

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

February 7, 1973

TO : Mr. Norman W. Green, Chief, Education Division
FROM : James A. Colman, Teacher Education Adviser
SUBJECT: Teacher Training Monthly Report January, 1973

Problems:

During the school year of 1972-73, a high percentage of Common Use items were not available during the first half of the school year. Many of the unavailable expendable items have forced the project to purchase the items on the local market. The lack of items have caused the postponement of scheduled work. The common expendable items chalk, paper, and writing materials to produce education materials have proven unavailable. Other items such as paint, plastic pipe, barbed wire, and fence posts, have also been unavailable to the project. For several months there were also shortages of plywood, and roofing material. This has forced an increase of local purchases from the Kip budget that has been overburdened with increased prices. With all the effort put into planning and documentation of materials needed, this operational problem is hard to understand. It would be helpful if information of known shortages in advance would be given to project managers enabling them to reschedule work and keep RIG Ministries informed of items to be purchased on the local economy. Possibly, we should consider local purchases in quantities instead of small monthly purchases by each project element. For example the item of chalk. Information was given the item would be available in October for filling educational needs. It is now February and each school has purchased chalk locally in small costly quantities in order to meet their needs. If supply could have informed the project of this lengthy delay, we could have purchased chalk in quantities and saved the project Kip that is already strained because of increased prices.

Activities:

- A. The first month of the new year saw the completion of paving four kilometers of roads at Dong Dok and the parking areas in three separate locations. Many logistic problems were experienced by the paving operation but most of the problems were Lao Government problems and not USAID. The high cost of good crushed gravel made the operation exceed the expected cost for materials and the local suppliers were strained to provide eight hundred cubic meters of gravel. The original plan was to apply two coats of asphalt. This plan was altered by the RIG Highway Department to one heavier coat of asphalt. The leaching of the asphalt during the hot season will be covered with sand to seal the top of the road bed and prevent water damage during the rainy season. The original estimate was \$65,000 for this work. However, it costs approximately \$10,000. The learning process of the Ministries working together was a valuable experience. Not only will the dust problem at the college be greatly reduced but the Lao Government employees have worked together to improve their country.

- B. A corrosion engineer from Hawaii was welcomed during the month of January. During the visit to Dong Dok the instruments used gave the strongest readings they had ever given. The engineer reported that three thousand feet of four inch galvanized water line from the main well to the water tower was losing twenty pounds of metal each year into the soil. The liner to the main well was losing ten pounds of metal to the ground around it each year. Suggestions of installation of a ground was made. This action has been taken. Other suggestions made required magnesium anodes that were indicated as essential to stop the determination of well and pump operation. These suggestions cannot be carried out until the report has been received. The recommendations will be carried out as soon as possible. Time did not permit the USAID staff to inform the engineer of the many local Pee (ghosts) that cause all the trouble but maybe the next time, we will have the opportunity to give our report.

- C. The month ended with a very important conference of the directors of the Normal Schools. This conference was held in Luang Prabang because of the hard work the staff there has put to making that school one of the best in the country. Not only was the campus in the best condition but there were comments by the Government educators that the education taking place in the school in the northern capital was better than in the political capital.

C. (Con't)

The administrators reorganized the administrative staff. Plans were made to expand three campuses to seven year schools. This will make them a full first and second cycle secondary school. Half of the administrators worked on the professional subject of pedagogy or methods of teaching. This could easily be called a first for the administrative staff to seriously sit down and think out basic educational problems. Primary Education representatives strongly stated that the existing teacher graduating from the Teacher Training Schools could not teach science or any of the subject matter required by the Primary Department. The one basic conclusion made was that the student teachers never learn the foreign language in which they are taught, enough to think in the second language. Therefore, the student teachers really never learn science, math, social studies, and the Lao language let alone the science of learning and methods of teaching. The directors of the two year program, using the Lao text furnished by the Fa Ngum program, stated they felt for the first time their students were understanding the material taught. The end results of the working committee was a Lao outline of what is needed to be included in the pedagogy courses.

This is of course the first step. The necessity for educational materials in Teacher Training was one of the most talked of subjects. The director of the Department agreed there should be an organized working staff to develop educational materials in all areas to be taught in the Teacher Training program.

The three day conference on science education was similar to the discussions of the directors. Again, the lack of teaching materials was the foremost in their discussions. The directors indicated a lack of staff but the teachers felt it was the lack of adequate assignments of staff. The lack of the opportunity for staff to improve their teaching techniques and grow professionally was a major problem identified. Conclusions were that all science instructions should be taught by the practical method required in the 1962 Education Act. That the teachers in training should be assisted in depending upon local materials to carry out the instructional program, rather than equipment from outside that is costly and extremely difficult to acquire. The science teachers requested a follow up session for two to three weeks to work on development of educational materials for the use of training primary and secondary teachers. This may be conducted immediately after school is out.

- D. Throughout the country, there are many student teachers practice teaching as part of the last year of their training before leaving as a high school graduate. Many problems have developed in this practice teaching and meetings are being conducted to try to improve and simplify the practice teaching procedure.