

UNITED STATES AMBASSY MISSION TO LAOS

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

April 22 1971

TO Mr. Charles A. Mann, Director

FROM Norman W. Green, Chief, Education Division *NW Green*

SUBJECT Education Division Monthly Report for March 1971

Refugee School Program

Recent movements of population in Xieng Khouang and Luang Prabang have upset the refugee school programs in those areas. In Xieng Khouang, over fifty schools have been closed and some 5,000 children have had their school year cut short. The impact of the situation in Luang Prabang on the school program is not yet clear.

In Xieng Khouang an effort is being made to salvage this year's program for Sixth Grade students who must prepare for their CEP examinations and for the entrance examinations for secondary schools, which will be given in May. Some 220 students from six *groupes scolaires* are being assembled at Pa Khe where they will be given continued instruction and subsistence support under the supervision of Ministry personnel.

Survey information attached to Mr. Woodson's report shows that 260 new refugee students, mostly from Xieng Khouang, entered Vientiane City schools this year. (The figures are only for that portion of the city schools under the responsibility of the School Inspector for Vientiane North, i.e., half the city schools.) 37 refugee children were registered but could not be accepted because of overcrowded conditions. The number of refugee children in Vientiane who are neither registered nor in school is not known. We are continuing to collect and analyze this type of information in relation to the combined RUC-USAID urban self-help school construction program.

The school at the Hanoi Nam Phak refugee settlement in the Pakse area was damaged during a terrorist attack on March 5. Mr. Constantino reports classes have not resumed since then because of insecurity.

Community Education

The disruption of normal activities in Luang Prabang caused regular schools in the city to be closed during the last two weeks of March.

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Many schools are being used as refugee hostels. It is hoped that progress can be obtained again this year. See New Year's

A recent visit to Hanoi City by Mr. Fitzgerald and Miss Dee Brusay **hopefully** promises a closer working relationship between civil and military authorities for the total educational program in that area. Plans were made for a special training course for 25 elementary teachers this year outside the country.

Mr. Fitzgerald also visited Tay Ninh, Phuoc and Kien Hoa this month in relation to refugee school problems and other CE programs.

Teacher Training

As reported in previous months, the teacher training schools at Dong Nhat closed for one week last month because of a water shortage which resulted from a 12-day strike hitting one of the main sources for the water pumps. The situation had at least one beneficial result in that a program is now being implemented to establish a hook up water system at Dong Nhat. See Merce Thomas's report for details.

The normal school at Luang Prabang, along with other schools, was closed this month because of the security situation. Work stopped on the construction of a science laboratory at the school and two in-service training workshops which were scheduled to be held in Luang Prabang in early April were also postponed and then transferred to Payne.

Practical teaching sessions began on April 1 for normal school students in many parts of the country. The schools selected for practical teaching are more urban than the Ministry would like but the security situation has prohibited having student teachers in many rural areas and has caused the program at the Luang Prabang RII to be postponed.

Final inspection was made for the new communications school and science laboratory at the RII in RII last month.

Plans are being made for fieldwork programs for maintenance and improvement of the RII during the summer vacation.

Secondary Education

Eleven of the Lao participants who are studying in Thailand to be secondary school teachers are spending their "summer" vacation at Fa Ngum School, Viengkane, where they are occupied with the preparation of teaching materials and practice-teaching activities. This program is similar to the Lao student summer program and was worked out in collaboration with M.D./PT.

As reported by Dr. Collins, all of the students and faculty of Fa Ngum School, Phon Hong, came to Viengkane for one busy day last month. The purpose of the field trip was to orient first year students at Phon Hong to the five major tracks and to give second year students a chance to visit establishments in Viengkane related to their major field, such as Hot Dak Keo, Satakum, ERL, the Chinese Belling Works, and so forth.

Dr. Collins also reports on field trips made by students from various sections of the Viengkane school in such places as 585, Lao Wood Industries, Lao Tobacco Factory, and the Millrose Hospital. These field trips have become a well established part of the Fa Ngum educational program. They help extend the school into the community and have produced a considerable amount of support for the school from private and government organizations.

There has been considerable progress on the Fa Ngum construction program:

Sayannakhet - The contract has been let and the contractor is now assembling materials. An Activity Plan for the development of the agriculture terrain and the access road will soon be submitted for approval.

Luang Prabang - A contract has also been let for the first phase of the construction of LP. In addition, an Activity Plan for the construction of a gation dam, which will establish a water reservoir for the school is being circulated for final approval.

Phon Hong - A call for bids for the final phase of the construction should go out in April. A contract has been let for the construction of a dam to create a water reservoir for this school. Work is in progress on teachers' housing and the two most generators have been installed.

Educational Materials

A response was called for these recommendations in the audit report on the Educational Materials Production Project.

Educational materials completed this month:

CR	OBA	Notebooks	100,000 copies
CE		Reading book, Grade 4	1,300 copies
TT		Theory of Teaching	10,000 copies

Educational materials being printed:

SE		Law typing book, Grade 8	1,000 copies
SE		Algebra book, Grade 8	6,000 copies
SE		Social Studies, Grade 8	6,000 copies
CE	OBA	Notebooks	707,500 copies
CE		Reading book, Grade 2	11,000 copies
CE		Reading book, Grade 3	5,000 copies
CE		Reading book, Grade 5	5,300 copies
CE		Arithmetic book, Grade 1	50,000 copies
CE		Arithmetic book, Grade 2	25,000 copies
CE		Arithmetic book, Grade 3	5,000 copies
CE		Arithmetic book, Grade 4	1,000 copies
CE		Arithmetic book, Grade 5	3,000 copies
CE		Arithmetic book, Grade 6	1,000 copies
CE		Geography book, Grade 2	6,000 copies
CE		Geography book, Grade 3	8,000 copies

Personnel

Miss Des Hately has been assigned to Vientiane on TDY since March 21 because of the security situation in Luang Prabang. Her monthly report is attached to the division's report this issue.

General

All Ministry employees and a great many other persons mourned the death this month of "Papa" Souphan Blanchard de la Brosse. He began his work for education in Laos in the 1920s as an elementary school teacher in Vientiane. Subsequently he served in almost every type of

educational position — school principal, school inspector, lycée professor, author of textbooks, leader of cultural activities, director of teacher training, director general of the Ministry of Education, and finally advisor to the Ministry. He received many honors, including a posthumous decoration from the King, but his greatest recognition comes from all those in Laos at all levels who looked on him as their teacher.

Plans are progressing for the inauguration of a pilot functional literacy program in the Houa Phou area under the sponsorship of an interministerial Central Committee for Functional Literacy. A working seminar is planned for late April to kick off the program, followed by a training course for 48 literacy teachers in August and the actual start of the teaching for functional literacy in October. A UNESCO expert, Mr. Al Hamadeche, is working with the committee and the Asia Foundation is supporting the training program.

Other Donors

The annual meeting for the Franco-Lao Cultural Accords was held in Paris this month for the purpose of planning cooperative cultural and technical activities in Laos for next fiscal year. A separate report on the results of the meeting is being prepared. Briefly, for education, the French said they will not reduce the number of their educational personnel in Laos but 16 positions will be shifted from elementary and secondary education to teacher training and vocational education. The French will also give a good amount of support to professional training, especially at the Medical School. Scholarships in France were offered for 48 in-service training programs and for 15 new academic programs. Priority for these scholarships, and in fact for the total French aid program in education, will be given to training teachers and specialists in scientific and technical subjects.

USIS and the Asia Foundation provided sample textbooks and other source material for use in the Ministry's Elementary Curriculum Library. The Asia Foundation is also providing funds to purchase instruments for a Lau orchestra at Pa Ngum School, Vientiane.

EDU:NWGreen:ei

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