

## EDUCATION

No persuasion is needed to establish schools in the hills and valleys of government controlled areas in the north. The Lao, Meo, and other ethnic groups build their own schools, help support the teachers, and sacrifice as necessary to enroll their children. Indeed, one motivating factor for refugee movements is the desire of parents to obtain or continue schooling for their children.

Through the past decade of conflict in the north, the educational program has more than doubled in size. More strikingly, the predominantly Lao enrollment of ten years ago has been replaced by a student <sup>body</sup> ~~base~~ that is now predominantly Meo.

Xieng Khouang Province: Elementary school enrollment figures for Xieng Khouang Province indicate both the progress and the changes of fortune brought to the Meo population of that area.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1960	4,621
1961	5,441
1962	229
1963	5,167
1964	5,938
1965	7,046
1966	8,797
1967	11,926
1968	13,507
1969	10,912
1970 (June)	4,343
1971 (February)	13,161

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The current enrollment figure of 13,161 is the total number of children in the 127 schools under the jurisdiction of the RIG Provincial School Supervisor for Xieng Khouang. These schools are in Xieng Khouang Province

and the Ban Xon (Site 272) area. The enrollment figures do not include 5,000 predominantly Lao students relocated from the Plain of Jars to sites on the Vientiane Plain or the many Meo and Lao students from Xieng Khouang who have been assimilated into school programs in Vientiane, Borikhané, Saysaboury and elsewhere.

Xieng Khouang schools are presently staffed by 376 teachers and administrators, of whom most, including the Provincial School Supervisor, are Meo.

Houa Phan Province (Sam Neua): Although the Royal Lao Government has lost control of Houa Phan Province, a provincial school administration has been maintained by the Ministry of Education to serve a cohesive group of Houa Phan refugees now living in the area of Site 272. (Many other Houa Phan refugees have been assimilated in Vientiane Province and elsewhere.) After leaving Sam Neua town, the administration for Houa Phan schools was located first in Vientiane, then Sam Thong, and now Phone Say (Site 211). The central school at Phone Say is actually the former elementary school of Sam Neua town and has many of the same teachers on its staff.

There are currently 22 elementary schools serving the Houa Phan refugees in the Ban Xone area, with a teaching staff of 99 and a total enrollment of 3,177 children. In 1963, the enrollment was only 557 but in subsequent years it averaged about 1800. Most of these students are ethnic Lao.

Secondary Schools: A secondary school (Grades 7-10) in Xieng Khouang Ville which served students from Xieng Khouang and Houa Phan Provinces was forced to close in about 1960. It was re-opened at Sam Thong in 1966. Growth in enrollment has been as follows:

1966-67	38	71-72
1967-68	77	72-73
1968-69	108	73-74
1969-70	146	
1970-71	130	

With the fall of Sam Thong in the spring of 1970, the secondary school was relocated intact in Vientiane where it continues to function as a distinct institution except that the senior class(10th Grade) was placed this year in the Vientiane Lycee in order to prepare for examinations. Most of the students are Meo.

Students from Xieng Khouang and Houa Phan are also enrolled individually, on the basis of competitive examinations, in the Lycee, the Comprehensive High School, the Technical Schools, and other secondary schools in Vientiane and elsewhere. The honor roll of Lycee graduates each year inevitably includes some Meo names.

Teachers and Teacher Training: About two-thirds of the 475 elementary educational personnel working in the north are ethnic Meo. In 1965, a small training school to train teachers for Grades 1-3 was established in Sam Thong. The school provided an accelerated one-year program at first and then was extended to a two-year program. The number of graduates has been as follows:

1966	35	71 -
1967	67	
1968	37	72 -
1969	-	
1970	82	73 -
	<u>221</u>	

In the spring of 1970, with the loss of Sam Thong, the training school was moved to Vientiane where it continues to operate as a distinct unit at the National Teacher Training Center. The current enrollment is 88. In addition, approximately 200 students from Xieng Khouang and Sam Neua who are studying to be teachers of higher elementary grades or in secondary schools are enrolled in the National Teacher Training Center itself. Of these, about 150 are Meo.

During the summer vacation, the Ministry of Education, with USAID support, sponsors in-service training courses for teachers throughout Laos. The enrollment figures for courses held for Xieng Khouang and Sam Neua teachers

have been as follows:

1965	99	teachers
1966	100	"
1967	25	"
1968	31	"
1969	130	"
1970	72	"
71	-	
72	-	
73	-	

School Supplies and Materials: Beyond the salary payments for teachers made by the Lao government and the support for schools contributed by the people, there is a continuing need for textbooks, school supplies, and some school construction materials. These latter items are provided largely by USAID through the Ministries of Education and Rural Affairs. School construction in the north is simple but adequate. School supplies and textbooks used in the ~~north~~ schools are the standard provisions used throughout Laos.