

48th International Conference on Education



WORKSHOP 4

Inclusive Education: The Lao PDR Experience

Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun



**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**



**48th Session of the International Conference on
Education,
Geneva, 25-28 November 2008**

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
The Lao PDR Experience**

*By: Ms. Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun, Deputy-Minister,
Ministry of Education, Lao PDR*

OUTLINE OF CONTENT

- **Introduction**
- **Policy and Progress**
- **Strategies**
- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Selected Challenges**

Introduction

- **Necessity to develop and implement public policies on Inclusive Education**
- **Adjusting teaching and learning environment to enhance Inclusive Education**
- **Some challenges related to inclusive education need to be addressed.**

Inclusive Education: The Lao PDR experience

Policies and Progress

Framework

- EFA National Plan of Action 2003-2015
- Teacher Education Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2015
- National Education Reform Strategy 2006-2015
- Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment 2008
- Draft Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) 2008

Progress

- Participation of disadvantaged groups has been improving in the past 5-10 years
- Gender parity indices for primary education have shown an upward trend
- Enrolment share (primary education) of the 47 poorest districts increased significantly
- Primary school enrolment from some ethnic groups has increased in the past 6 years
- Special needs provision is increasingly part of the Ministry's policy

Inclusive Education: The Lao PDR experience

Strategies

➤ *Systematic approach*

- Scholarships for the poor
- Increased access to village primary schools
- Recruiting teachers from ethnic groups

➤ *Mainstreaming*

- Integration into the curriculum : gender, ethnic group and culture issues
- Adjusting the school physical environment and provision of appropriate learning environment for special needs
- Participation of children, parents and community for effective learning and school management

Strategies (continue)

- *Specific targeted interventions*
 - Boarding schools provided sensitive to the needs of females and ethnic groups
 - Recruit and train ethnic group teachers from remote districts and villages
 - Provision for severely disabled children with severe learning, hearing and sight difficulties

- *More effective standards, indicators, information*
 - Information systems - specific inclusive education measures (geographic/socio-economic disaggregation)
 - Specific Ministry centres set up to ensure systemic or targeted interventions are rigorously screened

Teaching and Learning: Interventions

- An approach that focuses on the inclusion of the most disadvantaged (the hardest to reach individuals, the poor, the most vulnerable as well as everybody else)
- Develop strategies, skills and behaviours for bringing those children into school and helping them to learn
- Approaches to educating teachers through revised pre-service programmes and in-service professional development to integrate the required skills, strategies and behaviours

Teaching and Learning: Interventions (cont')

➤ Inclusive education project

- Running since 1994 (367 schools: pre-school, primary, lower secondary) in nine provinces including remote areas
- Targets: children with disabilities, children failing at school and all other children
- Teachers had the opportunity to improve skills for teaching the disabled

➤ Active learning programme

- Modules based on active learning, child-centred approaches and inclusive education concepts
- Initial workshop followed by supported practice in schools and a second experience-sharing workshop

➤ National Charter of Teacher Competencies (NCTC)

- The NCTC clearly reflects principles of inclusive education
- Teachers should support children with special educational needs
- Teachers should be aware that children's backgrounds affect their learning
- Teachers should offer consistent and fair treatment to pupils whatever their gender, social, cultural, linguistic, religious or ethnic background

Teaching and Learning: Interventions (cont')

➤ **Changing curricula**

- IE concepts and teaching skills/student-centred approach integrated into new teacher education programmes
- Pre-school and primary teacher education programmes extended from 1 year to 2 years

➤ **Professional development programme**

- Experienced staff in 8 teacher training institutions developed as key trainers who then delivered a similar two-year part-time programme to all their colleagues
- Action research, field trips to multi-grade schools and inclusive education schools

➤ **Curriculum, teacher manuals and textbooks**

- Supplementary curriculum to assist the teaching of ethnic students (22 textbooks/teachers guides)
- New training techniques put students at the core of the learning process and encourage involvement of both boys and girls
- Promotion of rights especially for girls and ethnic groups
- Illustrations show all ethnic groups involved in learning and creates understanding from an early age

Inclusive Education: The Lao PDR experience

Teaching and Learning: remote area teachers, salaries and incentives

➤ **Teachers for remote areas**

- Challenge: deployment of trained competent teachers to remote area posts
- Recruiting from remote areas and ethnic communities and providing teacher training scholarships
- Innovative programmes ensure trainees return to schools in their communities
- On graduation teachers are posted to home villages as teachers
- Increased retention as newly graduated teachers have not lost their community ties

➤ **Teacher Salaries and incentives**

- Teacher salaries have been increasing over the past few years
- A number of incentives and structural changes have been or are being introduced
- National awards with attached honorariums recognize outstanding teachers
- System of teacher titles with a financial incentive attached
- Allowances for teachers to work in remote areas & for teaching multi-grade classes in less populated areas

Selected Challenges for Lao PDR: Basic Education

National Education System Reform Strategy (NESRS)

- Speed up implementation of the 5+4+3 system to provide an additional year of lower secondary school education in 2009
- Ensure that all children successfully complete primary and lower secondary education without dropping out of school
- Out-of-reach children must be caught in the social security net along with out-of-school youth
- To put in place a combination of demand-side approaches (the increased economic and cultural relevance of schooling) and supply-side approaches (reducing the number of incomplete schools and a more equitable distribution of qualified teachers)
- Strengthening of school-community links including measures to ensure accountability strategies for education service quality

Selected Challenges for Lao PDR: Post-basic Education

National Education System Reform Strategy (NESRS)

- Ensuring the education system, its physical and institutional infrastructure and agencies, is responsive to changing labour market demand and new economic sectors for Lao PDR
- Expansion of upper secondary education and TVET and higher education reform taking account of the world of work
- Education governance, quality assurance and financing strategies will need to be well defined to ensure that the supply of school, college and university graduates matches labour force demand
- Strategies are needed to ensure more equitable provision of post-basic education opportunities
- Improved legislative, regulatory and financing measures are required to mobilise and expand private sector participation ensuring opportunities for those not always included in the past

Final

- **The draft Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) proposes a number of strategies to address challenges**
- **Additional resources for formal school education will need to be mobilised in support of achieving inclusive education.**
- **Ensure that IE becomes a cross-cutting issue/ an important part of teacher training, curriculum development as well as inclusion in other relevant MoE initiatives.**



*THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
KIND
ATTENTION*