

UNITED STATES AID AGENCY IN LAOS

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

April 3, 1971

TO : Mr. John MacTague, AL/SA

FROM : Hunter Fitzgerald, CEA/National *H. Fitzgerald*

SUBJECT: Briefing Materials on Refugee School Program

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Refugee

The following report summarizes the refugee school program. This paper is organized to give: (1) a general background statement; (2) the Ministry of Education program; (3) Community Education Branch organization; (4) actual activities undertaken and proposed future activities; and (5) general statistical data designed to give an overview of the refugee school situation.

1. General Background

Currently there are about 266,000 people in Laos classified as refugees. Of this count approximately 50,000 are school age children who need to have educational opportunities provided.

2. Ministry of Education

The Lao Ministry of Education has operated under the general policy of treating refugee school children the same as any other group of children. Any new construction, teachers, or students become part of the on-going educational program and are administratively part of a Royal Lao Government activity. However, the large influx of new students has definitely been difficult both from monetary and staffing viewpoints on an organization that even without this problem is minimally funded because of limited national resources.

3. Community Education Branch Organization

The Community Education Branch last year was staffed with a Chief, a Curriculum Specialist, and two field advisors for the

northern and southern regions. The major role on the project was to give technical advice and assistance to the Department of Primary and Adult Education. With the advent of large scale refugee movements and top priority given to refugee educational needs, a one year contract Community Education Advisor/Refugees position was approved by the Mission. The addition of this position and the combined efforts of the existing staff have made it possible for the Division to work toward a satisfactory solution of an extremely large and complex problem.

4. Actual Activities Underway or Planned

Brief descriptions of separate activities underway or completed are outlined below:

- (1) 198,000 elementary grade reading books were printed locally with USAID assistance and turned over to the RLG for distribution to refugee children.
- (2) 250,000 copybooks were printed locally with USAID assistance and turned over to the RLG for distribution to refugee school children.
- (3) The Ministry of Education allocated 100 extra teacher positions for refugee schools.
- (4) The Department of Primary Education with USAID assistance completed 117 temporary classrooms with furniture for Plain de Jar refugee children.
- (5) Last March over 200 Sam Thong sixth grade children were airlifted to Vientiane by USAID to finish the sixth grade. A dormitory was built and maintenance was provided.

- (6) A one month in-service training course at four training centers for 161 refugee teachers was conducted last summer.
- (7) The Education Division is giving technical assistance to Area Coordinators in the construction of over 350 refugee classrooms.
- (8) The Community Education Branch with Public Works Division support assisted in the repair and making of furniture for the Long Tieng Nua Groupe Scolaire.
- (9) The Sam Thong ENI was moved to the Dong Dok campus and 80 more students are enrolled.
- (10) In the field of Secondary Education, the Sam Thong College was relocated at Va Ngum I, Vientiane, and 130 students are enrolled. Saravane and Attoupan Colleges were moved to the city of Pakse and 377 pupils are enrolled in two facilities.
- (11) Activity Plans are approved and in process for an additional 207,500 notebooks and 133,400 mathematics and geography textbooks for refugee school children.
- (12) An Activity Plan is approved to train 144 refugee teachers next summer. [Another Activity Plan is in the approval process to train 30 military-refugee teachers in Houa Khong province]
- (13) Again there has been a problem in Kiang Khouang due to enemy activity which has necessitated the closing of most schools. [A special program has been worked out

to give sixth grade children the opportunity to finish the sixth grade so that they will be eligible to take secondary school entrance examinations.]

- (14) The Community Education Advisor/North is currently working on comprehensive plans to complete refugee schools. However, security, especially outside the Luang Prabang area, has suspended some of this work.
- (15) Recent large scale movement to the Borekane-Paksane area has necessitated increased input. New Activity Plans are now in the draft stage and will be implemented in the very near future as soon as permanent relocation sites are filled.

5. General Statistical Data

See Chart next page.

Clearance for Distribution:

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Chief, Education Division

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DIST: AC/LP, AC/Pakse, AC/Syrt, CEA/LP, CEA/Pakse, CEA/Syrt,
CEA/Refugees, AC/BKS, AC/Savabary, AC/Khong Khouang,
AC/Vientiane