

## HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN

- Save the Children draws its world-class **expertise** from over 249 million USD worth of programmes in 64 countries. This investment ensures the implementation and continuance of a solid policy dialogue and implementation in schools and communities.
- Save the Children has **extensive** experience working at scale with the most disadvantaged children in marginalized communities. In 2012, we reached 48,804 children as a result of our education programs.
- Save the Children works alongside the Ministry of Education and Sports, civil society, communities, and above all the children who we serve. These relationships help ensure that our education programs are **effective** and **sustainable**.
- Save the Children **fosters** a learning environment where children can thrive. We have increased student **participation** in schools by encouraging them to be involved with planning and self-monitoring activities. This **unique** approach has led to higher attendance rates, lower drop-out rates, and improved academic performance.
- Save the Children help makes schools a **safer** place. A place free of violence and bullying, where children's protective behaviours and knowledge are strengthened.



*“At that time there was no grade 5 in the incomplete school at my hometown, so I needed to move to live with my aunt in Thaduea village to seek further education. I did not want to drop out from school as many of my friends did due to the unavailability of grade 5 at my hometown.” Lien, 22 years old, Viengthong District, Bolikhamxay Province.*

*Education is very important for me because it provides knowledge and skills. If we do not go to school it means we will have no job when we grow up and we will be poor always.” Salika, female, 5th yr. grade student, Xaysathane District, Sayaboury Province.*

## MOVING AHEAD ON EDUCATION

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## OUR MISSION

All children in Lao PDR have their rights equitably fulfilled and are healthy, protected, empowered, skilled and knowledgeable to seize emerging opportunities and mitigate threats in a fast changing environment.



## OUR PROGRAMS

In 2009, Save the Children in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports launched two innovative programs called **SQIP (School Quality Improvement)** and **ELPS (Early Learning in Primary School)** worth USD eight millions to help support the Government attain its EFA (Education for All) goals and contribute to MDG 2 & 3 for 2015.

**SQIP** is a 5 year program designed to ensure that more than 100,000 children of 10 poorest districts in Bolikhamxay, Luang Prabang, and Sayaboury Provinces gain their rights to access and complete pre- and primary quality education,

The **ELPS** program helps improve access to pre-primary education in vulnerable areas by establishing pre-schools with the support of communities and local education bureaus.

## SECTOR OVERVIEW

- There has been great progress in enrollment over past 5 years. Laos is well on track to achieve MDG target 2.1. However drop out is still high. Country wide, 35% of children do not complete a full course of primary education.

*Why is this?*

High rates of repetition suggest that children are struggling with lessons taught in Lao, a language that is not their mother tongue.

- Low survival rate also means that non- formal education is critical to ensure more out of school girls and boys are able to continue learning .
- Lao is on track to achieve gender parity for pre-school and primary. There are large disparities across the country, however. Many girls in rural areas must stay home to care for younger siblings, while most boys may continue to attend school.
- In spite of the government's strong financial commitment to education, there remains a substantial gap in funding for non-recurrent expenditures. Children and teachers lack adequate teaching materials and parents have to support the high costs of running the schools.
- More teachers have been trained and recruited in recent years. Rural schools still suffer from a severe lack of teachers, however, and many schools cannot offer a full course of basic education. Of the 10,553 villages country wide, only 45% have schools that go up to grade 3, and 20% of communities have no schools at all.



## OUR APPROACH

- Save the Children has created a unique model that brings communities and schools together to support children's learning. Save the Children supports the training of ethnic female teachers selected by their communities. They have joined forces with communities to build schools and empower the villages to contribute to quality education in a safe environment.
- Save the Children has developed a comprehensive approach to promoting Education for All. This has been achieved by improving teaching methods and by fostering participation of the children themselves to create a positive school environment.
- Save the Children has developed systems within the communities to ensure that schools receive accurate information, pedagogic and administrative support, and overall support at district and provincial levels. We have put an emphasis on helping teachers and principals across the provinces share best practices with the ultimate goal of affecting quality changes among all schools.



## ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- Admission rates for 5 year olds have risen from 32.3% in 2009 to 48.72% in 2012. Approximately 5,470 children have already benefited from access to early childhood education. This is a direct result from building capacity of communities to take part in school development.
- 163 Pre-schools were built within the targeted districts, 171 pre-school teachers have been trained. In addition, a 30 week pre-school training course has been successfully integrated into the Teachers Training College in Vientiane and has been replicated in two other provinces.
- Primary school net enrollment rates in the implementation areas have increased to 95.5% in 2012, from 90% in 2009, This is the direct result of improved access to early education in rural areas.

Number of children passing the grade 5 level test increased to 93.57% in 2012, from 68% in 2009. This is largely due to Save the Children's initiative on training primary school teachers in active teaching; a two way communication technique encouraging children participation.