



# Accelerating Learning Recovery in the Context of COVID-19 in Lao PDR



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## Lao PDR has shown strong commitment to basic education over the years

- Among the first to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP
- Achieving 98.7% net enrolment in primary in 2017
- In 2019, signed onto the *Convention on Rights of the Child@30* global pledge
- In 2020, joined the World Bank's Human Capital Project
- In 2022, committed to education at the UN Transforming Education Summit



## While primary education was universalized, students were not learning

- Based on SEA PLM 2019, 98 percent of Grade 5 children in the sample could not read and comprehend an age-appropriate text and the majority as 92 percent had not mastered fundamental mathematical skills (based on standards in SDG 4.1.1b)
  - Lao PDR was performing much worse than its peers
  - **Disadvantaged** children and children from the poorest households were performing significantly worse than others



## COVID-19 caused unprecedented interruptions to schooling globally

Prolonged school closures disrupted the learning journey of an estimated 1.6 million pre-primary to secondary students in Lao PDR, but work did not stop

- Safe school opening
- Back-to-school campaigns
- Continuity of learning and remote learning
- Remedial and catch-up learning
- Socio-emotional well-being
- Compressed curriculum

**COVID-19 and the economic downturn have led to**

A sharp increase in drop-out rates

A further drop in learning levels

# What will it take to accelerate learning in Lao PDR?





# 1. Careful Prioritization

- **Foundational learning for all children** to acquire basic reading, mathematics and socio-emotional skills in preschool and in the early grades of primary school.
- **Addressing the issue of school dropouts** to ensure that children go to/remain in school and complete a full cycle of quality education

# Establishing a learning recovery strategy

- **A comprehensive learning recovery plan** is essential to recover learning losses, reduce school dropouts and mitigate other detrimental impacts on children and youth in Lao PDR.

RAPID Learning Recovery Framework developed by UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank

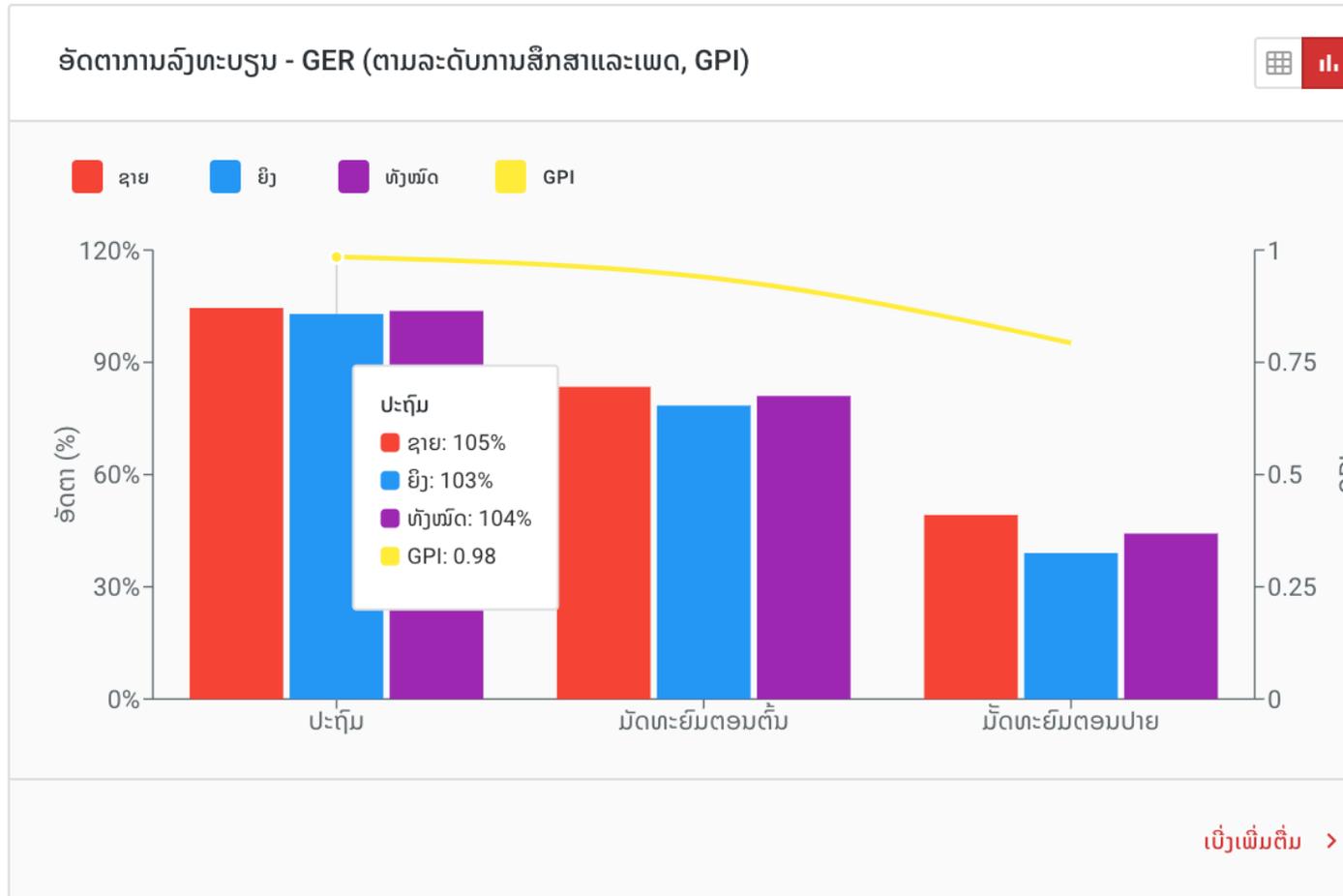


## 2. Bridging the digital divide

- COVID 19 highlighted the importance of digital devices
- While digital technologies cannot replace teachers, they can help them perform better
- What needs to be done:
  - Improve access to digital devices and the Internet
  - Improve the ability to use digital technologies for learning



# 3. Effective monitoring and feedback loops



Better data allows for better decision-making and accountability

- What needs to be done:
  - Collect data on key inputs, processes and outputs routinely
  - Link data across different databases and use it for decision-making

## 4. Adequate, efficient and equitable financing

- Adequate budgeting is critical to accelerating learning recovery as well as providing sufficient teachers and learning materials.
- Therefore, increasing the budget for the education sector is necessary in order to achieve learning recovery efforts after the outbreak of COVID-19.





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# **Thank you.**