

## Actions by the Education Sector to the 2019 Roundtable Meeting key recommendations and Sector Working Group Call for Action 2020/2021

Focus on “Quality of education” and “Greater investment in training of the primary teacher workforce”

- MoES with Development Partners support is piloting shorter pre-service training of ECE teachers, and alternative approaches for early childhood education programmes using caregivers rather than fully qualified teachers, in response to the reduced quota of new civil service teachers.
- TVET teachers have been trained in the learner-centered approach and have gradually shifted to more competency-based learning.
- A draft Continuous Professional Development Strategy for Teachers in Lao PDR is being developed and Development Partners are supporting to finalize the strategy, but its implementation will require an increased education budget from GoL.
- Development Partners are supporting the Department of Teacher Education to develop a comprehensive teacher policy.
- The roll-out of the new primary curriculum and limited training of teachers in the new curriculum continues to be supported by Development Partners. But the lack of GoL budget to support training of all primary teachers in the use of new curriculum and to strengthen content knowledge and pedagogical skills remains a challenge.

## Priorities for 2022 Roundtable Meeting

- Consequences of quota restrictions on universal primary education and improving the quality of education.
- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and human capital development and broader economic development.
- Impact of reduced non-wage recurrent budget on teacher trainings and continuous professional development.
- Findings from the Public Expenditure Review focusing on medium-term budgeting reforms, public expenditure and institutional review, and financial management analysis (debottlenecking) in the education sector.

### Education Sector Working Group

Chair: Ministry of Education and Sports

Co-Chairs: Australia and European Union

Delegation to Lao PDR

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# Lao PDR Education Sector Key Issues and Recommendations High-Level Roundtable Meeting 2021



## Key issues facing the sector

Learning outcomes in Lao PDR are already deeply concerning and this is likely to deteriorate further with a **shortage of teachers (low quota), lack of non-wage recurrent budget and the impacts of school closures due to COVID-19.**

Percentage of Grade 5 children performing at or above SDG level in reading and mathematics		
Country	Reading	Mathematics
Lao PDR	2%	8%
Philippines	10%	17%
Myanmar	11%	12%
Cambodia	11%	19%
Malaysia	58%	64%
Vietnam	82%	92%

Source: UNICEF & SEAMEO. (2020). SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report, Children's learning in 6 Southeast Asian countries. Bangkok, Thailand.

- Universal primary education is at risk with access to primary teachers declining.
- Low learning outcomes persists at primary and secondary level with flow-on effects to TVET and higher Education, preventing production of skilled workers who can compete in the ASEAN Economic Community.
- Learning outcomes may get worse due to shortage of teachers (low quota) and lack of non-wage recurrent budget to improve the quality of learning, particularly teacher training. This reduced education budget limits teacher upgrading and is below internationally recommended levels and one of the lowest among ASEAN countries.
- COVID-19 impact on education threatens to erode gains in the sector.

## Universal primary education is at risk as the number of primary teachers declines.

- The national budget for education has not been protected, as recommended in the RTM 2019, with deep cuts. This inhibits the Ministry of Education and Sports' own capacity to plan and respond and leads to reliance on development partners for quality improvements, but partners cannot support all districts of the country.
- A much-reduced quota of new civil service teachers, below attrition, is leading to declining numbers of primary teachers.
- Children in rural and remote schools are most disadvantaged by teacher attrition, given their previous reliance on volunteer teachers. Volunteer teachers are now leaving the system due to a lack of future quota positions.
- Declining numbers of primary teachers will result in increased use of multi-grade classes and double shifts, both leading to reduced learning time in the classroom.



## COVID-19 impact on education:

- Possible increased dropouts particularly for secondary education.
- Possible worsening of learning outcomes.
- Deterioration of the national budget and the share allocated to the education sector (level already insufficient) that further impact on quality of education and expansion of some areas.
- Prolonged school closures may mean that the gains made in education over the last decade could be eroded which will reduce the future productivity and lifetime earnings of affected students.