

## Laos: «Honghian Ban Hao - Our Village School»

Primary and kindergarten education for the children of the Mangkong ethnic minority



### Project location

Nong district, Savannakhet province

### Project duration

3 years: 1.1.2016-31.12.2018

### Project budget 2016–2018

CHF 212,973

## Background

The Mangkong ethnic minority is one of over 160 ethnic subgroups in Laos; they live in the poorly developed Nong district in the south of Laos, on the border with Vietnam. The villages in this hilly region are difficult to reach and most of the villagers practise traditional agriculture. This makes it impossible for them to build up reserves to sell, so that they have no source of income. Only a few of the adults in the village have received any education, and although there are now more schools available for their children, these are mostly located in larger cities. The children from the three project villages – Bangyalang, Bang and Salaeng – attend ‘temporary’ schools where the quality of teaching is low, so that their opportunities for education and development are limited.

The aim of the project is to provide high-quality pre-school and primary education. Child-friendly primary schools in three villages enable the children to progress in their learning and lay the foundation for further education and opportunities in later life. To achieve sustainable success it is important to take a holistic approach, which means including families and village communities and strengthening them by means of small-scale income projects and literacy courses. Active involvement of the village communities leads them to identify more closely with the project and accept it more fully.

## Goals

- Construction of 3 child-friendly primary schools and 3 kindergartens
- Provision of a child-friendly schools and learning environments
- Improved quality of teaching and learning in the village schools
- Literacy courses for adults, especially women
- Income projects and setting up of a village store
- Strengthening of the local partner organization

### Partner organization

**CoDA** (Community Development Association) was established in 2013 as a nationally registered NGO. So far there are few civil organisations in Laos.

**Vision:** Empowerment of endangered societies and minorities, encouragement of sustainable development based on gender equality.

**Thematic focus:** Education, nutrition

Website under construction

## Beneficiaries

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- 3 primary schools with about 200 students per year, 3 kindergartens with about 35 children, 6 primary and 3 kindergarten teachers
- 30 adults per year in literacy courses
- 30 participants in craft courses and income generating activities (IGAs)
- Indirect beneficiaries: around 980 inhabitants of the project villages

## Activities

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- Construction of infrastructure for primary schools and kindergartens, including toilets, water supply, solar plant
- Construction of school compounds with fences, sports- and playgrounds, planting of trees and shrubs
- Supply of furniture (tables, chairs, benches, shelves) and complete sets of learning materials
- Development of child-friendly learning environments. Teacher training in subjects such as child-friendly teaching methodology, basic English, gender sensitivity and promotion of gender equality, production of teaching and learning aids from local materials
- Provision of extra-curricular activities for students: sports, play, music, cultural events
- Literacy courses for adults, especially women
- Income projects for families and villagers: technical and agricultural courses, initiation of small scale projects
- Setting up of a village store for local products and as a learning model for management skills
- Support of the development of the local partner organization through project implementation: monitoring of project effectiveness, narrative reporting according to proposal and log frame (with measurable indicators), financial reporting with electronic cashbook, external auditing and evaluation

## Sustainability

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The holistic approach focuses on involving the children's families and social environment. Parents who are themselves able to read and write can support their children's education more effectively. Awareness-raising activities are designed to emphasise the added value education brings.

Economic security for the families supports education for their children. Only when the children have enough time for school and homework and are released from work at home is it possible for them to attend school regularly. This is why ensuring income for the families is a vital part of the project.

The progress of the project and achievement of its milestones are monitored on an ongoing basis. Parents are involved in its implementation through school committees. Moreover, the participation of each community as a whole promotes identification with the project and its goals.

From the start of the project, the primary teachers' salaries are paid by the government. After conclusion of the project the state will also take over responsibility for, and ownership of, the kindergartens. This inclusion of the state ensures that the legal and financial status of all the participating schools as part of the national education system will be secured.

The local partner organization, CoDA, is a further component of the project's sustainability. Its development is being strengthened by the joint project, enabling it to professionalise itself further and become established as a key organisation in Laotian civil society.



Literacy courses



Rural school

**CO-OPERAID** promotes the right of children to education in East Africa and South Asia. The association was founded in 1981, is politically and denominationally independent and ZEWOCertified since 1998.

**Vision:** High-quality education for children and young people as a basis for a self-determined and dignified life

**Thematic Focus:** Basic education and vocational training with complementary elements such as fighting poverty, agricultural income projects, promotion of girls and gender equality, Aids prevention, health promotion.

[www.co-operaid.ch](http://www.co-operaid.ch)