2017 Asia-Pacific Regional ECD Conference

Holistic Approach to Improved Early Childhood Development in Northern Laos

By Oulath Saengouthay, Education Advisor 1-3 March, 2017, Siem Reap, Cambodia



List of Contents

- I. Overview of ECE in Laos
- II. Why CFL's Interventions in Northern Laos
- III. CFL's ECE Approach
- IV. Key ECE Achievements and Mechanisms to Achieve them
- V. Challenges
- VI. Conclusion and What We Might Take Away



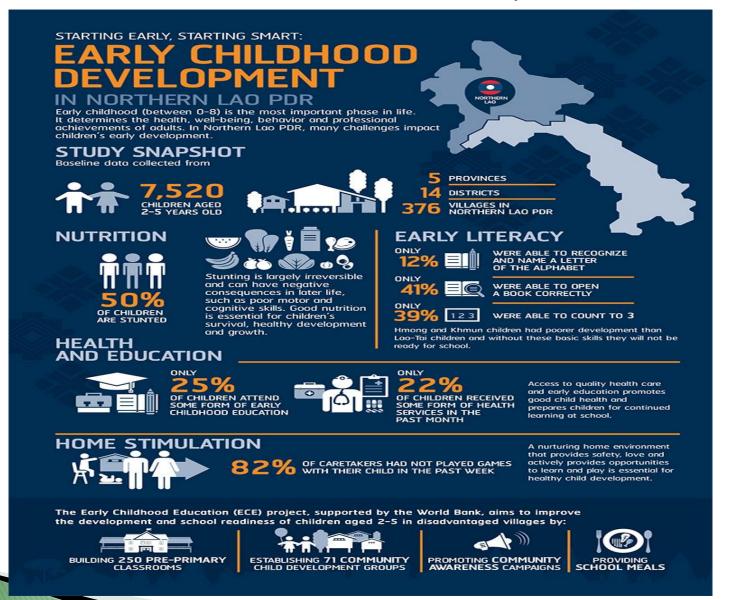
Overview of ECE in Laos

Problems and Opportunities:

- Emphasis on primary and thus under-investment in ECE
- DPs' low interest in ECE
- Language policy and ECE
- Need for ECE in Northern Laos as identified by local governments and communities
- Alignment with government priorities and SDG goals SDG 4.2:"by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education"
- Increased awareness on ECE/ECCD
- Increasing ECE activities despite main focus on primary education



The Recent World Bank Study



Source: World Bank, 2016

Why CFL's Interventions in Northern Laos

- Impact of ChildFund Australia's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan
- Impact of Dakar Framework for Action: good quality ECE can have a positive impact on the growth, survival and the developmental and learning potential of children
- High repetition rate for Grade 1 at high number of students not completing the full five years of primary schooling
- Huaphanh and Xiengkhuang identified as two of the lowest scoring provinces in the country with Grade 5 students achieving independent functioning in Lao language
- Reinforcing Govt Implementation of Education Sector Development Plans
- Aiming to strengthen young children's development opportunities in Xiengkhuang and Huaphanh Provinces ChildFund

CFL's ECE Approach ECE

- Participatory Project Design
- Integrating with previous experiences
- Linking with other relevant projects
- Community led with strong engagement of govt partners
- Seeking innovation with other players



Key ECE Achievements and Mechanisms to Achieve them

Reached 370 pre-primary school aged children in Nonghet, is reaching 340 pre-primary school aged children in Huameuang + numerous teachers, parents, community members, DESB and PESS members through:

- Community-led construction/upgrade of ECE centres equipped with appropriate furniture and teaching materials
- ECE teachers recruited, trained and deployed in ECEs



Key ECE Achievements and Mechanisms to Achieve them (Cont)

- ECE teacher performance assessed and developed through further training and coaching
- Project Construction Committees (PCCs) trained and supported to manage ECE construction
- Child- and youth-led monitoring teams trained and supported to monitor ECE construction
- VEDCs facilitate community-level activities that create/improve links between villages and schools



Key ECE Achievements and Mechanisms to Achieve them (Cont)

- ECCD training and support for Community Volunteers
- ECCD awareness-raising and information session for parents and caregivers
- ECCD support for parent and caregiver groups
- IEC materials produced and distributed promoting ECCD



Challenges

- ECE teacher not allocated for ECE centres
- Capacity of community volunteers to convey ECCD message to parents and caregivers remains a challenge
- Understanding ECCD materials remains a challenge for non-Lao speaking parents and caregivers
- · Participation of children in ECE centre construction
- Low language acquisition of ethnic children: objectives vs. achievements



Conclusion and What We Might Take Away

- ECE/ECD still has a long way to go for Laos despite increasing awareness of it
- CFL's ECE interventions in Northern Laos are a substantial shift and flagship initiatives leading to a holistic development approach
- Promising and replicable interventions
- Challenges call for stronger ownership of relevant players, improved ECD awareness, investment and innovation



Some Pictures of CFL's ECE Interventions



ChildFund

Khop Chai Der