

REPORT ON  
THE OBSERVATION TOUR TO THAILAND  
FOR 46 LAO ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS  
March 1 - 8, 1968

(PIO/P 430-064-1-80213)

The Lao educators consisted of 45 principals of elementary schools in Laos and the Primary School Inspector of Khammouane Province who served as Team Leader (see attached list).

Most of the group were from rural areas including areas designated as rural development clusters or Forward Areas. The educators expressed interest in seeing what rural schools were doing in Thailand to improve themselves. The Thai educators in Ubol and Mahasarakham were extremely cordial and hospitable. They entertained us royally and requested the Lao to reciprocate by entertaining them at receptions they gave. At all times there was a complete feeling of people sharing a similar culture and environment. The Thais are extremely proud of the education system, teacher training schools, programs and rural schools. On every trip to schools no less than five educators, including the Director, accompanied the Lao. At each institution the Thais commented on the fact that no women principals were represented in the group.

Mr. Lot KOUSOL, Primary School Inspector of Khammouane Province, was an excellent choice for the team leader. He maintained the respect of the Lao participants as well as Thai educators by showing professional and personal dignity. It is of the utmost importance that a group of this kind have a leader of Mr. Lot's character and charge.

The 45 educators had participated in a four-week in-service training program in Thakhek which ended the day before the study tour to Thailand began. The observation tour was an extension of the local training which gave the Lao school officials some new and broader, but related experience.

Four days were spent in Ubol and three days in Mahasarakham. Teacher training institutions, rural and urban schools and agriculture programs were visited. Arrangements for accommodations, travel by chartered buses, and visits to the above places were made by the Training Office of USOM/Thailand.

Two problems were encountered during the trip. The first difficulty was that the bus rented for the trip contained only 37 seats for 48 persons plus baggage. Mr. John Camden, Training Officer in USOM/Thailand instructed me to hire two taxis to get to Ubol where a second bus would be waiting for us. From Ubol on, no further transportation problems were encountered. The second problem occurred

when we arrived in Ubol and it was found that the Directors of TUFEC (Thailand UNESCO Fundamental Education Center) and the Teacher Training College had not been notified of our arrival until the evening before. In both cases, neither had received the schedule which had been prepared for them.

This was also true of the Director of the Teacher Training College in Mahasarakham who had prepared his own schedule upon hearing of our arrival two days before. In spite of this, all three Directors gave the participants good programs filled with the best their schools had to offer (see attached list).

The schedule was crowded but still of great interest to the Lao participants. Upon arrival in Ubol, I was besieged by requests from the participants to visit the Air Base so that they could see the jets which were keeping them awake a good part of the night. They were like children with their first Christmas toy when they viewed their first jet. The enlisted man who served as guide was amused by Mr. Lot's request to climb into the cockpit. His remark upon his descent was that the plane was extremely complicated. Many Lao saw their first train in Ubol and were impressed by the seats changing into beds and the writing desks which could be converted into sinks. No doubt some of their impressions were obscure to an observing American but the most enriching experience appeared to be the agricultural and livestock programs in Mahasarakham. They could not make themselves believe that poultry could grow to the size they witnessed, nor that the livestock could produce such fine specimens. Mr. Lot inquired how he could purchase a Brahmin bull of the type being used to further the breed there. He also stated after the first day's program in Ubol that Laos needs more schools where students can work more with their hands. He stated that this was going to be in his report since he was convinced it was of the utmost importance. Each participant brought back a greatly enriched and individual background of experience. Some, for example, were impressed with the teacher training schools. Many were impressed with the construction projects booming all over the areas they visited. Some gasped as we drove down wide modern highways leading to Nong Khai and others who saw Nam Ngeun Dam boasted that it was larger than Ubolrathani Dam they visited.

The purpose of the trip was to give the participants new experiences relevant to the development of Laos. As community leaders, the elementary school principals have considerable influence on public opinion and are a source of information in their communities. It is important that they understand the value of Laos of improved farming techniques, irrigation, livestock raising, community involvement in education, in-service teacher training for credit, and methods improving the local economy.

It is difficult to condense the trip but the following are some of the memorable highlights:

1. The meeting in the Regional Education Office in Ubol on the discussion of the Thai education system and problems was important since most of the participants were not aware of the differences in the Lao and Thai educational systems. The panel discussion held by the Regional Education Officer, two Ministry of Education officials, two rural education advisors and one educator from the teacher training college was entitled: "The Role

Elementary School Principals in Community Development." Many of the Lao educators asked questions or made comments during and after the discussion. The Director of TUFEC, Mr. Pinnith, and his staff explained how UNESCO had assisted fundamental education in Thailand. A tour was then made of the training center where the library, audio-visual section, agricultural programs, nursery, horticulture and field programs, animal husbandry, handicrafts and home economics programs were discussed by the staff members. The afternoon was spent in the participation of adult education courses in driving auto-mechanics, electronics, electricity, arts, dressmaking, and primary and secondary classes.

2. The entire Sunday morning was spent with the participants in four voluntary working groups as follows: 11 participants cooked the noon meal for group leader and USAID representative under the supervision of the home economist; 10 participants made handicrafts ranging from crocheted dolls to artificial flowers which were then given to take home with them; 12 participants made drawings and learned new methods of sketching; 17 participants learned Thai folk dances.
3. All participants spent Sunday afternoon observing types of schools and community facilities in the Ubol area. The Air Base, railroad station, downtown construction sites, radar station, etc. were visited also.
4. The Director of Ubol Teacher Training School, Mr. Sakol Nilvan, and his staff held a panel discussion on TURTEP (Thailand UNESCO Rural Teacher Education Project). There were some excellent examples given of how the teacher training college related its practice teaching program and curriculum to community development. At least 30 Lao educators have studied or taken summer training courses at the college. Immediately after the discussion period, the participants were taken to Ban Kaem Rural School where they saw a typical Thai school constructed entirely of local materials (wood, bamboo, thatch, etc.). They were not impressed when they were taken to a second school in the same village where only male student-teachers did practice teaching. The first school consisted of women teachers and the participants were told they were never mixed during practice teaching sessions. The participants showed great interest in the school lunch program in both of these schools and commented that Lao schools needed similar programs.
5. The participants were confused during the discussion by the Director on the topic of taking credit hours and how certificates were awarded for them. At least 45 minutes were spent in explaining that students chose the subjects they wanted to take and in this way chose their speciality. Mr. Lot clarified the situation by stating that in Laos students are given all subjects without having anything to say about a specialization.

6. In Mahasarakham, the Director, Mr. Saiyat CHAMPATONG and his staff took the group on a tour of the school campus pointing out the library, English department, Home Economics, crafts, mathematics, sciences, social studies, music, dancing and art departments. A panel discussion was held by Ministry of Education officials and the Governor on education in Mahasarakham. Questions and answers helped keep the discussion interesting.
7. Immediately after the discussion, three rural schools were visited. At Ban Peuy the participants saw how the staff and students planted 38 kapok trees on the campus to raise funds to purchase school supplies for the year. The principal stated they received at least 600 baht (\$30.00) for kapok taken from the trees. At Ban Bo Yai, the teachers and students raised banana and coconut trees which gave them a net profit of \$75.00 annually. At Ban Dong Phot School, the school raised money from the sale of arts and crafts made by the students. They also have 17 mulberry trees from which they receive at least \$80.00 annually when the silk cocoons are sold to the village weavers to make Thai silk. All of this impressed the Lao educators and even though it is hard to evaluate the entire program, projects of this kind will definitely make them better teachers.
8. Visits made to the urban schools in Mahasarakham impressed the participants even more because they saw students making arts and crafts items which were being sold in the local market. The students made musical instruments, paper flowers, dolls, bamboo items, masks of paper mache, etc. Also the parent-teachers association in Moung School assisted the students in cooking their own food for the school lunch program. Mr. Lot was so impressed by the tiny tots preparing their meals that he donated 100 baht (\$5.00) to the school lunch program. In Sak Muong and Booraphet Schools, the participants were told that students did all the cleaning and other menial jobs in the school since there were no funds for coolies. The Thais were clever to keep the best school until the last day and devoting two hours to it. The visit to Srikosomvithya School produced sighs and gasps from the Lao. The school had a room large enough to be a museum stocked with coins, Buddhist scrolls, stamps, etc. which would make any museum envious. The parents were also present with their children who presented a music and dance program unequalled at any other school visited. The participants were shown strange musical instruments which they were told were made by the students themselves and which they played during the program. Obviously the village was prosperous and the students displayed an alertness that was not seen in any other village. The Lao educators were very impressed by this visit which provided excellent examples of school activities possible for Laos.

9. In all of the training institutions that we visited, the Lao saw quantities of teaching materials and visual aids, many of which had been produced by classroom teachers. We saw students practicing hand lettering, students working in small groups with electrical experiments, students studying in libraries, students making arts and crafts items, and students busy in the shops of a technical school. The total impression for the Lao was one of active student and teacher participation in lively educational programs.

Throughout the trip, there could hardly have been a greater show of hospitality on the part of the Thai. They seemed genuinely concerned about developments in Laos and the staff of some of the schools had made many preparations for our visit. Our participants, in turn, were aware of the welcome they received and the ease with which they were able to move about Thailand, communicating freely and finding many more similarities than differences as they compared the Thai and Lao environment.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The USAID technician recommends that more trips of this nature be undertaken in the future. The results definitely show a rejuvenation of Lao education by educators who have learned from such experiences. Definitely Northeast Thailand, which Mr. Lot pointed out to me at least five times, is composed of Ethnic Lao, should be included in the program. These Lao officials administer their own schools and surrounding primary schools, instruct teachers during summer training courses, and are influential leaders in communities located all over Laos. Many will be future national leaders in education and other fields. They receive immediate professional benefits from the study tour and their range of experiences is immeasurably increased. They become aware of the resources available in Thailand which can assist Laos. By seeing development projects in the northeast, they gain a new respect for the Thai and inevitably see new potentials for Laos.
2. Only Mr. Lot and two participants mentioned that Bangkok should have been included in the schedule. The technician did not encounter any anger on the part of the participants for not visiting educational institutions in Bangkok itself. Greater emphasis should be put on schools in the Oudorn area since these have the most valuable lessons for the Lao.
3. If USAID wants to increase the supply of skilled manpower in Laos, more

participants should be sent to Thailand. If USAID wants an easy method of introducing and orienting Lao to the next steps in their development, more participants should be sent to Thailand. If USAID wants to strengthen cooperative regional programs, more participants should be sent to Thailand.

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Attachments: List of Participants  
Schedule

RNC:ees:3/15/68

SCHEDULE

Friday, March 1st

- 0730 - Leave Thakhek via boat
- 0800 - Arrive Nakorn Panom
- 0930 - Leave Nakorn Panom via bus - 2 taxis
- 1830 - Arrive Ubol

Saturday, March 2nd

- 0700 - Panel Discussion on Thai System of education and UNESCO.
- 1000 - Visits to Training Center to see:

Library, audio-visual section, agricultural program, forestry, horticulture and field crops, animal husbandry, handicrafts, home economics, etc.

- 1400 - Participants in adult education courses:

Driving, auto-mechanic, electronics, electricity, avia, drumming, primary and secondary classes.

Sunday, March 3rd

- 0800 - Participants in classes of four groups:

Thai classical and folk dances  
Art  
Handicrafts  
Cooking

- 1400 - Free

Participants visited Air base, railroad station, urban schools, historical sights, etc.

Monday, March 4th

- 0800 - Panel discussion with Ministry of Education officials on "The Role of Elementary School Principals in Community Development."
- 1000 - Visit TOTTEP (Thailand UNESCO Rural Teachers' Education Project).
- 1400 - Visits to Ban Kham rural schools.
- 1930 - Reception for participants given by Director of TOTTEP and staff.

Tuesday, March 5th

- 0800 - Leave Ubol by 2 buses
- 1600 - Arrive Mahasarakham
- 1900 - Reception for participants by Director of TOTTEP Teachers' College and staff.

Wednesday, March 6th

0800 - Visit to Teachers' College including:

Library, English Department, Home Economics, Crafts, Math, Sciences,  
Social Studies, Music, Dancing, Arts

0930 - Panel discussion by MoE officials and Governor on education in  
Mahasarakam.

1015 - Visits to rural schools of Takmuong, Huong and Boorapho.

1330 - Visits to urban schools under teacher training programs:

Ban Feuay, Ban Bo Yai, and Ban Dong Phot

Thursday, March 7th

0800 - Visit to animal husbandry station, teacher training school

1100 - Visit Srikosoomvithya School

1330 - Agricultural programs

1600 - Sports competition:

Soccer, basketball and volleyball

Friday, March 8th

0700 - Leave Mahasarakam via two buses

1445 - Arrive Nong Kai

1715 - Leave Nong Kai

1915 - Arrive Vientiane

## Community Education PIO/P 439-064-1-80213

## 46 Principals of Elementary Schools - Study Tour to Thailand

March 1 - 8, 1968

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>AREA</u>
1.	LOT Kousol (Group Leader)	Primary School Inspector	Khammouane
2.	KHAMLE Phongsavaddy	Keng Sadok	Borikhane
3.	BOUNNIONG Nanthathammiko	Ban No Khan	Borikhane
4.	KHAMPHAO Phomsavanh	Sakmuong, Phonethong	Champassak
5.	LOP Phosarajavong	Phonethong	Champassak
6.	SY Senkeomanivong	Nong Pham	Champassak
7.	KHANSAY Sanouvong	Phone Tlou	Khammouane
8.	TONH	Hine Boun	Khammouane
9.	KHAMPHENG Phahongchanh	Sithane	Luang Prabang
10.	PHAY Sayarack	Sengkhalok	Luang Prabang
11.	SOMLIT Saegdeuane	Ban Khouay	Luang Prabang
12.	LECK Rattanasithi	Luang Prabang	Luang Prabang
13.	PHOUY Soukphonh	Xiang Nyoum	Luang Prabang
14.	BOUNPHENG Samavongsay	Sayaphoum	Savannakhet
15.	SOY Sivoravong	Sivilay	Savannakhet
16.	KHAMLONG Phommakhay	Nhangkham	Savannakhet
17.	PHIET Thongsu	Nakhen	Sayaboury
18.	PHANH Chanpheng	Tha Deua	Sayaboury
19.	THOUY Insisiengmay	Ban Saphay	Sedone
20.	KHAMKHING	Office of PSI	Sedone
21.	SINGKEO Chandavongs	Champy	Sedone
22.	NOUXAY Srisouraj	Muong Sene	Sithandone

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>AREA</u>
23.	ANGMO	Nakhaboury	Sithabdone
24.	TOULOLY	Sam Thong	Xieng Khouang
25.	KHAMLA Khamphavong	Muong Cha	Xieng Khouang
26.	SANGTHONG Sonthavy	Phonexay	Phone ilong
27.	LECK	Ban Phoukhae Kham	Phone ilong
28.	OUKHAO Vongxay	Tan Piao	Dan Keun
29.	SOMNUK Bounphanhkom	Pak Khanhoung	Dan Keun
30.	SOY Chandara	Boung Ma	Paklay
31.	KHANTHIEKE Khanta	Nakok	Paklay
32.	BOUNHOM Douangdara	Song Muong Tay	Nong Bok
33.	FEUY Vongsouthi	Keng Kok	Keng Kok
34.	NIDUNE Xayavongs	Taleomay	Keng Kok
35.	SENG	Lao Souriya	Keng Kok
36.	PHOUSAYTHONG Vongsamphanh	Pak Kouang	Vang Vieng
37.	LA Khounphanh	Namone	Vang Vieng
38.	KHAMMANIVONG	Done Noune	Vientiane
39.	SICHANH Luangsignotha	Nakhouay	Vientiane
40.	KHAMPHONE Phonekeo	Sithane Neua	Vientiane
41.	LOY Dangkham	Sanakham	Vientiane
42.	NOY Louangraj	Tha Ngone	Vientiane
43.	PHOUK Vongsikeo	Phosy	Vientiane
44.	THA SOPHA Luxa	Naxone	Vientiane
45.	THONGKEO Ngonekhambay	Wapikhamthong	Wapikhamthong
46.	HOUM Sonethongkham	Khamthong	Wapikhamthong