



<b>1. Project Data:</b>		<b>Date Posted :</b> 08/20/2001	
PROJ ID: P004203		<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Project Name :</b> La-education Development (EDP)	<b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b>	37.5	26.6
<b>Country:</b> Laos	<b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>	19	Not Available
<b>Sector(s):</b> Board: ED - Tertiary education (45%), Primary education (24%), Secondary education (24%), Central government administration (7%)	<b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>		
<b>L/C Number:</b> C2488			
	<b>Board Approval (FY)</b>		93
<b>Partners involved :</b> SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation), Norway	<b>Closing Date</b>	06/30/2000	12/31/2000
<b>Prepared by :</b>	<b>Reviewed by :</b>	<b>Group Manager :</b>	<b>Group:</b>
Robert C. Varley	John R. Heath	Alain A. Barbu	OEDST

**2. Project Objectives and Components**

**a. Objectives**

The project sought to address immediate needs for quality improvement in basic education, and to establish the policy and institutional framework for longer-term sector development. Specifically the project aimed to:

1. Develop and implement new curricula, instructional materials and pedagogical support systems in primary and lower secondary education.
2. Initiate a sustainable construction program for primary and lower secondary schools .
3. Establish systems of data collection and analysis to support sector management and strategic planning .
4. Strengthen institutional capacities in educational administration and management at the central and local levels

**b. Components**

Project costs of \$26.6 million comprised:

1. **Furnished Classrooms (44.4%)**
2. **Training/Specialists/Studies (30.5%)**
3. **Instructional Materials (15.2%)**
4. **Equipment/Vehicles (8.0%)**
5. **Management/operations and Incremental Recurrent (1.9%)**

**c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates**

There are only very limited cost data - neither the annex nor the text indicates what share of the IDA funds was disbursed. The appraisal categories for civil works and construction have no entries in the Actual /Latest column. After consultation with the region, the reported cost for furniture (\$11.82 million) has been interpreted as "Furnished classrooms." The reason for the absence of separate figures is that the construction method was changed at mid-term, and subsequent contracts were for completely finished classrooms . Also the construction method was changed from one that was community-based, using prefabricated blocks, to a contractor -built method. Similarly OED has treated the lack of any actual figure for the Incremental Recurrent cost -component as owing to its amalgamation with the preceding component (Management/Operation.) In the rest of the report, the components are defined as corresponding to the 4 objectives, but there are no Actual/Latest costs, only those estimated at appraisal .

**3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:**

1. **Pedagogical support :** (a) although quantitative targets for textbooks were met or exceeded, there was no quality control and the project did not establish an efficient delivery system . The ICR concludes that while the project met immediate needs it failed to establish a sustainable system to provide school books . Goals set for students/textbook were partially achieved (1.7 and 1.6 for language and maths, versus a target of 1.0) The Borrower observes that some schools in remote poor areas received no books at all; . (b)The system of pedagogical advisers (PA), to support teachers has been well received , and continued by other donor supported projects. But the ICR concludes that for the other training "*there is little evidence that the various*

*training programmes...had much long term institutional impact."* (c) The curriculum and instructional materials development capacity of the National Research Institute for Educational Studies (NRIES) was significantly strengthened. A Concentrated Language Encounter approach for teaching Lao was successfully piloted. Studies to develop systems for assessment of educational outcome were carried out and recommendations made for a national system.

2. **Sustainable construction program** - after an unsatisfactory start, an approach was developed which reduced costs as well as largely meeting the quantitative targets. Weaknesses remain in maintenance, provision of water and sanitation. If the approach is to be widely replicated, costs must be lowered further (the Borrower goes as far as to say "too much money has gone to expensive and inappropriately designed schools construction.") The provincial units for construction and development (PUCDA) and the supporting central unit are operating satisfactorily but with much room for improvement in PUCDA site supervision. The construction management information system has been of limited effectiveness because the requisite training and data have not been supplied.
3. **Improving education planning, MIS and Assessment** - achievements were only marginally satisfactory as the MIS design was too complex. The Education MIS (EMIS) was installed with varying results in all 18 provinces. The personnel MIS (PMIS) was never decentralized as the DOP (Department of Personnel) lacked funds for equipment and local training. The financial MIS soon became outdated and was not replaced. Securing funds for MIS support staff is a chronic problem and the different systems have been used mainly for documentation rather than decision-making.
4. **Improving educational administration and management** - the capacities of DOP were strengthened but the achievements of the Department of Finance (DOF/MOE) were marginal. Assessments of the capacity of provincial and central education services were never undertaken, although the training took place. The project coordination unit (PCU) in the Department of Planning and Corporation was strengthened but owing to poor MOE supervision was poorly implemented. Also the PCU was understaffed and it was only the diligence of the consultant and two directors that averted more crises. MOE was largely responsible for poor implementation of project activities.

#### 4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

1. Physical targets were substantially met despite a late start and the adverse effect of the 1997 E Asian economic crisis.
2. Construction costs (between the first and second half of the project) fell from \$160 to \$115/m<sup>2</sup>, owing mainly to IDA's close supervision.
3. Decentralizing construction to the provinces was largely successful, reflecting the commitment of local communities and provincial governments.
4. Policy dialogue involving donors and government was strengthened by the DPC.

#### 5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):

1. Lack of coordination between donors.
2. Failure to establish adequate outcome and impact indicators.
3. The high turnover of Bank task managers in the early part of the project failed to provide "the consistency need to establish effective levels of trust, monitor the quality of implementation, provide technical assistance or trouble shooting as needed" and "led to a weak and frequently nonproductive relationship between the Borrower and Bank." A combination of a much stronger effort after mid-term and the positive contributions of co-financier SDC, meant that some objectives were partially achieved.
4. Until well into the project MOE departments failed to prioritize their work programmes, share resources, and collaborate across departmental lines on common goals.
5. Study tours for Senior Executive Officers of MOE were of doubtful effectiveness.
6. Accounting and budget procedures remained highly centralized and disbursement and accounts reports were not prepared on a regular basis (perhaps explaining the paucity of data in the ICR.)
7. The region reports that there may be even more serious problems with construction - a recent report from the field reports that there is no evidence of building at one classroom site.

6. Ratings:	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
<b>Outcome:</b>	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Some of the objectives were only partially achieved and there are enough shortcomings (see above) to warrant only a moderately sat. rating
<b>Institutional Dev.:</b>	Substantial	Modest	Training programs had little long-term institutional impact and sustainable, efficient book production was not established. Supervision was inadequate and the construction management information system has been of limited

			value. Progress on curriculum and instructional materials development capacity was significant.
<b>Sustainability :</b>	Unlikely	Unlikely	The region confirmed that the rating presented in Project Data is incorrect and should have been "Unlikely." Although an adequate policy framework appears to be in place, the budget is " <i>entirely</i> inadequate" and the MOE has "abdicated responsibility" to the provinces.
<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	A great and quite successful effort was made after Mid-Term, to get the construction and textbook components back on track. After 2 years the projects problem status was lifted.
<b>Borrower Perf. :</b>	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	The text cites borrower performance as Highly Satisfactory while the Principle Performance Rating is Satisfactory. OED concurs with the latter
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		Unsatisfactory	

**NOTE:** ICR rating values flagged with '\*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

### 7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

- The MOE departments are not likely to become mature enough to be accountable unless they control their own budgets and are responsible for (a) planning or administration of resources; (b) financial efficiency; (c) transparency of processes; and (c) explaining the relation of outcomes to budgets provided .
- Unless decisions on budgetary priorities are required of Government, it is unlikely that priorities will be clearly articulated. The EDP was insulated from normal pressures by requiring little financial commitment from the Borrower (the ICR does not, however, indicate how much of the realized funding came from government or donors.)

### 8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

**Why?** To answer various questions not satisfactorily addressed in the ICR .

### 9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

Unsatisfactory.

- A most basic requirement is to know how much IDA funds were spent and how - this information is not provided .
- The ICR makes no attempt to integrate the borrower comments into the main text - for instance concerning the effectiveness of the Teacher Training and Pedagogic Support component .
- Inconsistencies between ratings and the text, and between project data and the text . Some ratings are not supported by arguments in the text and in some instances it is not clear what the final rating is . For instance: (a) borrower performance is highly satisfactory in the text, but only satisfactory in the table of ratings; and (b) negative descriptions of institutional capacity are followed by positive ratings .
- The ICR does not provide an adequate explanation of what was wrong with the original community -based construction methodology and why it was dropped .