

UNICEF EDUCATION

Education Case Study

LAO PDR

Opening up to the frontiers of digital learning with the Learning Passport

18 August 2022

Spurred by school closures in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) launched the country's first digital learning platform, *Khang Panya Lao* or Lao Wisdom Warehouse, in 2021. Based on UNICEF's global [Learning Passport](#) initiative, which was developed in partnership with Microsoft, *Khang Panya Lao* ensures continuous learning for children from pre-primary through Grade 12 and supports the growing digital literacy needs of students and teachers. UNICEF is supporting teacher training to use the platform and providing digital devices in classrooms.

Khang Panya Lao serves as a repository of key learning and teaching materials for students and teachers across the country. It contains official curriculum textbooks for pre-primary and grades 1-12, technical and vocational education and training resources, teacher guides, a large suite of international resources translated to Lao, stories, songs, videos, games, quizzes and episodes of the television programme [My House](#) aimed at pre-primary aged viewers. The platform also offers resources to support teachers' professional development, particularly on remote teaching and learning, digital literacy and inclusive education, as well as key messages on COVID-19 infection control and prevention. The Government, with UNICEF support, has conducted teacher trainings in targeted districts and provinces on using the platform to support teaching and learning in classrooms and at home.

Content can be accessed online via a website and application and can also be downloaded and accessed via an app with offline functionality, enabling improved access in areas where there is limited or no internet connectivity. Tablets provided for the use of the app have accessibility options that can be activated to support students with disabilities. Most of the Lao language videos on the platform include subtitles, and videos from *My House* include sign language interpretation.

RESULTS

- Advocacy around the new tool, including 67 posts through UNICEF social media channels, has reached an estimated 3.3 million people.
- The number of registered users of the *Khang Panya Lao* online learning platform has grown from 700 in mid-April 2021 to 92,000 by mid-August 2022.
- Provincial Education and Sports Services in all 18 provinces and all Teacher Training Colleges nationally have received trainings in *Khang Panya Lao* and remote learning methodologies, with over 10,000 teachers registered to the platform.
- To date, 337 courses with 5,920 lessons are available on *Khang Panya Lao*, laying a strong foundation to intensify interventions that boost foundational skills and digital literacy.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Sparing no effort to overcome the digital divide.** The Government, UNICEF and other partners are cognizant of the importance of reaching the most vulnerable students, including those who lack devices, affordable data or internet. Beyond ensuring offline functionality, UNICEF is implementing offline device hubs to facilitate content access without internet and to introduce solar-powered multimedia backpacks in school communities without electricity or devices to enable unprecedented access to digital learning.
- **The revolution for teachers.** Teachers have faced significant changes with the acceleration of online and blended classes. UNICEF is supporting the MoES to use *Khang Panya Lao* to prepare teachers for the challenge, including through blended professional development opportunities. This innovation is less costly than traditional in-person teacher training, offering the opportunity

to revolutionise professional development opportunities by moving away from once-a-year training events to continuous learning, that also aims to improve digital literacy of teachers.

- **Partnerships for the win.** UNICEF has established 14 partnerships to expand digital learning nationally. UNICEF's ability to bring together a broad range of partners has ensured strong buy-in across the education sector with Government ownership and broadened the tool's reach by leveraging all available networks. Expanding partnerships, including with the private sector, will remain a priority.
- **Engagement of young people and caregivers.** Young people's voices must be heard on the types of digital resources they deem relevant for their learning and development. This includes organising youth digital literacy camps to facilitate youth engagement and also increase awareness on online safety. Engagement of parents will also be a key pillar to ensure they are equipped with information and knowledge to support children's learning and development from the early years onwards.
- **System level transformation is paramount.** The MoES, with UNICEF support, developed guidance on remote/hybrid learning and remedial education. A strategy on information and communications technology in education is under development to enable system-wide transformation.

NEXT STEPS

The MoES is expanding access to online teaching and learning resources to the most marginalized schools. It is planning to extend access to *Khang Panya Lao* through partnerships with internet service providers and other private sector players. By the end of 2023, *Khang Panya Lao* trainings will have been scaled to all 18 provinces in the country.

Cost effectiveness: UNICEF has contributed approximately US \$450,000 for the launch and development of the digital learning platform including translation of international resources and purchase of tablets. Valuable contributions from the European Union, the Global Partnership for Education and Education Thematic Funds is helping potentially reach up to 300,000 learners (50 *per cent* girls) and 10,000 teachers to date.

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