



Child Literacy Development Project

Empowering schools and communities to support children's literacy development in Lao PDR

PROJECT OVERVIEW

CRS in Lao PDR aims to improve children's literacy in the early grades, including those who do not speak Lao as their first language, through a Child Literacy Development (CLD) pilot project in Xaibouathong and Xebangfai Districts, of Khammouane Province. The main partners for the project are the American Institutes for Research (AIR), and the Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS).

The CLD project takes a two-pronged approach to supporting children's literacy development through working with teachers to use effective literacy instruction methodologies, as well as supporting communities and families to engage in activities to support children's literacy outside of the classroom.

Child Literacy Development Toolkits

CRS will train 6 provincial and district level Education staff and 103 teachers to assess specific literacy skills of approximately 1,126 Grade 1 and Grade 2 students from enrollment to the end of the school year, in order to tailor their teaching strategies to the specific needs of students.

The assessments and corresponding remediation activities for students will be shared through a **Reading Readiness Toolkit** and a **Formative Assessment Toolkit**, developed by technical partner AIR.

QUICK FACTS

Project Type	Education
Funder/funding	CRS / \$315,283
Project location	Khammouane Province
# of people served	103 Teachers and 34 VEDCs reaching 1,126 students and 2,252 parents
Timeframe	2017-2018
Partners	Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS) of Khammouane American Institutes for Research (AIR)

The Reading Readiness Toolkit will be used in the beginning of the school year for teachers to assess student's Lao language vocabulary and knowledge of how books and text work. Students who need extra support will be tested on these skills again a second time. The Reading Readiness Toolkit provides concrete strategies that teachers can use with students to strengthen their Lao language vocabulary and understanding of how books and print work before teaching more advanced literacy skills.

The Formative Assessment Toolkit will help teachers to understand how students are progressing in specific literacy skills, and appropriately adjust teaching and learning activities according to student understanding. Teachers will assess four basic reading skills:

1. Oral Vocabulary Knowledge,
2. Phonological Awareness,
3. Decoding, and
4. Reading Comprehension.

The Formative Assessment Toolkit includes instructions for simple activities that teachers can do with students to support their progress in each of these skills.

Teachers will use the Formative Assessment Toolkit four times per year to inform interventions and to document student progress in literacy development.

CRS' Community Mobilizers will coach teachers monthly, with the government technical Education staff where possible, to provide continued support on the use of the toolkits.

Capacity Building of Village Education Development Committees

In Lao PDR, each school is directed by a Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) composed of village leaders, school principals, teachers, and parent representatives.

VEDCs are well positioned to create change and establish a culture of literacy in their villages. CRS' Community Mobilizers will build the capacity of 34 VEDCs to become these agents of change by facilitating 6 village based, interactive sessions where VEDCs learn about; (i) VEDC roles and responsibilities; (ii) the identification of problems related to education; (iii) action planning for solutions to problems identified; (iv) the importance of the home and village environments on child literacy development; (v) activities for parents who read and who do not read to do with their children at home; and (vi) the capacity and right of all children to learn to read.

CRS will support VEDCs to work with parents to create an enabling home and village environment for children's literacy development.

Specific VEDC actions promoted through the project include:

- Home visits to encourage parents and children to engage in literacy activities at home;



All parents and villages can positively impact children's literacy development. Photo: Jim Stipe

- Periodic VEDC-led parent meetings at schools to discuss student progress in literacy and goals, and share key messages from the 6 VEDC modules.
- Small-grant mechanism for VEDCs to contribute to the development of a culture of reading in the community through activities such as reading contests, community libraries, and storytelling.

PROJECTED IMPACT OF CHILD LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PILOT

The anticipated direct impacts of the CLD pilot are:

- Participating teachers will be enabled to enhance their instructional practices during and beyond the life of the project.
- Participating VEDCs will have more efficient problem solving strategies, and will improve techniques for promoting literacy activities at the community and household levels.
- Participating families will increase child literacy promotion activities at home.
- Participating students in Grades 1 and 2 will have improved literacy skills.

CRS and AIR will conduct qualitative research for in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive the toolkits, and how they are applied in the classroom. Community level research will also be conducted to examine how literacy promotion activities for children are appreciated and adopted by VEDCs and families.