

UNITED STATES AID MISSION TO LAOS

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

September 11, 1972

TO : Mr. James B. Chandler, Acting Director 

FROM : Norman W. Green, Chief, Education Division

SUBJECT: Education Division Monthly Report for August, 1972

We are pleased to say that \$24,700 has been allotted to the mission for sponsorship of a SEADAG/EARP research project for the development of a curriculum for training secondary school teachers of Lao Language and Literature. A letter of agreement is being drawn up for signature by Dr. Veo Vanh Homsombath on behalf of the grantee institution, which is the ESP. The project needs to get underway immediately since the first ten students in the new Lao Language Section at ESP are scheduled to begin their two year study program in October. Fortunately, the Ministry has assigned three qualified Lao instructors to staff the new department and the chief researcher for the project, Mr. Jim Chamberlain, is presently in Laos. The ten students are graduates of the 13th year of the Buddhist Institute. They will be working towards an Associate Degree at ESP based on the curriculum to be developed under the EARP grant.

The academic achievement of Ministry personnel becomes more and more respectable. Mr. Somsack Saythongphet, Director of Fa Ngum Vientiane, and Mr. Hongthong Niravanh, Director of Fa Ngum Savannakhet, recently returned from the University of Hawaii with masters degrees in school administration. Mrs. Pinkham Simmalavong is due back from Michigan in a few weeks with her masters in linguistics. Now Mr. Bounlieng Phoummasavanh Director of Studies at the English Section, ESP, has started doing full time research for his doctoral thesis. The first phase of his research will take several months and will be done in Laos. He is expected to depart in December for Southern Illinois University where he will complete his work.

Another indication of academic achievement is reflected in recent appointments in Secondary Education. For the first time, a Lao, Mr. Soth Saymany, has been appointed director of the Pakse Lycee. Mr. Soth's prior position as director of the Lycee in Luang Prabang has been given to Mr. Bounnak Phommaraath, formerly Deputy Director of Secondary Education, who in turn has been replaced by Mr. Bounthavy Insixiengmay.

There are no new developments to report on the UNDP Science and Math Team's present difficulties except that Mr. Raoui Nolte, the chief of party, left Laos this month, his assignment having been ended. We will inform you when his replacement is named or when other developments take place.

A PIO/T to fund the second year of Dr. Larry Levy's AACTE contract is being circulated for approvals. Dr. Levy is now working full time in the USAID education office preparing proposals and other documents concerning the development of the College of Education.

Two more Fa Ngum textbooks came off the press this month. One is a ninth grade geometry book and the other is a social studies unit on the Lao government. Extra copies of the latter book were printed because of its wide usefulness throughout the school system and perhaps in other types of training courses.

Construction of the Fa Ngum Schools in Phone Hong and Savannakhet is nearly completed. There was some concern expressed about the Fa Ngum Luang Prabang project this month, and for a while we wondered if it had been forgotten by some that there was an Education Division and a Secondary Education Project Manager involved in the construction. We believe most of the questions that were raised have been answered but those that still need follow-up work will be pursued by Mr. John Rantala, who has just returned from his home leave.

All elementary schools began the new school year on the first Monday of September, except for those in the Wapikhamthong district where the situation is not yet stable enough to permit classes to resume. Plans have been made for the construction of about ten temporary classrooms at the Salaban relocation site, while Wapi refugee children at smaller sites will be able to use wats as temporary schools, assuming the families remain at these locations. The location of the Khongsedone College is also undecided and we are waiting for information from the Ministry regarding any assistance which may be required to reopen that school in October.

Twenty-four temporary refugee classrooms at Ban Thasano and Ban That Ing Hang in Savannakhet have been completed in time for the opening of school. On the Vientiane Plain, permanent school construction for the refugee villages is progressing well and many of the new classrooms are

being completed just as the school year begins. Furniture for these new rooms is being pre-cut at Kao Liao. For those sites where temporary rooms will still be needed, an activity proposal is being circulated to cover requirements for repair work, additional blackboards, and other minor items. In many places the student volunteers in the SSWE program completed their summer teaching assignments by helping to patch up temporary schools, constructing flag poles, and doing other minor repairs.

Refugee schools have been issued notebooks, textbooks, chalks, pencils and other miscellaneous supplies. For regular schools, a large shipment of supplies valued at about \$100,000 is being sent by the Australian government. As in past years, the Australian contribution is composed of bulk quantities of such items as notebooks, chalk and slates.

Work continues satisfactorily on the self-help construction of new urban groupés scolaires and on the maintenance and rehabilitation of the older contract urban schools. The Thahai School in Pakse was completed this month and the rehabilitation work for all the contract schools is about 50 percent completed.

Seventeen of the Primary School Inspectors, along with many other Ministry officials, were in attendance at the first national seminar on Population Education and Family Well-Being. The PSIs made use of their presence in Vientiane to hold a planning meeting with the CE staff, mostly in regard to in-service training programs for this year.

A weighty report on the last PSI conference has been distributed to the field. The report includes the text of the revised Elementary School Regulations which are of special interest in regard to school-community relations, and the beginning of a new curriculum design for Lao language activities in Grades 1-3.

Nineteen CE participants departed in early September for six months of study in Thailand in supervision, testing and guidance following three months of local training in the same fields. This is the second and final group of experienced teachers to be given this training. They will be assigned as staff to the PSIs when they return.

With the return of Mr. James Colman, Teacher Training project manager,

from home leave, the division now has all personnel at post except Mr. Tom L. Ston, who is expected to arrive about September 21.

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