



## FO ToR external evaluation

<b>Country:</b>	Lao PDR/Southeast Asia
<b>Project:</b>	532007Improvement of Quality Education in Primary Schools (IQEPS)
<b>Commissioned by:</b>	Pestalozzi Children's Foundation

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### List of Abbreviations

CCA	Child-Centered Approach
DESB	District Education and Sports Bureau
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
LSDA	Life Skills Development Association
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OP	Operational Partner
PCF	Pestalozzi Children's Foundation
PESS	Provincial Education and Sports Service
ToR	Terms of Reference
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee

## 1 Background information and context

To address poor quality teaching of primary education, Life Skills Development Association (LSDA) in partnership with Provincial Education and Sport Services of Huaphan Province and District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB) of Et District jointly developed a joint project, called “Improvement of Quality Education in Primary Schools (IQEPS)”. The project aims to address the root causes of poor-quality education of the ethnic girls and boys. The main root causes are: (1) the teachers’ limited knowledge and pedagogical skills (teaching Lao to ethnic girls and boys, mathematics, environmental education, multi-grade teaching and Child Centred Approach – including gender and child rights); (2) low competencies of school principals/managers; (3) schools’ lack of safe and peaceful environment in the form of green and clean school models<sup>1</sup>; (4) poor school infrastructure; (5) limited capacity of DESB to address their challenges in providing pedagogical support to teachers; and (6) limited community participation in education development and school management.

In doing so, the project emphasizes on 3 main foci: 1) quality of teaching by promoting compliance of teachers’ code of ethics and teacher capacity building so that they have improved knowledge and skills in teaching literacy, numeracy and environment, as well as child right and gender inclusiveness in education, based on the actual context; 2) safe and peaceful school environment will be improved by developing Green and Clean Schools and school infrastructure, for ethnic girls and boys, with the ownership and participation of communities using locally available materials; 3) promoting community and parents’ awareness regarding the importance of education, child rights and gender equity so that they encourage and equally support both girls’ and boys’ school attendance and learning.

The project supports capacity building for DESB in Training of Trainers, technical skills, child rights and gender equity and other relevant skills and techniques for strengthening pedagogical support and monitoring with school and communities. PESS are engaged in each step and process to ensure enabling environment and policy and technical support. In addition, relevant teaching and learning materials are provided to teachers and children.

The project plans to create positive gender impact in the education system in general, in particular at the district level. Gender inclusiveness will be trained and integrated into the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) to be applied by the project in all levels, processes and stages on management and implementation. As much as possible, women will be included and promoted in the management and implementation teams. Principals and teachers will be equipped to integrate gender inclusiveness into their teaching to ensure that ethnic girls and boys receive equal opportunities and support. Gender inclusiveness, which will be integrated in the capacity building to PESS, DESB, principals, teachers and VEDC, will be embedded in the system and sustain in the long-term. In addition, gender issue and gender-relevant results will be observed, monitored, addressed (if any) and reported. Ultimately, the lessons learnt from the project will be reflected to the decision-making level.

To promote sustainability, the project plans to enhance the DESB institutional capacity and ownership so that quality learning of ethnic girls and boys can be ensured. Principals will be trained or supported so that they are capable in school management. Community members and community education development mechanisms like VEDC will also be empowered through training and participatory learning and action to participate in community education development. The institutional capacity building and ownership enhancement at the district and community levels as well as the policy support from MOES and PESS in ensuring teachers’ accountability will sustain quality education for ethnic girls and boys after the project life. Child rights and gender equity promoted in all stages of project cycle will impact the long-term education planning and decision making among project stakeholders.

**Project Impact:** Contribution to a sustainable development and living peacefully together.

**Project Outcome(s):** Primary school girls and boys in 69 schools in Et District of Huaphan Province have access to improved quality education.

### Outputs:

1. Teachers improved their pedagogical skills and content knowledge.
2. Safe and peaceful school environments were developed and school managers’ competencies are improved.
3. Parents and communities gained awareness on child rights and quality education.

### Project Participants:

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<sup>1</sup> According to environmental criteria of the MoES’ guideline on quality schools.

1. Approximately 4,388 children (2,079 F; 2,309 M) from the 69 primary schools in the age 5 to 13 years old from Sing Moun, Lu Mien, Hmong, Khmu, and other non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups. Over 483 Village Education Development (VEDC) members (69 F; 414 M) from 69 schools.
2. 28,167 community member/parents (13,649 F; 14,257 M) in 69 schools/communities.
3. 162 primary school principals and in-service teachers (66 F; 96 M).
4. Approximately 30 government staff (10F; 20 M) from Provincial Education and Sport Service (PESS), District Education and Sport Bureau (DESB), Provincial Department of Foreign Affairs, Provincial and District Department of Home Affairs and District Cabinet.

#### **Project Partners:**

- DESB is a key actor at the district level that will manage the project, jointly with LSDA, assign the staff to work with the project for the training and pedagogical support and involve with all project activities. PESS is a direct department at the provincial level that is managing the education system in the province and also provide policy and technical supervision to the DESB. The PESS will support the project in facilitating project coordination with the district and be involved in some of the activity implementation (training, monitoring and evaluation). PESS will also facilitate project approval from the government.

**Project Duration:** 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2025. Because of the delayed MoU approval, the project actually started in April 2023.

## **2 Purpose of the evaluation**

The formative and summative evaluation purpose is to:

1. To assess the extent to which the project has achieved its planned outcomes and outputs equitably across genders, considering the specific needs and barriers faced by girls and boys<sup>2</sup>.
2. To identify key successes, challenges, and lessons learned regarding the approaches and/or tools leading to project outputs and outcome achievements, with a specific focus on how the project has addressed or failed to address gender disparities in access, participation, and learning outcomes.
3. To explore the feasibility and potential for a new project phase, and provide a clear, specific and practical recommendations for project design to ensure equitable benefits for girls and boys, with a potential of expanding to other districts.

## **3 Scope and focus of the evaluation**

The evaluation aims to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and management of the project and shall look at:

1. Progressive achievement of the project as per the designed impact, outcome and outputs, with a focus on the equitable progress of girls and boys in achieving these targets.
2. Lessons learnt in methodologies applied by the project in participatory delivery of quality education, with a focus on how these methodologies have contributed to or hindered the equitable participation and learning outcomes of girls and boys. This includes analysing the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder engagement, teacher and school principal training, pedagogical support, community engagement, child rights and participation, and gender equality strategies.
3. Sustainability of the project approaches and community engagement to education development, with a focus on how these factors contribute to the long-term, equitable access and participation of girls and boys in education. This includes analysing the sustainability of community support/engagement for school maintenance, improvements in the school environment, support for child enrolment, and child protection mechanisms, with a specific focus on how these factors impact girls and boys differently.

### **3.1 Evaluation questions**

1. To what extent have the project outcomes and outputs been achieved, with a particular focus on the equitable achievement of these targets by girls and boys?
2. To what extent have green and clean schools and infrastructure improved? How have teachers' knowledge and skills in environment education improved? How has the children's knowledge in environment improved? How much did students contribute to the development of the C&G schools? How relevant do they perceive their contribution?

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<sup>2</sup> The periodic test results of children's learning are available in semi- annual and annual project reports and monitoring system.

3. What specific project activities and approaches have demonstrated the most significant impact on improving learning outcomes for both girls and boys, taking into account the specific needs for gender equality promotion in the process?
4. What key lessons learnt and best practices can be extracted from this project to inform the design and implementation of future projects, including possible mechanism for expansion to other schools or districts while ensuring gender inclusivity?

### 3.2 Evaluation methods

The evaluation shall be conducted by an external consultant jointly with PCF, LSDA staff and project team. A more specific and detailed assessment design shall be developed by the consultant and discussed between consultant, PCF and LSDA based on the following mixed methods of information gathering (the list below can be adjusted):

- a. Multi-stakeholder workshop.
- b. Focus group discussions with project's participants, with teachers regarding skills improvement and application of their new knowledge, parents/VEDC regarding their contribution to community education development, children of different ages and gender regarding their participation in project supported activities and child right, with PESS and DESB regarding the overall project intervention and sustainability.
- c. Interviews with key informants (parents, teachers, girls and boys, etc.)
- d. Desk review of project/programme documentation (project planning documents (e.g. log frame), monitoring system, monitoring report, project reports).
- e. Participant observation
- f. Observation of Clean and Green School development, including waste management, greening of the school and infrastructure.

## 4 Schedule and Deliverables

Septs	What	Date
1.	Submission of proposal	16 February 2025
2.	Selection of the candidates	21 February 2025
3.	Signing the contract	28 February 2025
4.	Detail planning/finalising the ToR	12 March 2025
5.	Travel to Et	30 March 2025
6.	Preparatory workshop with PESS and DESB, multi-stakeholder workshop and small group discussions - separate groups of staff, PESS, DESB, teachers and village representatives. To be planned.	31 March - 01 April 2025
7.	Village visit – to be planned.	02-03 April 2025
8.	EE team summarise data in the morning and reflection PESS, LSDA, DESB and PCF in the afternoon.	04 April 2025
9.	Travel back	05 April 2025
10.	Draft report submitted	27 April 2025
11.	Final Evaluation Report	11 May 2025

### 4.1 Structure and length of the final report

The final evaluation report shall be submitted in English and Lao, if possible. It shall not be longer than 20 pages (excluding annexes and executive summary). The final evaluation should contain an executive summary of no more than 5 pages that includes a brief description of the project/programme, its context and current

situation, the purpose of the evaluation, its methodology and its main findings, conclusions and recommendations. The structure of the report should follow the structure of the executive summary. Three signed copies of the final version of the report along with a digital version have to be submitted to PCF.

## **5 Role and responsibilities**

A specific and detailed assessment design and process is led by a consultant with support of PCF and LSDA.

LSDA staff will facilitate the coordination with stakeholders at central and local level.

The lead during the actual evaluation is by the consultant and the actual evaluation is done jointly by the consultant, LSDA and PCF team members.

The report will be written by the consultant in consultation with PCF and LSDA. After receiving the first draft of report, PCF (Programme Director and Country Representative) will coordinate for the review and feedback to be given within 7 days after the receiving the draft. PCF's Country Representative Laos will be the contact person for this exercise.

## **6 Competency profile of the evaluator(s)**

The lead evaluator or the evaluation team is required to have the following of competency:

- Experience conducting project evaluations in education and related social development fields including community level.
- Knowledge of the OECD-DAC definitions: how to assess Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Management.
- Experiences of Result-Based Management, results chain and project cycle.
- Strong experiences with participatory working approaches.
- Skills in facilitating multi-stakeholder workshop.
- Skills to evoke and solicit data from different stakeholders (children, gender, etc.) concerned with the project, synthesise all accounts, justify achievement of the project.
- Knowledge of the rural community context and ability to travel to "hard to access" area and overnight in the rural community.
- Ability to write evaluation report in English.

## **7 Budget**

A detailed budget should be included in the proposal and specify how many days are given for studying the documentation, execution (field visits), reporting in English and translation of the final report into Lao. Materials, accommodation, foods and transportation will be handled by the project.

## **8 Guiding principles and values**

The evaluation team should adhere to the United Nations evaluation norms and standards and ethical guidelines for evaluation<sup>3</sup>.

The individual consultants/team or institution that will work on this project must demonstrate personal and professional integrity during the whole process of the evaluation. He/she/the team must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Further, the team must respect ethics of research while working with children including using age-appropriate consent forms, age-appropriate data collection, and principle of do no harm. Furthermore, the team and its members must take care that those involved in the evaluation have an opportunity to examine the statements attributed to them. The evaluation process and consultants must be sensitive to beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment in which they will work. Especially, the consultants must be sensitive to and address issues of protection, discrimination and gender inequality. Furthermore, the consultants are not expected to assess the personal performance of individuals, and must balance an assessment of management functions with due consideration of this principle. Finally, if the consultants or team uncover evidence of wrongdoing, such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body.

## **9 Annexe**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>, consulted on 23.10.2016