

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Subnational Mapping

February 2023

Life-long learning is an integral part of effective teaching practice for student learning. The Government of Lao PDR's Ministry of Education and Sports places high value on continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers. In July 2022 the Minister for Education endorsed *Decree 3342: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)* emphasising the importance of pedagogical support to teachers for their professional development.

In November 2022, the Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) worked with the Department of Teacher Education to research current CPD activities and needs across 30 target districts in Luangnamtha, Khang Khai and Savannakhet teacher training college (TTC) catchments. The CPD Subnational Mapping research included three parts: a large-scale survey with 1,225 teachers, principals, District Education and Sport Bureau (DESB), TTC and Provincial Education and Sport Service (PESS) respondents; qualitative fieldwork with 362 participants; and validation and implication workshops with 242 participants.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Teachers' main motivation to participate in CPD is to increase teaching quality and students' learning.
2. Teachers' main priorities for CPD support are understanding how children learn and improving their subject knowledge.
3. Teachers want more support to improve teaching practices related to GE&IE.
4. Teachers prefer one-to-one advice, co-teaching, and school cluster activities and rate them as effective.
5. Teachers appreciate pedagogical support and advice from other skilled teachers.
6. There is a need for quality assurance and capacity building for pedagogical support staff.
7. Clear, strategic, local leadership and coordination contribute to active internal pedagogical support.
8. Digital learning may be accessible to DESB, PESS and TTC personnel, but less so for principals and teachers.

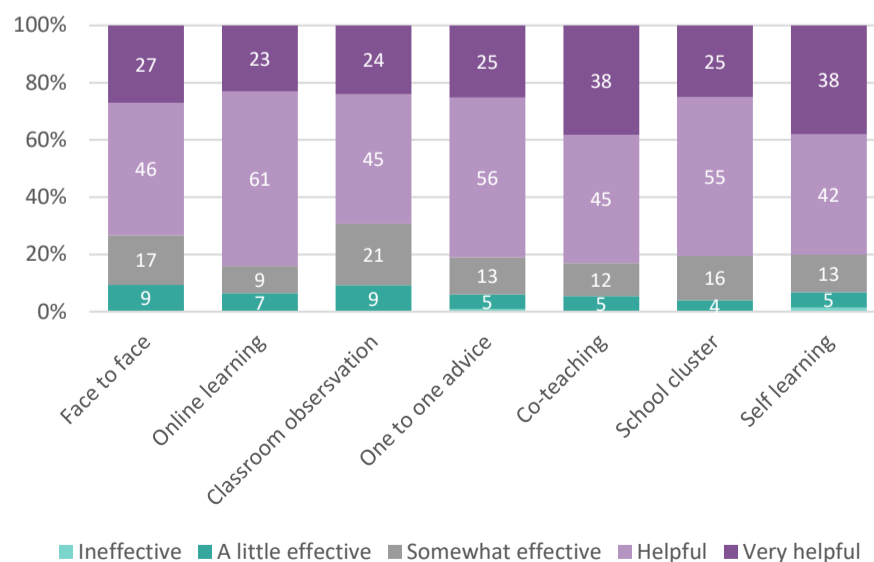
The CPD Subnational Mapping research shows that teachers are keen to engage in more CPD, and that CPD support providers would like to increase the quality and consistency of support they provide.

High areas of interest for CPD include deepening the understanding of the new curriculum, especially in Lao language and Maths subjects and increasing inclusive education practices, especially for supporting non-Lao speaking students. Gender equality and inclusive education (GE&IE) are keen areas of interest for teachers and principals.

A range of CPD modalities are currently being accessed by teachers and there is an opportunity to increase cluster and school based CPD activities, which are rated by teachers as most effective, see Figure 1. When it came to CPD support providers, good practice examples were found of schools, clusters and districts maximising existing expertise for teacher CPD support within their local area.

Amplifying the use of skilled teachers for pedagogical support and professional dialogue will be an important part of the equation for school-based CPD, along with clear roles across TTC, PESS and DESB in quality assurance and coordination of school-based support teams. An environment that strategically uses existing and refined policies and resourcing, will be important to enable subnational stakeholders to increase the frequency and quality of CPD that teachers engage in. As new methods are trialled for school-based CPD, facilitation of discussions on lessons learnt will be important for sharing, adapting and scaling what works for CPD.

Figure 1: Effectiveness of teacher reported CPD activities (by activity).
How effective was the teacher professional development activity in helping you improve your teaching knowledge and skills?



The teachers share they want confirmation from a pedagogical adviser or someone with expertise, whether what they are doing is correct or not. They need positive reinforcement. –Teacher focus group discussion, Houaphanh.

Suggested actions

STUDENT LEARNING

- ✓ Support teachers to recognise how their CPD is influencing changes in student engagement and learning.
- ✓ Continue to promote the use of formative and summative assessment so teachers can understand learning needs across individual students in their class.
- ✓ Ensure Lao language and maths scores are used to inform remedial support.
- ✓ Build TTC technical teams' and IPS team capacity for teacher CPD.
- ✓ Ensure that CPD support providers at school level (i.e., IPS teams) are recognised in formal performance assessment processes.
- ✓ Use existing social and financial motivators for teachers more effectively.

SCHOOL BASED CPD

- ✓ Formalise the 'establishment of the network for teacher professional development'.
- ✓ Strengthening the capacity and skills of pedagogical support providers.
- ✓ Encourage peer-to-peer professional dialogue and development.
- ✓ Support teachers to engage in a cycle of self-learning and reflection.
- ✓ Promote principals' role in facilitating a CPD culture.
- ✓ Incorporate CPD into school-based management (SBM) guidelines with principals expected to make CPD a key focus of the school development plan.
- ✓ Engage community and Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) support for teachers to access CPD.
- ✓ Encourage strong DESB leadership, support, and coordination to enable school level responsiveness and flexibility in CPD activities.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CPD SUPPORT PROVIDERS

- ✓ Establish teacher self-assessment linked to Primary Teaching Standards
- ✓ Gather feedback from teachers on frequency, consistency, and quality of CPD support.
- ✓ Encourage TTCs role in quality assurance.
- ✓ Highlight good practices of schools and clusters making the most of CPD skills within their district.
- ✓ Encourage PESS to facilitate cross-district sharing.
- ✓ Encourage DESBs role in identifying school needs, coordination and monitoring of IPS visits.
- ✓ Support a broader understanding and successful implementation of CPD teacher development policies.

GENDER EQUALITY & INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- ✓ Increase activities that provide practical examples of teachers using GE&IE strategies.
- ✓ Increase support to teachers to effectively teach non-Lao speaking students.
- ✓ Work with VEDCs to ensure all students living with a disability, are participating in school.
- ✓ Address gendered trends in CPD participation of teachers and their support providers.
- ✓ Ensure ICT overcomes GE&IE barriers rather than reinforces them.
- ✓ Engage with policy makers to ensure a GE&IE lens is applied to policy development and implementation.

Many teachers are not confident. With the IPS we feel that this group is the one who will support the teachers and provide technical support, so we feel this is a good suggestion and good practice. –MoES workshop discussion, Vientiane.

