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## USAID LEARN TO READ

USAID Learn to Read, a five-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will complement government efforts to improve reading skills for children from the pre-primary level to second grade in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. With a special focus on children who do not speak Lao and children with disabilities, the activity will help to improve the quality of basic education in the country.

Laos has made significant progress in primary school enrollment over the past five years, with a national enrollment rate of 97 percent. Despite these achievements, drop-out rates at the primary level remain high, particularly in more remote and rural areas. Children in households that do not speak Lao as a first language – approximately half of the total population – face additional barriers and must first develop basic communication skills in the Lao language before they can access the national education curriculum. Similarly, children with mild disabilities require additional support to successfully learn to read.

USAID Learn to Read augments efforts by the Government of Laos to increase the number of primary school children with functional literacy and the number of skilled Lao language teachers.

### IMPROVING READING OUTCOMES

USAID will support the development of evidence-based, supplemental reading materials. By tapping into expertise from across the education sector, USAID Learn to Read will develop Lao literacy program packages for pre-primary and early primary classrooms. Based on a collaborative approach and an understanding of the needs of disadvantaged student, these packages will address gaps in new curriculums and will be supplemented by teaching and learning materials specifically designed to address the learning needs of non-Lao-speaking students and children with mild disabilities.

PHOTO: ATHIT CHANTHALATH

## ENGAGING COMMUNITY TO CREATE A CONDUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

USAID supports the development of literacy for children from pre-primary to second grade by strengthening the literacy environment at home through targeted engagement of community members. The activities include face-to-face home visits by literacy volunteers and Village Education Development Committees, reading festivals and family literacy days at schools. USAID partners with the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, and local and international non-governmental organizations to determine effective strategies that enhance commitment to literacy and strengthen the home and community literacy environment.

## ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The USAID Learn to Read activity:

- Improves the Lao reading ability of students in pre-primary and early primary education
- Improves classroom instruction
- Enhances teacher competencies in applying effective classroom teaching and learning activities and their access to resources to meet the needs of targeted children
- Strengthens community engagement and the development of conducive learning environments for improved reading skills, particularly for children who do not speak Lao and children with disabilities

**PARTNERS:** USAID partners with Save the Children to improve basic education in Laos.

## CONTACTS

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