



## Holistic Educational Improvement

**Budget:** \$10,760 fully funded. This is the first year of a 3-year project.

### Update:

Entrust is working with several other partners in a large, holistic project aimed to improve food security in 12 of the poorest villages in the District through a range of different activities. One of those activities is improving the quality of education at the local government schools. This will be done by working with teachers in each of the schools to help them to sustainably improve their pedagogical practices. It will also add information to the curriculum on agriculture, nutrition and hygiene, which will consolidate other components of the project and make sure the changes being introduced are owned by future generations. Finally, it will assist the poorest students in the school with access to materials to enable them to stay at school, ensuring the benefits of the program reach those most in need.



In the first half of this year, our partners collected data for the educational component of the project, met with schoolteachers, organised training sessions for education technicians as well as providing school materials to poor students in 6 target villages. One of these students is 14-year-old Nang, (above, right) who is in Primary 4. It is quite common for girls from poor families in remote villages to be so far behind at school. They tend to start school late and often stop for a year or so to help the family with daily chores. She describes the impact the educational program has had on her.

*“When I didn’t have writing books and a pen it was hard to follow in school. I could not copy what the teacher was writing. I couldn’t learn well and didn’t remember the lessons. But with these materials, I’m very happy. I want to study. I can write the lessons, the vocabulary, the explanations and I do my homework after school. Taking care of my books means keeping them well in my bag, not to tear the sheets or draw pictures everywhere.”*

In the second half of the year, the educational technicians created pedagogical activities for term as well as during the school holidays (such as cutting nails, washing hands, sport and collective games, eating well etc). They organised training for 2 teachers from each target village, bookshelves were ordered and 27 educational books were distributed to each school (see below). Gardens were created in two target villages. Vegetables were planted and activities around reading and mathematics were done.



Much of the training and activities are new for the teachers and the village communities. It will take some time for them to absorb the new ideas and there have been some challenges in this first year. These include rejection from the local government to access the education curriculum, interference by police because the authorities were not informed in advance when poorer students were given school supplies and some resistance from teachers for activities to be included in the current timetable.

Generally, the project has been well received. According to the data collected and recent feedback, educating their children is a clear priority for most communities. Thank you for helping to train teachers and educate the youth in remote areas of southern Laos.