of population projections. At the same time, small surveys or surveys without appropriate sampling design cannot generate accurate populations. The quality of indicators may vary depending on the quality of school-age populations.

(7) The *coverage* – this is one of the most important aspects to be considered when comparing different data sets. Surveys or case studies sometimes implicitly or explicitly claim the results as "national", even when they cover only a small local area or a population group or were conducted with small (insufficient) purposively selected samples. On the other hand, it is also important to check the coverage of EMIS data collection. EMIS may exclude some remote or insecure areas.

In short, it is common that differences exist among the education statistics and indicators from different sources. Caution is urged in using or comparing education statistics and indicators. Taking the data quality surveys regularly is the only way to ascertain the quality of EMIS data.[54]

Description of Indicators Used

Indicators – The standard education sector indicators used in this report are listed and briefly described in Table 96 below and are those recommended by UNESCO and UNICEF[55]. The meanings of some of the education sector indicators are self-evident and these are not discussed. Some of the tables use indicators not originating in the education sector (for example health sector or more general social indicators related to poverty). These are described as needed in the associated text.

[54] Myint, N. (2006), Stocktaking and Diagnostics of Education Management Information System in Lao PDR, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Education Lao PDR/World Bank.

[55] UNESCO & UNICEF. "Guidelines for the Asia and Pacific Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment: Identifying and Reaching the Unreached". Bangkok: UNESCO, 2006. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. "Education Indicators: Technical Guidelines". Revised. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2003.

Table 96: Indicators used in this report

Drop-out Rate (DR)

The proportion of pupils who leave the system without completing a given grade in a given school year. High drop-out rates imply high input/output ratios and hence lead to low internal efficiency.

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)

Enrollment at a given level of education, *regardless of age*, expressed as a percent of the population in that the official age group for the given level.

Net Enrollment Ratio, (NER)

Enrollment *of the official age group for a given level of education*, expressed as a percent of the population in that age group.

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

The ratio of the value of a given variable *for females* to the value of the same variable *for males*, for example GER for females divided by GER for males. Gender parity is indicated by the value 1, *dis*parity in favor of boys is indicated by a value less than 1, and disparity in favor of girls is indicated by a value greater than 1.

Intake Ratio, Gross (GIR)

New entrants to the first grade of primary education, *regardless of age*, expressed as a percent of the population at the official primary school entrance age.

Net Intake Ratio (NIR)

New entrants to the first grade of primary education *who are of the official primary-school entrance age*, expressed as a percent of the population of that age.

New Entrants

Pupils entering a given level of education for the first time; the difference between enrolment and repeaters in the first grade of the level.

Quintile

In statistics, each of five numerical equal groups into which a population can be divided according to the distribution of values of a particular variable.

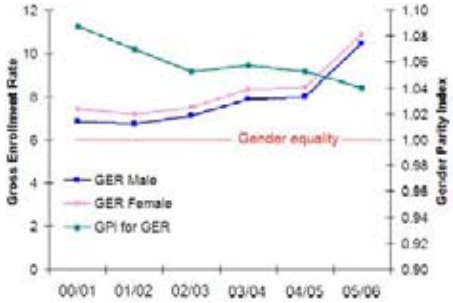
Repetition Rate

Number of repeaters in a given grade in a given school year, expressed as a percent of enrollment in that grade the previous school year.

Survival Rate

Percent of a cohort of students who enroll in the first grade of an education cycle in a given school year and expected to reach a specified grade, regardless of repetition. Typically used to assess survival to grade 5.

Display of Gender Parity – In this report the development trends of many indictors are displayed as line graphs with two vertical axes. The vertical axis to the left left shows the main indicator separately for males (blue, darker) and females (pink, lighter), for example GER. The scale is "absolute", in the sense that it is related to the *number of persons*, for example the *number of students* at a given level, and it always ranges from 0 to some maximum value. For example GER can *never be less than 0* but it can vary up to 100 or even



higher, although it is rare that it exceeds 120 or 130. The axis to the right represents *a measure of gender parity*.

As a matter of terminology, the indicators used here refer to "*gender parity*", not "*gender equity*" or "*gender equality*". By *gender parity* is meant *only* that for a given indicator X, $X_{female} = X_{male}$. Thus "parity" is used here as a mathematical term, whereas "equity" is a broader social concept which implies fairness, justice and impartiality.

Two measures are used here to assess gender parity. The Gender Ratio (GR)[56] is a ratio of absolute numbers, such as the *number* of male and female students enrolled: $GR = N_{female} / N_{male}$. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is a *ratio of ratios*, for example the ratio of GER_{female}/GER_{male}. If GER_{female} is *less* than GER_{male}, then GPI is *less* than 1 (girls are "less likely" than boys to enroll in school). If GER_{female}.is *greater* than GER_{male}, then the GPI is greater than 1 (girls are "more likely" than boys to enroll in school). If *only boys* go to school, then $GPI = 0/GER_{male} = 0$, but if *only girls* go to school, then the $GPI = GER_{female}/0 = \infty$. The same holds with the GR. *Gender parity* implies that boys and girls are "*equally likely*" to go to school, so $GER_{female} = GER_{male}$, and GPI = 1. What is interesting, therefore, is the GPI value *not relative to 0* but *relative to 1*. Whereas GER has 0 as a natural "fix point", GR and GPI have 1 as the natural "fix point", both of which are always shown in the diagrams.

The difference between GR and GPI is that by comparing *ratios*, such as GER, rather than absolute numbers, such as enrollments, GPI takes into account the size of the underlying male and female populations, which could be different. For enrollment rates in Lao PDR, GR and GPI will be very close, because the number of girls and the number of boys in the school age population are almost the same.[57] For other indicators, such as transition rates, they can be significantly different. The two measures provide different but meaningful assessments of gender parity. For example, it can be seen that the GPI for transition from primary to lower secondary school is relatively high and rises from primary to lower, while the GR falls.

Wherever appropriate, a measure of gender parity is always shown in the diagrams (green) and the values are represented in the axis to the right. Wherever GR or GPI are shown, the "line of gender parity" (red) is also shown, where GR = 1 or GPI = 1.

Finally, it should be understood that GPI is *not* a measure of "disadvantage". The fact that GPI < 1 for the primary school repetition rate does *not* mean girls are "disadvantaged" any more than the fact

[56] Often referred to in older texts as the Sex Ratio.

[57] According to the 2000 census, girls account for about 49.3 percent of the population in the primary school age range.

that GPI > 1 for the primary school dropout rate means that girls are "advantaged". Even a GPI < 1 for GER does not *necessarily* mean that girls are disadvantaged.

Measuring Household Consumption – In assessing who benefits from social interventions (for example, the provision of primary schooling), it is common that the impact of the intervention (attending primary school) is assessed in relation to income or wealth. When the concern is poverty, it is essential to estimate *per capita household consumption*, rather than monetary income, because for very poor people a large proportion of total consumption is based on own production and "free" goods[58], such as firewood picked up in the forest, common edible plants growing wild, etc. The LECS surveys have estimated household consumption by assessing the total monetary value of both expenditure (goods purchased for money or through barter) and consumption from own production including "free" goods.

Describing the Distribution of Household Consumption – The distribution of income is commonly described in several ways. In studies related to poverty, the most common approach is to divide the population, *ordered from the lowest income to the highest*, into five numerically equal groups, called *quintiles* (see Table 16 above). Thus the *first* quintile is the 20 percent of the population with the *lowest* income, the *second* quintile is the next 20 percent, etc. The fifth quintile is the 20 percent with the highest income.

[58] No goods are really free, since there is always an opportunity cost involved – it always takes time to collect firewood or edible plants or other biota, and that time could be used for other income generating activities. However, anthropological studies show that the opportunity cost of time is low, because there are few alternative economic activities.