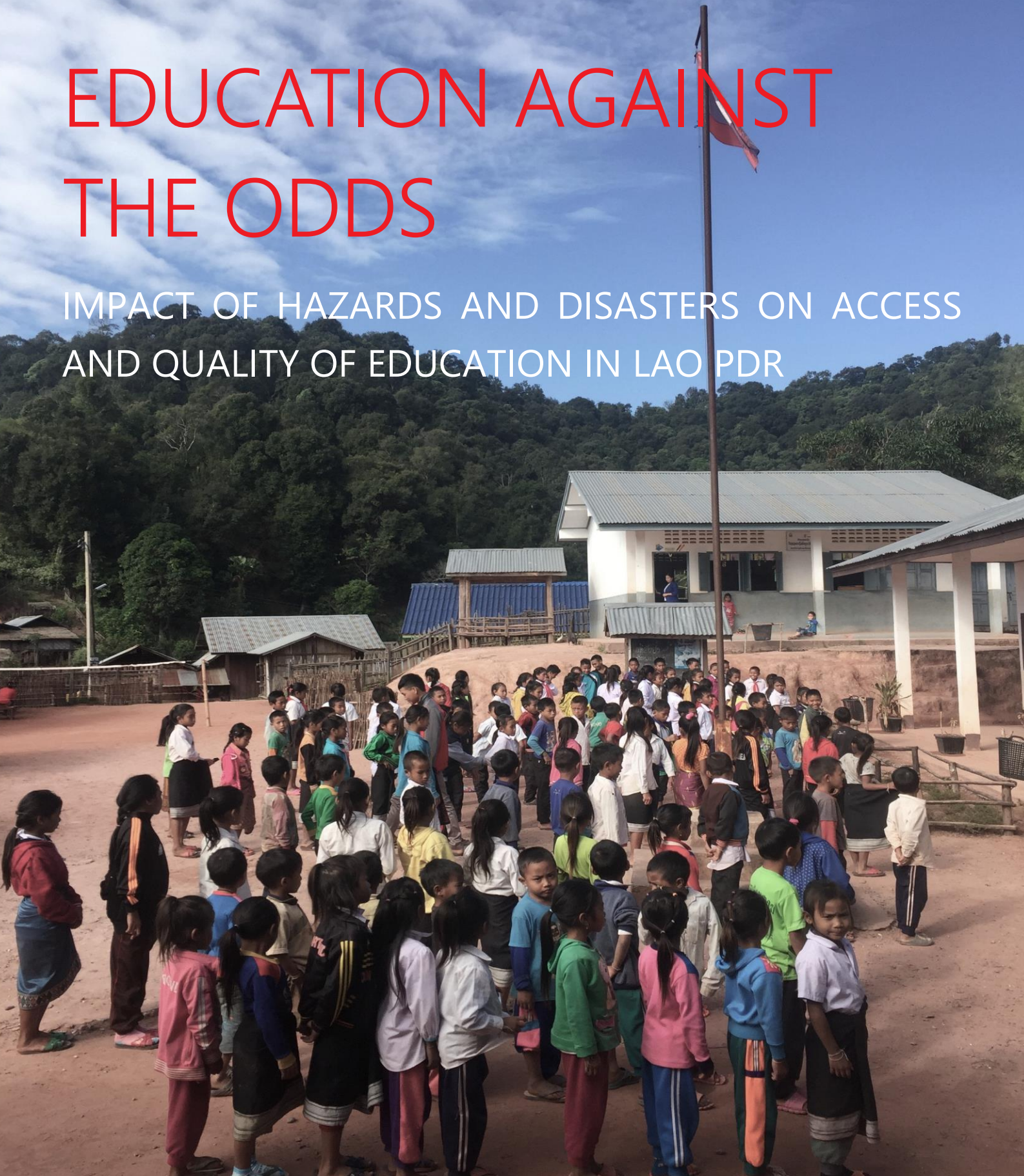


EDUCATION AGAINST THE ODDS

IMPACT OF HAZARDS AND DISASTERS ON ACCESS
AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN LAO PDR



Save the Children

OPEN PUBLICATION

On the cover

Phularn Primary School, Laos children
during assembly

Photo by Matej Damborsky.

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CARFAX

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Though Lao PDR has one of the fastest growing economies in the East Asia and Pacific region in terms of GDP, there are some lags in its development relative to other factors, including poverty reduction relative to regional peers. In terms of education, the net enrolment rate in Lao PDR has increased from 80 percent in 2005 to 98 percent in 2014 (World Bank, 2016). However, data from the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) points to concerning trends in low primary-age enrolment, inconsistent attendance, grade repetition and early drop-out rates that curb the optimism indicated by these statistics.

Lao PDR experiences a range of natural hazards and disasters – from floods and landslides to droughts and epidemics – that have been identified by The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), among others, as impediments to socioeconomic development. Flooding has been identified as having particularly damaging effects (MONRE, 2015). Relevant research indicates that natural hazards and disasters represent significant obstacles to education, particularly in reference to the consistency of attendance and age of drop-out (Save the Children, 2014). However, there is still substantial work to

be done in improving the depth and quality of research and documentation in this area

PURPOSE

This study aimed to complement other recent studies on the barriers to achieving children's right to a free basic quality education, and to identify significant sources of inequities in educational participation, particularly as the result of hazards, disasters, and climate-change impacts.

The study sought to generate evidence-based documentation which can be used to support MoES in its efforts to address educational inequities with thoughtful, evidence-based planning and decision-making, and to guide education sector partners, development partners, donors, and other stakeholders in reducing hazard and disaster impacts on the education sector.

The purpose of this research was to analyze the specific effect and comparative impacts of daily and recurrent hazards, on girls and boys in rural and remote districts in Laos in accessing a quality education (formal and informal), especially in relation to other known barriers such as: parents perceptions of what age is too young to go to school, distance and safety of

access routes to schools; economic barriers due to declining agricultural yields esp. as these may relate to climate change, drought and flood.

The research sought to provide specific recommendations for the education sector that improve the disaster resilience of schools, minimizing the impact of disaster on education.

OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall objective of this research was to assess the extent and nature of barriers and inequities in access to quality formal education, for the most marginalized children in remote rural areas in Lao PDR. The research will respond to the following questions:

1. Are there inequities in children's *participation* in school based on degree of remoteness and access to local schools? (This calls for a study of attendance).
2. What are the barriers and enablers for boys and girls in remote locations to access and regularly participate in formal education?
3. What remedies and innovations might be used to mitigate these barriers?
4. How do daily and recurrent hazards figure into the push/pull

factors impacting school attendance?

5. What is the current capacity for ongoing documentation of hazard impacts on schools?

METHODOLOGY

This study sought to measure data across a range of qualitative and quantitative factors, focusing on both self-reported data generated through questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs) as well as external observations in the form of lesson observations and community observations & school inspections structured around photographs of school and community settings relevant to the key research questions of this study. Given the wide range of required data for effective evaluation, a mixed methodological approach was used. (Denscombe, 2010) (Hart & et.al, 2007). Such methods have been found by a range of researchers to be particularly effective within fragile and complex contexts, like those encountered in the targeted areas of Lao PDR (Barakat, et al., 2002). The use of multiple instruments to collect data against individual indicators allows 'triangulation' of findings, ensuring stronger results from data collection and analysis (Denscombe, 2010) (Hart & et.al, 2007).

Data was collected from high-level stakeholders; teachers and school

leaders; healthcare workers; parents; and other community members through written questionnaires completed by individual adults. However, children (largely upper-primary-age) were interviewed using focus group discussions (FGDs) of between 2-10 individuals. Lesson observations & random class attendance sampling were also used for this research, as well as community observation & school inspections.

RESULTS

The results of this study point to frequently indicated multiple challenges were impacting on school attendance, rather than primarily to specific hazard impacts. There were few schools where attendance was regularly or rigorously kept, making impossible to validate rates of attendance or specific events or causes for missing school.

Parents and knowledgeable adults (largely teachers, head teachers, and education officials) were asked to estimate the number of days children lost to illness, hazards and disasters. The total estimated number of days lost to the combination of illness, hazards and disasters comprised approximately 8-9% across studied regions.

Within remote rural areas, it appears that boys may have been somewhat more

susceptible than girls to missing school due to hazards and disasters.

Many of the hazards (cold, flood, illness, road safety, landslide) facing boys were similar across both rural and urban respondents; however, the cold appeared to be a particular challenge in rural areas. This is likely because of two factors: first, visited rural areas tended to be in mountainous regions, making the cold more of a factor; and second, rural children tended to be poorer, facing more challenges in purchasing sufficient clothing to meet need.

It may be the case that boys miss additional days due to truancy; many stakeholders indicated boys were more likely to miss school to play sports, or simply due to not wanting to go. This would likely increase the number of school days missed by boys compared to girls; however, little quantitative data on this topic emerged from the study. Some studies undertaken in the region (see PLAN's Learn Project study for more information) support the conclusion that male rates of absence are indeed higher than girls'.

It appears that cold was a substantial challenge for both boys and girls; however, urban girls appeared to face more issues in this regard than boys; it was unclear from the data why this might be the case. Girls also appeared to suffer more frequency with illness and food poisoning than boys. Once again, it was

unclear from the data why this may be the case.

It does appear that hazards and disasters are having a substantial impact on school attendance for both boys and girls in remote, rural and urban areas. Less than 10% of the school years is missed due to these particular challenges, they may

exacerbate a wider array of factors at work related to poverty, lack of infrastructure, and poor oversight and accountability for health and safety. It may also be that children face more challenges from hazards and disasters, when they go to school compared to when they stay home.

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Though Lao PDR has one of the fastest growing economies in the East Asia and Pacific region in terms of GDP, there are some lags in its development relative to other factors, including poverty reduction relative to regional peers. In terms of education, the net enrolment rate in Lao PDR has increased from 80 percent in 2005 to 98 percent in 2014 (World Bank, 2016). However, data from the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) points to concerning trends in low primary-age enrolment, inconsistent attendance, grade repetition and early drop-out rates that curb the optimism indicated by these statistics.¹

Lao PDR experiences a range of natural hazards and disasters – from floods and landslides to droughts and epidemics – that have been identified by The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), among others, as impediments to socioeconomic development. Flooding has been identified as having particularly damaging effects (MONRE, 2015). Relevant research indicates that natural hazards and disasters represent significant obstacles to education, particularly in reference to the consistency of attendance and age of drop-out (Save the Children, 2014) (ADPC, 2008) (O’Kane, 2016). However, there is still substantial work to be done in improving the depth and quality of research and documentation in this area.

¹ EMIS data suggests that the dropout rate is 28% by grade 4 but that this represents a phenomenon of repetition – about 20% in grade 1, almost 10% in grade 2, and more than 5% in grade 3 – rather than permanent

drop-out. EMIS data also reflects a trend of late-enrolment and significant under-enrolment among rural populations and ethnic minorities (World Bank, 2016).

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PURPOSE

This study aimed to complement other recent studies on the barriers to achieving children's right to a free basic quality education, and to identify significant sources of inequities in educational participation, particularly as the result of hazards, disasters, and climate-change impacts.

The study sought to generate evidence-based documentation which can be used to support MoES in its efforts to address educational inequities with thoughtful, evidence-based planning and decision-making, and to guide education sector partners, development partners, donors, and other stakeholders in reducing hazard and disaster impacts on the education sector.

The purpose of this research was to analyze the specific effect and comparative impacts of daily and recurrent hazards, on girls and boys in rural and remote districts in Laos in accessing a quality education (formal and informal), especially in relation to other known barriers such as: parents perceptions of what age is too young to go to school, distance and safety of access routes to schools; economic barriers due to declining agricultural yields esp. as these may relate to climate change, drought and flood.

The research sought to provide specific recommendations for the education sector that improve the disaster resilience of schools, minimizing the impact of disaster on education.

OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall objective of this research was to assess the extent and nature of barriers and inequities in access to quality formal education, for the most marginalized children in remote rural areas in Lao PDR. The research will respond to the following questions:

6. Are there inequities in children's *participation* in school based on degree of remoteness and access to local schools? (This calls for a study of attendance).
7. What are the barriers and enablers for boys and girls in remote locations to access and regularly participate in formal education?
8. What remedies and innovations might be used to mitigate these barriers?

9. How do daily and recurrent hazards figure into the push/pull factors impacting school attendance?

10. What is the current capacity for ongoing documentation of hazard impacts on schools?

METHODOLOGY

This study sought to measure data across a range of qualitative and quantitative factors, focusing on both self-reported data generated through questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs) as well as external observations in the form of lesson observations and community observations & school inspections structured around photographs of school and community settings relevant to the key research questions of this study. Given the wide range of required data for effective evaluation, a mixed methodological approach was used. (Denscombe, 2010) (Hart & et.al, 2007). Such methods have been found by a range of researchers to be particularly effective within fragile and complex contexts, like those encountered in the targeted areas of Lao PDR (Barakat, et al., 2002). The use of multiple instruments to collect data against individual indicators allows 'triangulation' of findings, ensuring stronger results from data collection and analysis (Denscombe, 2010) (Hart & et.al, 2007).

Stakeholder groups were identified and differentiated based on two general criteria: those requiring specific methodological or ethical considerations in the design of relevant instruments. Those holding particular and/or unique insights, requiring distinct lines of questioning. For this study, six key stakeholder groups were identified:

1. Children (male and female);
2. Parents;

3. Teachers & school leaders;
4. 'High-Level Stakeholders' including district education workers as well as village and school disaster management focal points;
5. Village health workers; and
6. Other relevant community members.

The instruments developed for this study were designed to collect stakeholder-specific data, while allowing for comparability of collected data across the various instruments and stakeholder groups (Bell, 2010, pp. 140-141) (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 155-156).

1. Document Review
2. Parent/Household Questionnaire Survey
3. Teacher or School Leader Questionnaire
4. High-Level Stakeholder Survey Questionnaire
5. Community Member Survey Questionnaire
6. Healthcare Worker Survey Questionnaire
7. Children Semi-Structured FGDs
8. Lesson Observations & Random Class Attendance Sampling
9. Ethnographic Observation & School Inspection

Questions were designed to avoid leading respondents and to ensure effective and sensitive questioning surrounding relevant topics. Where children are concerned,

question design received particular care. When possible, open questioning was used in the interest of limiting respondent leading by enumeration teams.

All enumerators were trained in and agreed to SCI's Child Protection policies, and the ethical concerns relating primary research with children, adults, and vulnerable groups.

The consultants sought to ensure, through continuous management and observation of enumerators, the effective observance of these standards.

OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE ACHIEVED

		Sex		Location						Community/School Type		
	Total	Female	Male	Saysathane	Nonghet	Salyabouly	Namen	Pakka	Pha-En	Urban/Peri-Urban	Rural with Road Access and/or Students within 3km	Rural without Road Access and/or Students outside 3km
High-Level Stakeholder	11	7	4	3	3	5	-	-	-	9	2	-
Teacher or School Leader	56	32	24	17	23	16	-	-	-	33	15	8
Healthcare Worker	16	10	6	3	1	-	6	3	3	3	13	-
Parent	9	4	5	-	2	-	1	2	4	-	9	-
Child	242	130	112	107	84	51	-	-	-	114	76	52
Other Community Members	11	7	4	2	7	-	1	1	-	5	5	1
Grand Total	345	190	155	132	120	72	8	6	7	164	120	61

CHILD FGD

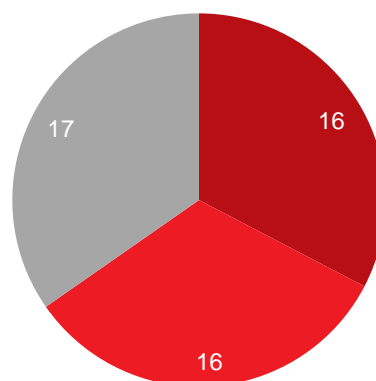
Data was collected from high-level stakeholders; teachers and school leaders; healthcare workers; parents; and other community members through written questionnaires completed by individual adults. However, children (largely upper-primary-age) were interviewed in 49 focus group discussions (FGDs) of between 2-10 individuals, with an average of 2.9 individuals per group. 7 of these FGDs were male-only and 8 were female-only; the remaining 35 were mixed gender.

LESSON OBSERVATIONS & RANDOM CLASS ATTENDANCE SAMPLING

Forty-nine lesson observations were undertaken across all community/school types and across four of the targeted areas: Sathsathane, Nonghet, Sayabouly, and Pakka. These lesson observations gained a particularly balanced sampling across community/school types, with 16 lesson observations each in both rural types and 17 in urban/peri-urban locations.

Figure 1 - Lesson Observations by School/Community Type

- Rural with Road Access and/or Students within 3km
- Rural without Road Access and/or Students outside 3km
- Urban/Peri-Urban



COMMUNITY OBSERVATION & SCHOOL INSPECTION

Community observations and school inspections structured around documentary photography were conducted by two consultants at schools and communities representing all three school/community types and all targeted locations (see summary table above). These were focused on recording both routes to schools and schools themselves with an emphasis on identifying health and safety concerns with both. These tasks were not given to enumerators, as consultants sought to offer more objective measures of relevant concerns through observation and documentation; these methods were thought to offer some degree of objectivity.

within the Lao context. Selected photographs are included in this report to illustrate the range of concerns identified.

STUDY SITES

Figure 2 – Map of Sainyabuli (left) and Xiangkhouang (right) Provinces (Source: Wikipedia)



CHALLENGES FACED IN RESEARCH

A number of challenges were encountered in undertaking this research, many of which may have impacted the data collection process and the quality of data. As such, they are worth briefly discussing here:

- **Enumerators:** It was unclear, given the heavy involvement of partners in the research process, how reliable the records of enumerators will have been in recording informant responders. For instance, Carfax researchers recorded higher rates of affirmative response to questions regarding liability compared with enumerators.
- **Limited time and resources:** as is always the case in research such as this, limited time and resources have limited the amount and depth of data that could be recorded.

RESULTS

DANGER & HAZARDS

The primary challenges identified by the researchers were separated into the distinct

categories given below. Each of these is analysed individually in the following section:



Winter & Cold



Illness



Food Hygiene



School-Based WASH



Road Accidents



Fights



Rains, Storms, and Flooding



Landslides



Terrain Challenges



School-Based Hazards



Girl-Specific Challenges



Poverty



WINTER & COLD

Table 1 - Percentage of stakeholders indicating winter and cold are hazards and challenges for children attending school

	Adult	Child
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	100%	56%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	83%	71%
Urban/Peri-urban	48%	50%

General concerns were expressed by a wide range of stakeholders regarding the winter and cold serving as a substantial barrier to school access and quality. Such concerns were particularly salient given the season of data collection (undertaken in December), likely increasing the emphasis on this concern emerging from the data. Winter and cold were more frequently mentioned as a concern by stakeholders in rural areas, though urban and peri-urban areas also appear to face this challenge.

Qualitative discussions with stakeholders, as well as observations undertaken by the research team, substantiated these key areas of concern. Within the broad concern of 'cold & winter', the specific challenges broadly comprised:



Cold in Schools

Stakeholders discussed challenges posed by cold in schools; this at times resulted in children being unable to write, and facing challenges in paying attention and staying healthy. None of the schools visited had any heating apparatus.



Lack of Clothing

Few children were observed to have sufficiently warm clothing. Many wore light trousers and shirts. In rural areas, very few, if any, children had shoes. Hats, gloves, and other winter accessories were not commonly observed. Clothing-related challenges were widely substantiated by reports that children do not go to school when it becomes too cold.



Mist and Fog

In Laos' mountainous regions, winter brings with it heavy fog and mists, obscuring roadways and exacerbating challenges relating to road safety. Many children and families reported long walks to school, along narrow and already unsafe roads; adequate walkways (offering separate or protected walking spaces alongside roads) were rarely observed. Adding mist and fog could make the school-to-home commute particularly perilous.



Illness

Many stakeholders indicated that illness was exacerbated by the cold and lack of adequately warm clothing. High rates of illness were reported throughout all visited communities.

These winter-related challenges were common themes in discussions of school absences, and poor school performance of pupils. They were particularly prevalent discussions in rural areas.



ILLNESS

Table 2 - Percentage of stakeholders indicating illness is a hazard or challenges for children attending school

	Adult	Child
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	100%	78%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	83%	59%
Urban/Peri-urban	98%	82%

Building on challenges relating to the cold, illness among pupils was widely mentioned as a substantial challenge facing regular school attendance. This was broadly consistent across both adults and children in rural and urban areas. The most common illnesses mentioned were:



Flu



Cold



Vomiting



Generic Stomach Illness



Diarrhoea

The challenges relating to cold and flu may well be influenced by previous discussions regarding low temperatures and widespread lack of adequate clothing among pupils. However, those challenges relating to stomach problems may link to widely observed inadequacies in WASH practice and infrastructure – these are discussed in the following section.



FOOD HYGIENE

Photo 1 - School kitchen and dining shed, Sao Diew Primary School, 08/12/2016



Researchers observed widespread inadequacies in food preparation hygiene and cleanliness; it did not appear that stakeholders were aware of this challenge, as only c. 15% of all adult stakeholders (consistent across rural and urban areas) mentioned hygiene and cleanliness of any kind as a potential hazard or point of concern. Researchers observed that food is prepared in large quantities, in frequently unclean kitchen spaces at schools. Concerted cleaning and maintenance of cleanliness in these spaces was limited. It appeared that food was frequently left out for long periods of time without refrigeration. It was unclear whether uneaten food was disposed of regularly. Such practice is likely to have impacted substantially on the above-described challenges relating to pupil illness.



SCHOOL-BASED WASH

Photo 2 - Bamboo containers used to store water to wash hands, Sao Diew Primary School, 08/12/2016



School-based WASH practice and infrastructure was a substantial concern identified in observations by the research team; these concerns were particularly prevalent in rural schools. The most common challenges comprised:



Locked toilets



Unclean toilets



Children urinating and defecating on school grounds



No functioning hand washing spaces, and no soap



Rotting rubbish piles on school grounds



Poor food hygiene practices (e.g. hand washing, washing of utensils, etc.)



Unclean cooking spaces



Uncovered food



Limited running water available

poor adult supervision observed by researchers at all visited schools. These WASH concerns were most commonly observed by researchers in rural communities, though some urban and peri-urban schools faced similar challenges.

Photo 4 - Rotting rubbish piles on school grounds



Photo 3 - Latrines and the edge of kitchen, Phularn Primary School, 07/12/2016



These challenges are likely to contribute substantially to illness-related challenges faced by pupils, particularly in light of the



ROAD ACCIDENTS

Table 3 - Percentage of stakeholders indicating road accidents and dangers are a hazard or challenges for children attending school

	Adult	Child
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	100%	100%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	100%	100%
Urban/Peri-urban	54%	50%

Road hazards and road accidents were widely and consistently mentioned by the full range of stakeholders in rural areas (100% of stakeholders), though this appeared to be something less of a concern in urban and peri-urban areas (50-54%). Healthcare workers indicated this was the most common cause of injury among both boys and girls in rural and urban/peri-urban areas. Within many of the visited regions, long walks along narrow roads, at times exacerbated by heavy mists and fogs, resulted in frequent road accidents in visited communities, particularly in rural areas. Many children ride bicycles to school on these hazardous paths, and some also ride

motorcycles. In some cases, very young children were observed to ride motorcycles to school², creating additional hazard for pedestrians, as well as themselves.

Photo 5 – Teacher/Students motorbikes, 2016-12-09_Ban Kor High School



Photo 6 - Bicycles used by children to come to school, Sayabouri Primary School, 06/12/2016



² One researcher estimated he saw a child as young as 7 years old operating a motorcycle in a rural area)



FIGHTS

Table 4 - Percentage of stakeholders indicating fights are a hazard or challenges for children attending school

	Adult	Child
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	0%	0%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	10%	18%
Urban/Peri-urban	0%	5%

While fights were not frequently mentioned as a point of concern by respondents, 'impressive' schoolyard fights were observed by researchers in approximately 25% of visited schools. Those stakeholders indicating that fights were a point of concern stated that altercations were common off campus as well. Such concerns may be compounded by ready availability of potential weapons (e.g. machetes and farm tools) on many school campuses – see later sections for further discussion. Concerns about safety, fighting, and bullying may depress school attendance for children who feel they may be victimized (and for their parents). Fights observed were generally among boys and did not appear to include or be directed towards girls.

Photo 7 – Stack of wood at the back of class, Ban Kor Primary School, 09/12/2016



RAINS, STORMS, AND FLOODING

Table 5 - Percentage of stakeholders indicating rain, storms, flooding, and related concerns are a hazard or challenges for children attending school

	Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	Urban/Peri-urban
Rain - Adult	33%	37%	57%
Rain - Child	33%	41%	45%
Storm- Adult	33%	17%	50%
Storm - Child	44%	53%	36%
Wind- Adult	33%	27%	52%

Wind - Child	33%	59%	41%
Lightning- Adult	33%	3%	28%
Lightning - Child	11%	18%	5%
Flood- Adult	11%	7%	54%
Flood - Child	0%	47%	55%

A range of weather-related challenges were cited by stakeholders during interviews and focus group discussions. The most common of these mentioned as impacting on school attendance were:



Rain

Heavy rains were seen as a substantial challenge; rains were linked to many of the challenges that follow. However, even when it was not causing floods, landslides, and other similar challenges, heavy rain on its own was cited as a reason why children may not attend school.



Floods

Floods resulting from heavy rains were cited by many stakeholders as a challenge, particularly in urban/peri-urban areas and for those with road access. Floods were reported to have damaged schools. According to qualitative discussions with high level, and beneficiary-level, stakeholders, in rural areas floods resulted in water levels above what could be safely crossed with current infrastructure; many rivers became impassable given the lack of bridges to safely cross. Stakeholders also indicated that children would frequently stay home to support families when

flooding and heavy rains damaged homes or crops.



Wind

High winds have damaged homes and schools. Damage to schools often resulted in school closures, while damaged homes meant pupils frequently stayed home to support reconstruction. In the case of damaged schools, long delays in reconstruction were reported in some cases, particularly in rural areas.



Lightning

Lightning was reported to have damaged schools in several regions; once again, the damage may have taken a substantial period of time to repair.

The specific frequency of these incidents was difficult to establish given available data; very little systematic data was collected by central authorities (as will be discussed in later sections). Nonetheless, they were of sufficient concern that stakeholders mentioned them frequently.



LANDSLIDES

Table 6 - Percentage of stakeholders indicating landslides and related challenges are a hazard or challenges for children attending school

	Adult	Child
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	22%	44%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	23%	53%
Urban/Peri-urban	13%	9%

Storm-related challenges include frequent landslides and road closures, posing challenges to pupils who must walk long distances to schools in rural areas with and without road access. Falling rocks appeared to be only an occasional challenge. These two concerns were not as frequently reported as others, but children in rural areas are very concerned about these, and this is also worth of further attention.



TERRAIN CHALLENGES

Stakeholders frequently cited general challenges posed by rural and mountainous

terrain. Long, steep walks to school, compounded by weather and road safety concerns, were mentioned as a serious barrier to school attendance, particularly for rural pupils. Long commutes to school, generally on foot, are thought to be contributing factors in this regard:

Table 7 – Teachers and School Staff's Commute Times to School

Mins to commute	Rural (All)	Urban/Peri-urban
<15	42%	53%
15 - 30	23%	34%
30 - 60	16%	23%
60+	11%	12%

Table 8 – High-level Stakeholders' Commute Times to School

Mins to commute	Rural (All)	Urban/Peri-urban
<15	82%	53%
15 - 30	18%	31%
30 - 60	0%	19%
60+	0%	2%

Approximately half of all children are thought to walk less than 15 minutes to school by their teachers, with rural children generally thought to spend more time going to school. Such concerns are compounded by road safety hazards identified by many stakeholders.

Photo 8 – View of the mountains from the school, Ban Kor High School, 09/12/2016



Figure 10 - Access road to the school Ban Kor High School, 09/12/2016



Photo 9 – Narrow path used for school



commute

SCHOOL- BASED HAZARDS

School-based hazards were identified primarily through researcher observation, and do not overlap with the WASH concerns highlighted above. Many of these appear to stem from a general lack of concern for health and safety in many school campuses, and widespread poor adult supervision outside of classrooms:

Photo 11 – Sheer drop off adjacent to school grounds – no apparent fencing



Photo 12 – Children playing on road during school hours



Adult Supervision

Adult supervision outside of class time was rare; supervision that ensures children are not engaging in dangerous, unsafe, or hazardous behaviour during and immediately following school hours. This resulted in myriad of unsafe behaviours,

including schoolyard fights, children running into busy roads.



Machetes, garden tools, and other implements

Children on multiple occasions were seen to be playing with machetes, hoes, and other tools in the play yard. In some cases, chopping at bamboo stands while their friends ran past. Ready availability of such tools poses additional concerns within a context where children regularly engage in fights.



Unsafe premises

A range of concerns regarding unsafe school premises were identified, ranging from a complete lack of fencing, to sheer cliffs and drops on the boundary of schools, to rusty metal scattered about school grounds and sticking out of buildings. Injuries as a result were reportedly common; availability of tetanus vaccinations remained unclear.



Street animals

Street animals, not least dogs, were commonly seen roaming schoolyards; they came and went freely, rummaging through the rubbish piles. Children did interact with the animals on occasion. Some stakeholders in SCI indicated the presence of farm animals (e.g. pigs, cows, and chickens) may be a presence in some schools.

Photo 13 – Stray dog near pre-school building



Photo 14 – Exposed, rusted rebar on school premises



Throughout the project research areas, it did not appear that school staff took on the responsibility for maintaining a safe school space, deferring instead to central authorities who were slow to respond. Many schools were poorly maintained as a result, with limited care taken to make them safer for pupils. This seems to be a particular challenge in rural areas.



GIRL-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

With regard to hazards, girls broadly faced many of the same challenges as boys, with little difference reported. There were two primary exceptions to this:



Safety on Walk to School

In qualitative discussions, some concerns were expressed relating to the general safety of girls on long walks to school, with some implying that girls were particularly vulnerable to harassment and assault. This appeared to be a challenge that stakeholders were reluctant to discuss, which posed challenges to establishing the type and frequency of such incidents.



Family Support

When family members became ill, or needed domestic support, it was girls who were more commonly kept home to help families. This was a relatively common reason cited by stakeholders in qualitative discussions for girls missing school.



POVERTY

Generic challenges relating to poverty were cited by many stakeholders. Researchers also observed that this appeared to be a substantial challenge. This challenge links to all others mentioned throughout this document, exacerbating many other challenges due to the lack of resources to address those challenges, as well as being a general barrier to participation and effectiveness of education.

DISCUSSION

HAZARD IMPACT ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The results of this study point to frequently indicated multiple challenges were impacting on school attendance, rather than primarily to specific hazard impacts. There were few schools where attendance was regularly or rigorously kept, making impossible to validate rates of attendance or specific events or causes for missing school.

Table 9 - Do boys and girls miss school due to hazards and disasters? (adults)

	Boys	Girls
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	78%	67%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	68%	65%
Urban/Peri-urban	53%	54%

Within remote rural areas, it appears that boys may have been somewhat more susceptible than girls to missing school due to hazards and disasters.

Parents and knowledgeable adults (largely teachers, head teachers, and education officials) were asked to estimate the number

of days children lost to illness, hazards and disasters. The average number of days estimated were:

Table 10 – Estimated average number of days per year to children miss school due to illness,

	Boys	Girls
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	7	8
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	9	10
Urban/Peri-urban	11	9

Table 11 – Estimated average number of days per year to children miss school due hazards, and disasters

	Boys	Girls
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	10	9
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	7	6
Urban/Peri-urban	5	6

The number of days lost was broadly equal for boys and girls.

Table 12 - School days lost per annum to illness, hazards, and disasters as a percentage of total school days³

	Boys	Girls
Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km	9.4%	9.4%
Rural with road access and/or students within 3km	8.9%	8.9%
Urban/Peri-urban	8.9%	8.3%

The total estimated number of days lost to the combination of illness, hazards and disasters comprised approximately 8-9% across studied regions. Parents and knowledgeable adults were further asked to describe the most common hazards and disasters keeping children from schools. It appears that some respondents included illness within this definition, posing some challenges to the days of absence estimation above. At this stage, it is thought the overlap has minimal impact on the findings described below.

Table 13 - Most common hazards or disasters keeping boys in rural areas from school (adults) (frequency count)

Boys - Rural (All)	
Change of Season & Cold Weather	16
Raining	7
Windstorm	4
Drought	2
Landslides	2

³ Assuming average of 180 school days per annum

Illness	2
Sports injuries	1
Lightening	1
Fog	1
Influenza	1

Table 14 - Most common hazards or disasters keeping boys in urban and peri-urban areas from school (adults) (frequency count)

Boys - Urban/Peri-urban	
Storms	7
Illness	7
Accidents (Unspecified)	5
Windstorm	4
Flooding	4
Raining	4
Cold Weather	3
Soil Erosion	2
Vehicles	1
Electricity	1
Natural Disasters	1
Weather	1
Fire	1
Unclean Food	1
Epidemic Diarrhea	1
Influenza	1

Many of the hazards facing boys were similar across both rural and urban respondents; however, the cold appeared to be a

particular challenge in rural areas. This is likely because of two factors: first, visited rural areas tended to be in mountainous regions, making the cold more of a factor; and second, rural children tended to be poorer, facing more challenges in purchasing sufficient clothing to meet need.

It may be the case that boys miss additional days due to truancy; many stakeholders indicated boys were more likely to miss school to play sports, or simply due to not wanting to go. This would likely increase the number of school days missed by boys compared to girls; however, little quantitative data on this topic emerged from the study. Some studies undertaken in the region (see PLAN's Learn Project study for more information) support the conclusion that male rates of absence are indeed higher than girls'.

Table 15 - Most common hazards or disasters keeping girls in rural areas from school (adults) (frequency count)

Girls - Rural (All)	
Cold & Winter	15
Food poisoning / unclean food	8
Rain	6
Illness	5
Wind	2
Drought	2
Landslides	2
Storms	1

Table 16 - Most common hazards or disasters keeping girls in urban and peri-urban areas from school (adults) (frequency count)

Girls - Urban/Peri-urban	
Cold & Winter	13
Illness	11
Storms	5
Food poisoning / unclean food	3
Accidents	3
Rain	2
Flood	2
Drought	1
Natural disaster	1
Fire	1
Lightning	1

It appears that cold was a substantial challenge for both boys and girls, however urban girls appeared to face more issues in this regard than boys; it was unclear from the data why this might be the case. Girls also appeared to suffer more frequency with illness and food poisoning than boys. Once again, it was unclear from the data why this may be the case.

It does appear that hazards and disasters are having a substantial impact on school attendance for both boys and girls in remote, rural and urban areas. Less than 10% of the school years is missed due to these particular challenges, they may exacerbate a wider array of factors at work related to poverty, lack of infrastructure, and poor

oversight and accountability for health and safety. It may also be that children face more challenges from hazards and disasters, when they go to school compared to when they stay home.

HAZARDS AND 'PUSH'/'PULL' FACTORS

The World Bank recently undertook a study into 'Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Achievement in Lao PDR'; in this report, they identified a range of primary factors driving high rates of dropout and low achievement in Laos. The main areas of concern were arranged in the framework given below.

'Push' factors



Insufficient supply



Schools



Classrooms



Teachers



Inadequate school environment



Low quality education



Hazards Encountered en-Route to School

'Pull' factors



Poverty



Costly attendance



School fees



Other costs (uniforms, transport, meals, etc)



Opportunity cost



Low perceived value of education

The above framework was used to undertake analysis of the data collected in this study, seeking to structure findings according to the 'push' and 'pull' impacts hazards and disasters might be having on education.

'Push' factor analysis

Insufficient supply: Schools & Classrooms

In many cases, hazards and disasters (particularly storms) were seen to cause substantial damage to school infrastructure. Much of this damage appeared to remain for substantial periods, with school cancelled altogether or with children required to share already crowded classrooms until repairs could be made.

Insufficient Supply: Teachers

Given the challenges involved in rural teaching, not least among these the remoteness of schools and the potential

hazards teachers must face, rural schools were reported to be unpopular postings among teaching staff during qualitative discussions with relevant stakeholders. The government recently instituted a 6+3 teacher qualification programme (6 years of primary school plus 3 months of teacher training) seeking to address the rural teacher shortage. In spite of this programme, which is likely to have had substantially negative impacts on school quality, teacher retention remains a serious challenge in rural primary schools. Rural secondary schools, where they exist, were reported face even more difficulty in this regard.

Inadequate school environment

As was described in previous sections, school environments were widely observed to be inadequate. Poor WASH infrastructure, unsafe environments, common fights, and poor food hygiene were just some of the challenges which may be serving to 'push' pupils from Lao schools, particularly in rural areas.

Low quality education

Educational quality, further to the above challenges in school environment and teacher retention, was widely observed to be of a poor standard. Lesson observations, undertaken as part of the research process, indicated that teachers did not, in any case, meet minimum standards for effective teaching practice; absenteeism, and non-engagement, were common problems reported during the research process. Such

findings were consistent across rural and urban areas.

Hazards en-Route to School

While such hazards were not included in the World Bank report as a 'Push' factor, this study has identified a number of factors which in themselves serve as 'Push' obstacles, and cannot be completely categorised within the given framework. Heavy rains, lack of equipment, flooded roads, and a range of other similar factors were demonstrated to be 'Pushing' pupils from regular school attendance.

'Pull' factor analysis

Poverty

Poverty, is one of the primary challenges facing pupils in Laos. This challenge exacerbates and compounds all others emerging directly from hazards and disasters.

Costly attendance: Other costs

Costs of transportation, and inability to afford appropriate cold weather clothing, were cited by some stakeholders in qualitative discussions with high-level stakeholders as barriers to children attending school.

Opportunity cost

When disasters impacted families, either through property damage or families falling ill, pupils were reported to stay home,

particularly in rural areas. Girls were particularly vulnerable in this regard.

Low perceived value of education

The perceived value of education remained somewhat outside the view of this study; however, what little data was collected appeared to indicate a potential lack of value, particularly on the part of boys who often reported not attending school out of boredom or a desire to do other things; PLAN's LEARN report also substantiated this finding.

Within the above framework, it is clear that hazards and disasters are serving to exacerbate 'push' and 'pull' factors affecting low achievement and attendance among many Lao pupils; these challenges, while still a substantial concern in urban and peri-urban areas, were particularly prevalent in rural parts of the country.

REPORTING AND MITIGATION SYSTEMS

Analysis of responses from high-level stakeholders, health workers, teachers, and other school staff indicates there are few, if any, effective systems for reporting, recording, and addressing hazards and

disasters impacts on education in Lao PDR. This was particularly true in rural areas. The lack of daily attendance records means that there is little data available for comparative analysis of hazard impacts across schools. The most commonly-cited method of communication with officials, teachers, and pupils comprised the school loudspeaker. This was used to report issues to children, and advise them of appropriate action. It was unclear how impactful this tool is in addressing hazards and disasters.

Three high level stakeholders indicated that relevant concerns were reported to district officials. They further indicated this system was not as impactful as it could be; district officials reportedly lacked the resources or desire to support schools when urgently required, with issues going unaddressed for substantial periods of time. Families, parents, and community members were largely left to their own devices when it came to disaster and hazard repair and recovery.

With regard to health concerns, limited recourse was described by healthcare workers aside from awareness raising and education for families; limited systematic and government-centered recourse was available to address concerns regarding traffic accidents, injury, and illness impacting children in visited school communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



WINTER & COLD

Establish programs for the **collection and distribution of winter clothing and shoes** to children whose families cannot afford them. A 'hand-me-down' system for clothing that has been outgrown could equalize this and reduce a possible stigma associated with accepting used clothing.

- **Current Challenge:** Very few children were observed to have sufficiently warm clothing. Clothing-related challenges were widely substantiated by qualitative stakeholder interactions.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** The data indicates that this step as a more informal practice exists in some of the targeted areas. However, a more formalized system could encourage community involvement and awareness of the impact of winter and cold weather, especially on children, as well as providing needed materials.

Provide awareness **educational and messaging** for parents, children, and other relevant stakeholder groups about the **specific hazards of cold weather**, emphasising measures to prevent cold-related illness.

- **Current Challenge:** Many stakeholders indicated that illness was exacerbated by the cold and lack of adequately warm clothing. High rates of illness were reported throughout all visited communities.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Enhancing the knowledge base within effected communities could make sure that correct information about how to minimize the hazards associated with cold weather that impact school attendance as well as child health more generally.

Provide **heaters in schools (and including fire prevention education and rudimentary fire suppression supplies)**.

- **Current Challenge:** Stakeholders discussed challenges caused by cold in schools including children being unable to write and facing

challenges with paying attention and staying healthy.

- **Reason for Recommendation:** None of the schools visited during this study had any heating apparatus. Ensuring that schools are heated during the winter could improve attendance – both in terms of reducing illness and making it a more appealing environment – as well as performance by helping concentration. The introduction of heaters will increase fire risk, which should be mitigated with fire prevention education and bucket and sand and/or fire blanket for rudimentary fire suppression).
-



ILLNESS

Ensure that **local healthcare facilities have access to supplies (medication, equipment, etc.) and knowledge** to effectively manage common illnesses affecting children in the targeted communities.

- **Current Challenge:** Illness among pupils was broadly and widely mentioned as a substantial challenge facing regular school attendance.
 - **Reason for Recommendation:** Making sure that village-level healthcare professionals are able
-

to effectively and efficiently handle common illnesses could help children get over illnesses more quickly and also minimize the time that students miss as a result of them.

Provide **community-wide education initiatives** and Child Club activities focused on identifying situations and practices that may increase vulnerability to common illnesses involving local healthcare professionals in leadership positions.

- **Current Challenge:** High reported incidence of cold and flu likely linked to low temperatures and of stomach problems possibly tied to inadequate WASH practices and infrastructure.
 - **Reason for Recommendation:** Emphasising the connection between certain situations and practices, like lack of winter clothes and inadequate WASH practices, and common illnesses could help decrease the incidence of illness and/or diminish time lost by individual students. The inclusion of local healthcare workers could emphasise their visibility as information and service points in the community.
-



SCHOOL- BASED WASH

Allocate **funding for the maintenance and improvement of existing WASH facilities** in schools and closely monitoring and evaluation the use of the funds. Provide guidance for recommended roles and responsibilities for WASH maintenance.

- **Current Challenge:** Insufficient and/or unhygienic water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in schools. WASH facilities are not adequately maintained.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Data and observations from this study point to inoperable and poor quality WASH facilities. In addition there is often lack of oversight and accountability in the allocation of funding at the school level. By assigning funding specifically earmarked for facility improvement and implementing external monitoring and evaluation – as well as concrete consequences for misuse – for its use, more funding could be assigned to the appropriate maintenance and improvement of school WASH facilities. In addition concrete consequences for misuse of funds should be available, and safe avenues for whistle-blower

reporting should be widely publicized.

Provide water, hygiene, and sanitation training to teachers, school leaders, Child Clubs, families, and other stakeholders, especially those involved in the making and distribution of food in schools. Also providing similar training for students if deemed appropriate.

- **Current Challenge:** Poor food hygiene practices in schools, including lack of handwashing; unclean cooking spaces; and uncovered food.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Providing this kind of education could mean that the safety and hygiene standards for food provided in schools could improve and, moreover, facilitate a trickle-down effect whereby students are educated by their teachers about appropriate WASH practices, like handwashing, for food. Providing additional, targeted training for children could enhance the effectiveness of this initiative. Education for children about WASH in schools could also impact food hygiene practices at home.



ROAD ACCIDENTS

Undertake school and community-wide campaign to **raise awareness of the dangers associated with local roads and methods of transportation**, providing road safety education materials for students. Consider using loudspeaker as means for ensuring drivers are aware of hazards.

- **Current Challenges:** High incidence of road accidents on narrow roads, apparently exacerbated by natural hazards like heavy mist and fogs. Children, including very young children, riding motorcycles and taking other unsafe methods of transportation to and from school.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Emphasising the hazards associated with local roads and forms of transportation as well as providing education about safe driving could impact practices among drivers and encourage caution for drivers and pedestrians alike.

and source inexpensive reflective mirror for dangerous corners.

- **Current Challenge:** Road conditions are unsafe for both pedestrians and young cyclists. Users are exercising insufficient caution given the conditions.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Creating greater awareness of the need for caution due to specific road conditions, and improve visibility.



Promote use of signage and mirrors on unsafe roads, through models and recommended materials for road safety signs that school communities can create,

RAINS, STORMS, AND FLOODING

Provide access to re-usable rain ponchos and pouches for children in at least 3 sizes.

- **Current Challenge:** Even when not causing floods, landslides, and other similar concerns, heavy rain on its own was cited as a reason why children may not attend school.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Stakeholders indicated that many children do not have appropriate clothing or equipment for walking to school. Providing inexpensive protection from rain could help reduce the impact of this on school attendance.

Invest in **improving and expanding infrastructure for managing water**, including bridges. Ask communities to identify and report to district authorities on specific needs for bridges to travers areas commonly inundated.

- **Current Challenge:** In rural areas, floods raise water levels above what can be safely crossed with current infrastructure, and many rivers become impassable due to

flooding and heavy rains due to a lack of sufficient bridges.

- **Reason for Recommendation:** Even if schools survive flooding undamaged, without the infrastructure to properly handle it raised water can prevent pupils from attending school in the immediate aftermath of flooding or even heavy rain. Improved infrastructure could also minimize damage to not only schools but also to homes and farms so that children might not be required to stay home and support with flood damage as frequently. Communities can play a significant role in identifying the need for modest infrastructure projects to improve emergency access and the safety of home-to-school commutes in areas that regularly inundated.

Work with relevant school, community- and district-level stakeholders to **develop educational continuity plans to facilitate continued, formal schooling** in the aftermath of natural hazard impacts, like flooding, when buildings sustain damage. Use existing guidance for participatory school disaster management

- **Current Challenge:** Schools are damaged by flooding, thereby delaying the restarting of education in the aftermath of natural storms and heavy rains.

- **Reason for Recommendation:**

Educational continuity planning is a key step in participatory school disaster management. In the event that a natural hazard damages school buildings or limits access to school, having an alternative plan for providing education until repairs can be made – e.g. designating another building for classes or creating make-shift, temporary classrooms, alternative calendar and make-up days, and peer-to-peer instruction – could ensure that disruption to education is minimized in the wake of floods and other hazards.

Create and/or support **community-driven clean-up, repair and recovery initiatives** in the immediate aftermath of disasters. Promote educational continuity planning with guidance on clean-up kits and supplies to complete temporary learning facilities using locally available materials.

- **Current Challenge:** High winds and heavy rains damage homes and schools. The data indicates that damage to school often results in school closures, while damaged homes mean pupils stay home to support reconstruction.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** This step could be useful in minimizing the effect of natural hazards on school attendance following windstorms, flooding

and lightning/storm damage. Engaging community members in planning and implementing school clean-up, mounting of temporary learning facilities and school repair could have a positive impact of community preparedness and educational continuity. Such practices were already present in some target areas, but national-level formalization and leadership of such a system has the potential to substantially reduce time lost to recover from the impacts of damaged infrastructure.



SCHOOL- BASED HAZARDS

Establish and enforce standards for **supervising pupils** while they are on school grounds but outside of the classroom, and provide guidance on positive discipline.

- **Current Challenge:** While fights were not frequently mentioned as a point of concern by respondents, 'impressive' schoolyard fights were observed by researchers in approximately 25% of visited schools. In other

studies, bullying and poor interpersonal relationships have been identified as issues (REF).

- **Reason for Recommendation:** Enforced policies about when children should be supervised and who is responsible for this have the potential to decrease the number of fights in the school yard. Positive approaches should be used to prevent bullying.

Incorporate school-based risk assessment and risk reduction planning into ongoing school-based management. Use existing school-self-assessment survey and risk reduction guidance (part of 'participatory school disaster management) to promote regular inspection of school grounds in order to identify and reduce health and safety hazards.

- **Current Challenge:** A range of concerns regarding unsafe school premises were identified, ranging from a complete lack of fencing, to sheer cliffs and drops on the boundary of schools, to rusty metal scattered about school grounds and sticking out of buildings. Machetes, hoes, and other dangerous tools were also readily available in play areas.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Providing for regular, even if informal, inspections of school grounds by teachers or other members of staff, and creating

lines of accountability for ensuring these are completed, possible dangers could be identified and dealt with. This could improve the safety of students on school grounds.

Provide funding for small mitigation projects to build **fences or walls** around unsafe schools.

- **Current Challenge:** Street, domestic animals and livestock were commonly seen roaming schoolyards; they came and went freely and children were observed interacting with the animals on occasion. Children were observed running into roads during play time.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** This step could not only prevent animals from getting into the school and play yard, but could also discourage students from playing in the road or getting too close to cliff faces.



GIRL-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Develop buddy-system designed to protect girls and younger children from harassment and bullying.

- **Current Challenge:** Some concerns were expressed relating to the general safety of girls on long walks to school, with some implying girls were particularly vulnerable to harassment and assault. Young girls were deemed by some NGO stakeholders to be particularly at risk.
- **Reason for Recommendation:** Providing measures to improve safety to and from school may reduce gender-specific real or perceived dangers they encounter in transit, encouraging girls to attend more regularly. It would also provide greater safety and peace-of-mind for parents of younger children.

Provide child rights awareness education, including child-abuse prevention and gender-based violence education to school communities. Hold workshops with school-aged girls in targeted communities in order to gain greater depth on issues they see as obstacles to their regular school attendance.

- **Current Challenge:** The data indicates that girls face specific challenges to school attendance that need to be looked at specifically and in greater depth.
- **Reasons for Recommendations:** Involving girls directly in discussions about their needs and what could be done to improve their attendance could strengthen any gender-sensitive measures taken by tailoring action to their specific regional and cultural considerations. Peer-support and trusted members of the community could be enlisted to help.

A wide variety of push and pull factors have been identified that impact school attendance. This report summarizes those that are related to a variety of hazards and risks encountered on the way to and from school, and conditions at school. There are a wide variety of low-cost and feasible measures possible to address these hazards. Education sector authorities and their supporters in Lao PDR are encouraged to use and build upon available guidance on participatory school disaster management;

school safety self-assessment, health and nutrition in schools; water, sanitation and hygiene in schools in Lao, as well as best practices in road safety, and bullying prevention to design and measure the effectiveness of these various implementation measures, in order to improve school attendance. To that end, it will also be important to develop and implement effective means for obtaining regular and reliable measures of school attendance through valid and reliable sampling methods.

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Dubai Cares, Plan International, and
Save the Children.

APPENDICES

ADAPTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH STAKEHOLDERS

1. Enumerator Name
2. Enumerator data collection team
 - Alpha
 - Beta
 - Carfax
3. Date
4. GPS Coordinates
5. Location
 - Saysathane
 - Nonghet
 - Khoun
 - Other_____
6. School/Community Type
 - Urban/Peri-urban
 - Rural with road access and/or students within 3km
7. Stakeholder category
 - Parent
 - Teacher or School Leader
 - High-Level Stakeholder
 - Other Community Member
8. Age of respondent
9. Sex of respondent
 - Male
 - Female

Teachers & School Leaders, High-Level Stakeholders, and Other Community Members – Q2

10. What is your position?
11. What does this role entail?

High-Level Stakeholders – Q2

12. What institution do you work for?
13. How many years have you worked in this institution?
14. How many years have you worked in your current role?

Teachers & School Leaders – Q2

15. What school do you work for?
16. If you teach, what subjects do you teach?
17. If you teach, what grade/age group do you teach?

Parents – Q2

18. Is there a type of person or child who faces difficulty in accessing school in this community?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
19. If yes, who are they?
20. If yes, why is this the case?

Teachers and School Leaders - Q3

21. What percentage of your class travels less than 15 minutes to get to school every day?
22. What percentage of your class travels 15 minutes to 30 minutes to get to school every day?

23. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
24. What percentage of your class travels 30 minutes to 60 minutes to get to school every day?
25. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
26. What percentage of your class travels more than 60 minutes to get to school every day?
27. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
28. What is the standard of education offered at your school?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Neutral
 - Poor
 - Very poor
29. Why?
30. How do you know?

High-Level Stakeholders and Other Community Members - Q3

31. What percentage of students in (rural schools)/(schools in the community) travels less than 15 minutes to get to school every day?
32. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
33. What percentage of students in (rural schools)/(schools in the community) travels 15 minutes to 30 minutes to get to school every day?
34. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
35. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
36. What percentage of students in (rural schools)/(schools in the community)

travels more than 60 minutes to get to school every day?

37. Does this group face any particular challenges in attending school?
38. How do you know?
39. What is the standard of education offered by schools (in this community)/(in rural areas)?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Neutral
 - Poor
 - Very poor
40. Why?
41. How do you know?

Parents – Q3

42. How long must your children travel to school? (in minutes)
43. Do they face any particular difficulties in those travels?
44. What is the standard of education offered by your local school?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Neutral
 - Poor
 - Very poor
45. Why?
46. How many days per year do your boy children miss school during the academic year?/
47. How many days per year do your girl children miss school during the academic year?

Teachers and School Leaders, High-Level Stakeholders, and Other Community Members – Q3

48. At what age to most boys in your area start school?

- 3-5
- 5-7
- 7-9
- Other: _____

49. At what age do most boys in your area stop attending school?

- 9-11
- 11-13
- 13-15
- 15-17
- Other _____

50. At what age do most girls in your area stop attending school?

- 9-11
- 11-13
- 13-15
- 15-17
- Other _____

51. How many days per year, on average, do boy students miss school during the academic year?

52. What are the most common reasons for this?

53. How many days per year, on average, do girl students miss school during the academic year?

54. What are the most common reasons for this?

All Stakeholders – Q4

55. What are the greatest barriers to school attendance for girls in your community?

56. Why is this the case?

57. What are the greatest barriers to school attendance for boys in your community?

58. Why is this the case?

59. What factors make girls in your community more likely to attend school regularly?

60. Why is this the case?

61. What factors make boys in your community more likely to attend school regularly?

62. Why is this the case?

Parents – Q4

63. If you have any boy children between the ages of 5-12 not in school, why is this the case?

64. If you have any girl children between the ages of 5-12 not in school, why is this the case?

65. If your children are enrolled in school, what is the most common reason your boy children miss school during the academic year?

66. If your children are enrolled in school, what is the most common reason your girl children miss school during the academic year?

67. What are the greatest barriers to school attendance for your girl children?

68. Why is this the case?

69. What are the greatest barriers to school attendance for your boy children?

70. Why is this the case?

71. What factors make it easier for your girl children to attend school regularly? (please note this does not refer to policies, systems, or interventions by the state or NGOs, but rather conditions in the community)

72. Why is this the case?

73. What factors make it easier for your boy children to attend school regularly? (please note this does not refer to policies, systems, or interventions by the state or NGOs, but rather conditions in the community)

74. Why is this the case?

All Stakeholders – Q5

75. Are there any policies, actions or systems you know of which raise levels of attendance among the specific groups listed below:

- Rural boys (please describe) _____
- Rural girls (please describe) _____
- Urban boys _____
- Urban girls _____
- Disabled boys _____
- Disabled girls _____
- Minority boys (please be sure to mention the group) _____
- Minority girls (please be sure to mention the group) _____
- Other groups (please be sure to mention the group) _____

76. How do you know these work?

77. Can you share any data with us to this end?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

78. If yes, can you please describe this data or information?

79. If yes, can you please share with us your contacts so we can follow up about this?

Parents – Q5

80. Has the government done anything to mitigate the impact of hazards and disasters on school attendance?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

81. If yes, what did they do?

82. Why?

83. Have NGOs done anything to mitigate the impact of hazards and disasters on school attendance?

- Yes
- No

- I don't know

84. If yes, what did they do?

85. Why?

86. Has the community done anything to mitigate the impact of hazards and disasters on school attendance?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

87. If yes, what did they do?

88. Why?

89. Has any other group or individual done anything to mitigate the impact of hazards and disasters on school attendance?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

90. If yes, what did they do?

91. If yes, how impactful have these interventions been?

- Very impactful
- Somewhat impactful
- Not very impactful
- Not at all impactful

92. Why?

93. Is there anything the government or NGOs could do to raise school attendance among boy children?

94. Why is this the case?

95. Is there anything the government or NGOs could do to raise school enrollment among boy children?

96. Why is this the case?

97. Is there anything the government or NGOs could do to raise school attendance among girl children?

98. Why is this the case?

99. Is there anything the government or NGOs could do to raise school enrollment among girl children?

100. Why is this the case?

All Stakeholders – Q6

101. What type of hazards and disasters affect your community – and how often?

- Multiple Times Per Year
- Once Per Year
- Rarely
- Never
- Floods
- Windstorms
- Droughts
- Urban and/or Forest Fires
- Landslides
- Agricultural Pests
- Epidemics
- Other – Describe: _____

102. Do boy children miss school due to disasters and hazards?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

103. If yes, how many days per year?

104. If yes, what hazards and disasters?

105. If yes, for what reasons?

106. Do girl children miss school due to disasters and hazards?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

107. If yes, how many days per year?

108. If yes, what hazards and disasters?

109. If yes, for what reasons?

110. Have hazards and disasters impacted on the quality of education provided children?

- Yes

- No
- I don't know

111. If yes, how and why?

Parents – Q6

112. Do your boy children in this area miss school due to disasters and hazards?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

113. If yes, how many days per year?

114. If yes, what hazards and disasters?

115. If yes, for what reasons?

116. Do your girl children in this area miss school due to disasters and hazards?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

117. If yes, how many days per year?

118. If yes, what hazards and disasters?

119. If yes, for what reasons?

High-Level Stakeholders – Q6

120. In the past year, have school facilities in your community been damaged by natural hazards and disasters?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

121. If yes, has this caused boy children to miss school?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

122. If so, how many days per year?

123. If yes, has this caused girl children to miss school?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

124. If so, how many days per year?
125. Which areas have been most impacted by hazards and disasters?
126. What actions, if any, have been taken as a result of these hazards and disasters?
127. How long did it take for these actions to be implemented?
128. Why was this approach taken?

High-Level Stakeholders and Teachers & School Leaders – Q7

129. Are there reporting systems and processes for natural disasters and hazards on schools in your community?
- Yes
 - No
 - I do not know
130. If yes, what are they?
131. If yes, how are they used?
132. What is the effectiveness of these systems?
- Very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Not very effective
 - Not at all effective
133. Why?
134. Do you consider these can be improved?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
135. If yes, how?

LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

Enumerator and School Info

1. Enumerator Name (please write full name)
2. Enumerator data collection team (use as appropriate):
 - Alpha
 - Beta
 - Carfax
3. Date:
4. GPS Coordinates
5. School Name
6. Location
 - Sathsathane
 - Nonghet
 - Khoun
 - Other
7. School/Community Type
 - Urban/Peri-urban
 - Rural with road access and/or students within 3km
 - Rural without road access and/or students outside 3km
8. Is the instructor a cover, substitute, or supply teacher?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I can't tell

Teacher and Class Information

9. Class grade/level (please tick all that apply)
 - Foundation
 - Grade 1
 - Grade 2
 - Grade 3
 - Grade 4
 - Grade 5
 - Grade 6
 - Grade 7

- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

10. Class subject

11. Teacher name

12. Was the teacher on-time?

- Yes
- No
- I cannot tell

13. Is the teacher absent?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

14. Does the teacher have a lesson plan?

- Yes
- No
- Cannot tell

15. Teacher gender:

- Male
- Female

Basic Indicators

16. Number of boys in class

17. Number of girls in class

18. How many children are sharing a book in the class?

- There are no books in the class
- One (1) child per book
- Two (2) children per book
- Three (3) children per book
- Four (4) children per book
- Five (5) children per book
- Six (6) children per book
- Seven (7) children per book
- Eight (8) children per book
- Nine (9) children per book
- Ten (10) children per book
- Eleven (11) children per book
- Twelve (12) children per book

- Thirteen (13) children per book
- Fourteen (14) children per book
- Fifteen (15) children per book
- More than fifteen (15+) children per book

19. Is the teacher just reading from the book, without expanding on content delivered, and not actively engaging with the class?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

20. Has the teacher clearly communicated the lesson's goals to the class?

- Exceeded
- Met
- Partially met
- Not met

21. Are the teacher's objectives SMART?

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timebound

22. The teacher has good knowledge of the subject they are teaching (do they make any errors, or demonstrate a lack of knowledge about any element of the lesson?)

- Exceeded
- Met
- Partially met
- Not met

23. The teacher communicates well and clearly what is expected of all students, and has clear success criteria for the lesson:

- Exceeded
- Met
- Partially met
- Not met

24. The teacher adapts instruction to meet individual student needs

- Exceeded

- Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
25. The teacher gives support and instruction to all students equally, regardless of gender, religion, or ethnicity
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
26. The teacher teaches 'learning to learn' strategies (e.g. study strategies, mnemonic techniques, shortcuts or systems to facilitate understanding and skill development, imparts passion for the subject and a desire to learn independently – this criteria seeks to evaluate how well teachers make pupils effective independent learners):
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
27. The teacher makes good use of existing materials, expanding the amount of time they can dedicate to instruction
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
28. The children are engaged in learning and appear to be grasping the concepts taught
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
29. What methods of assessment are deployed by the teacher and with what frequency? (Responses were on a five point Likert scale from 'Very Frequently' to 'Never' for each of the following):
- Choral response or chanting
 - Whole-class questioning
 - By asking 'did you understand' or other closed questioning
 - Targeted questioning
 - Open questioning
 - Monitoring and observation of individual
 - Checking individual work
 - Test, quiz, or worksheet
 - Homework
 - Other
30. If other, please specify:
31. The teacher changes their practice, plan, or strategy in response to assessments:
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
32. The teacher frequently gives individual pupils feedback and support, based on the results of assessments; this feedback is targeted, and facilitates learning:
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
33. The teacher engages in cross-curricular teaching, and 'integrated learning'
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
34. The teacher accepts responsibility for student learning outcomes
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met
 - Not met
35. The teacher manages classroom behaviour well
- Exceeded
 - Met
 - Partially met

- Not met

36. Can you please provide additional detail of the lesson quality?

Random Class Attendance Sampling

37. Is there a record of what the enrolment for this class is supposed to be?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

38. If so, who provided it?

- Principal/School Administration
- Classroom Teacher
- Other _____

39. If there is, how many boy children are meant to be in the class?

40. If there is, how many girl children are meant to be in the class?

41. How many boy children are actually in attendance today?

42. How many girl children are actually in attendance today?

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