



Child's Dream Foundation

238/3 Wualai Road
T. Haiya, A. Muang
Chiang Mai 50100
Thailand

Empowering children, youth
and communities in the
Mekong Sub-Region

Tel. +66 (0)53 201 811
Fax +66 (0)53 201 812
info@childsdream.org
www.childsdream.org

Final Report for

Project concerned

Swiss Lanna Society – Chiang Mai, Thailand

Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School

Pak Khaen Village, Ngern District, Xaignabouli Province, Laos

We have built one school building with six fully furnished classrooms and four toilets.

Funded and implemented by

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Executive Summary

The Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School is located in Xaignabouli Province in Northern Laos, near the Mekong River. Due to limited resources the primary and secondary students had to share the existing two-classroom building, creating a chaotic and uncondusive learning environment for the school children. To improve the situation of overcrowded classrooms, the community constructed a temporary school building for the primary students. The building was made out of thatched bamboo sheet walls and a grass roof - an unfavourable learning environment for the young students. In order to provide a safe and conducive learning environment, we constructed a new school building with six fully furnished classrooms for the lower secondary students along with four toilets. After the construction of the new six classroom building, the primary students have been transferred back to their original classroom in the old, but stable concrete building.

1. Overview

Laos is still considered one of the poorest and least developed countries in South-East Asia and also one of the poorest in the world. Even though the social and economic conditions in Laos have been improving since its independence in 1975, there is still significant wealth disparity amongst Laotians. Many communities are living in extremely remote and isolated areas, where the infrastructure is basic and rudimentary. Therefore, they are often neglected in the government's development policies and unable to participate in economic growth. Although education is one of the key factors in poverty reduction and sustainable development, educational indicators in Laos show dramatically low values. The obstacles for effective basic education are usually insufficient classrooms and a lack of textbooks, educational supplies, teachers' books and libraries in general.

Contents	Page
Executive Summary	
1. Overview	1
2. Operational Implementation	2
3. Project Performance	3
4. Project Chronology	3
5. Project Photos	4
6. Financial Reconciliation	5



The Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School is located in Pak Khaen Village, the poorest area of the Muang Ngern District. The close proximity to the Mekong River and the easy access to the main road was instrumental in making the village a hub for families from other villages to settle in the area. Most of the villagers live from farming and animal husbandry. Before Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School was established, the students had to travel almost 20 km to Baan Thong Secondary School. It was difficult for the families to provide monetary support to their children, either for daily transportation or lodging near the school. In 2015, the government opened the Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School and since then the dropout rate subsequently decreased. Hence the primary and lower secondary school students had to share the school building, which led to an overcrowded and noisy learning environment and made it hard for the children to concentrate. To improve the situation the community decided to construct a temporary school building for the primary students whereby the existing building was used by the lower secondary school. Currently there are 203 students (110 boys, 93 girls) in attendance. Besides a dramatically increasing number of students, the school intends to introduce grade 8 and 9 in the new future. For these reasons a new school building was direly needed to accommodate all students. The school currently caters to 3 villages in the vicinity; Baan Pak Khan, Baan Home Xai and Baan Huay Ngeuy and the total number of students is expected to increase by 40 to 50% next year only. In order to improve the existing, insufficient learning environment, we have decided to support the Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School with a new and bigger school building on a new property. By providing a new school building with six fully furnished classrooms and four new toilets, we are addressing the condition of overcrowding, which will permit students to fully benefit from their education. Also the primary school will be moved back to the original building, which improves the learning environment significantly. A better learning environment will enhance the quality of education and motivate the children to complete the primary and lower secondary education. We further expect that absence and dropout rates will also decrease.

2. Operational Implementation

Integral to our approach, it is our belief that establishing a close partnership with the community leaders and the school management, when developing educational infrastructure projects, will lead to a more successful outcome. This is seen in terms of successfully meeting educational needs and supporting community development that leads to greater sustainability. As with all our projects, at Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School we encouraged the community to actively participate in the construction. This gives villagers a stronger sense of pride and ownership of their project. The community is responsible for maintaining and up-keeping all infrastructure. For this project, the community contributed to the construction process with manual labour, wood, sand and soil. The new school building was built on a new and wider property. The school director took care of preparing the property for the construction.

We partnered with a local contractor to provide labour, to transport everything to the site and to oversee the construction of the school. The contractor was paid in accordance to the progress of the construction in 4 instalments. As a warranty for the quality of the work, 5% of the total labour cost is being held back for one year. The construction started end of November 2016. During the following months, our project team visited the construction site several times in order to ensure that our high quality standards were being met.

The construction ran so well that the project was finished end of February 2017, one month ahead of schedule. The community and the government collaborated in overseeing the construction process and we are all very satisfied with the building progress and the final outcome.

The opening ceremony for the new building is scheduled to take place on Friday 10th of March 2017. We are very happy that you already confirmed your attendance with a group of donors. Many thanks for being part of this important event.



3. Project Performance

Effectiveness: The following initial objectives were achieved:

- One new school building with six fully furnished classrooms and four toilets have been built. A quality learning environment for the students will incentivise them to continue their education after lower secondary school.
- With the improvement of the safety and hygiene standards of the school, parents from the communities are encouraged to allow their children to pursue an education.
- Thanks to the improved learning environment, we expect that the communities will benefit tremendously, as the literacy rate will increase and school dropout rate will decrease, and children of these villages will have the opportunity to lead self-determined lives.

Efficiency: Due to our strong partnership with the community and collaboration with the construction teams, we are happy to report that the project was completed just slightly above the proposed budget. For more detailed information, please refer to the attached financial report on page 5. Please note that this report does not yet include the 5% guarantee payment (USD 584) on the labour cost, which will be withheld for one year to ensure overall quality. You will also see that 'Transportation & Rental' shows an unspent balance. This cost was included in the school furniture production and therefore result in an overrun of that said position.

Sustainability: The sustainability of the Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School's activities is guaranteed by its close collaboration with the Laotian government, which will provide the curriculum and materials for teaching and learning as well as the teachers' training and salaries. In addition, with a greater sense of ownership over the school building through their active participation in the planning and construction process, the community will ensure that the facilities are properly maintained and taken care of. The community and school leaders are committed to further promote education and will encourage students and families to send their children to school now that there is a new, bigger and safe building. We will continue to carry out regular follow-up visits for monitoring purposes.

4. Project Chronology

The following link provides more information and photos about the various phases of the construction:

<http://childsdream.org/projects/samakkeexai-lower-secondary-school/>

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for all your support and trust. Together, we were able to make a significant and sustainable impact on many children's lives.

We are looking forward to welcoming you at the opening ceremony soon.

Chiang Mai, 7th March 2017

Child's Dream Foundation

Marc T. Jenni
Founder & Head Operations

Daniel M. Siegfried
Founder & Head Projects

5. Project Photos



Welcome to Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School



The primary and secondary students had to share the concrete building (far left building)



Some of the primary students were moved to this thatched bamboo building



The classrooms are overcrowded and the number of students is expected to increase in the coming school year



Contract signing with the community and the contractor



The property is already prepared for the new school building



The foundation is set



We are pleased with the smooth progress



Four new toilets are a big improvement to the hygienic conditions



The new school building with six fully furnished classrooms is finished! Thank you for your support!





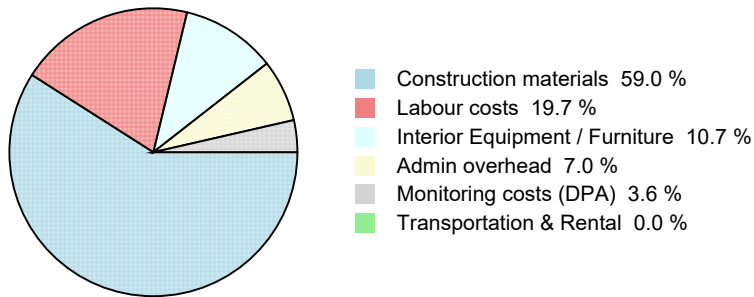
Financial Report

Samakkeexai Lower Secondary School
Building

Budget Fx 7,880.00 Expenses Fx 7,880.00

Financial overview		In budget currency (LAK)			In reporting currency (USD)		
Account item	Account sub-item	Budget	Actual cost	Deviation	Budget	Actual cost	Deviation
Infrastructure	Construction materials	256,175,000.00	261,263,394.51	-5,088,394.51	32,509.52	33,155.25	-645.74
Infrastructure	Interior Equipment / Furniture	33,750,000.00	47,231,036.65	-13,481,036.65	4,282.99	5,993.79	-1,710.79
Infrastructure	Labour costs	92,000,000.00	87,400,000.00	4,600,000.00	11,675.13	11,091.37	583.76
Infrastructure	Transportation & Rental	11,960,000.00	0.00	11,960,000.00	1,517.77	0.00	1,517.77
	Project subtotal	393,885,000.00	395,894,431.17	-2,009,431.17	49,985.41	50,240.41	-255.00
	Monitoring costs (DPA)	16,411,875.00	15,886,757.25	525,117.75	2,082.73	2,016.09	66.64
	Admin overhead	30,882,560.48	30,882,560.48	0.00	3,919.11	3,919.11	0.00
	TOTAL	441,179,435.48	442,663,748.90	-1,484,313.41	55,987.24	56,175.60	-188.36

Actual Cost Breakdown



Budget vs Actual Cost

