Building Schools
Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar
It All Begins With Building Schools

We strongly believe that a safe and secure learning environment is essential for educational success. Therefore, we support children and youth in accessing education by building educational infrastructure, primarily school buildings with fully-furnished classrooms and latrine facilities.

In many villages in our target countries, there are limited or no schools at all nearby, requiring students to travel long distances or live away from home. In Laos, for instance, there is a primary school for every 4 – 5 villages, with an average classroom housing 60 students.

Many families are unable to afford the traveling or boarding expenses. Also, in the rainy season many students receive no education due to travel difficulties such as flooded roads or those with very bad conditions. Particularly with poor quality school infrastructure, rotten classrooms with usually leaking roofs and gapped walls prevent students and teachers to continue their lessons in an enabling environment.
A school without walls in Cambodia...
...And now a safe and conducive learning environment for primary school children
Main Issues We Address

- Low school enrolment and class attendance rates due to inadequate basic infrastructure in remote and neglected communities such as toilets, water supply, electricity, or a stable school building when it is stormy or rainy

- High dropout rates due to incomplete schools (unable to offer complete education pathway – e.g. classes available only to grade 3 of primary level - due to insufficient school buildings)

- Teachers are challenged with crowded, multi-age and multi-grade classrooms

- Poor, unsafe and unhygienic learning and teaching environments

- Parents lack awareness of the importance of education.
A typical classroom in a rural Laos school
Example of a school building we constructed in Laos
**Beneficiaries**

Children and youth of Primary (aged 5/6 – 10/11) and Secondary/High School (aged 11/12 – 17/18) educational level from disadvantaged and neglected communities living in remote rural areas in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Teachers also benefit and are more motivated under a more conducive learning environment.

**Cooperation & Partnership**

In Laos and Cambodia we work closely with the respective ministries of education, while in Myanmar we often partner with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and local NGOs. We more and more start to cooperate with the local education authorities also in Myanmar.
Objectives

- To provide access to basic education for all children in the region
- To increase literacy rates and set the foundation for productive and self-determined lives
- To significantly reduce school dropout rates
- To increase continuation rates from primary to secondary school and on to high school
- To improve teaching quality and the overall learning environments
- To improve hygiene standards at schools and boarding houses
- To encourage parents and community members to support their children in education

We focus on education because it is proven to be one of the most important factors for sustained social and economic development. Education also promotes a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding and builds the foundation for diversity, human rights and freedom.
Implementation

1. Initial Site Visit & Community Consult
   Our local project team meets the school management and community leaders/members at the site. Needs and interests of teachers, students, and community members are analysed to determine appropriate initiative.

2. Second Community Consult
   Reviewing project terms with community leaders/members and school management before signing contract. This is to ensure robust engagement, responsive address to educational needs, and enhance community ownership, leading to greater sustainability.

3. Recruitment of Building Contractor
   An experienced local contractor is hired. He/she will manage the labour, transportation of materials, oversee the construction, and arrange for the furniture needed.
Implementation

4. Construction of the Building
   It usually takes 6 - 7 months for the construction of the school building and latrine facilities to complete. Our team visits the site 4 - 5 times to ensure high quality standards are met.

5. Community Engagement
   Community engagement is critical as it fosters pride and ownership of their project. The members usually contribute manual labour such as filling the foundation, erecting school fence and paint job. They also organise the opening ceremony upon completion.

6. Warranty of Quality
   5% of the total cost is held back for 6 months after the building is finished, as a guarantee for the quality of construction. The community is responsible for maintaining all infrastructure afterwards.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation
   Project is completed. We ensure follow-up surveys among the teachers and students and data (baseline and endline) collection at 2 and 5-year intervals to make sure the intended outcomes are achieved or challenges to be addressed.
Schooling in Myanmar before...
...and afterwards.
Budget & Reporting

Depending on the size of student population, a school building construction (normally ranging from 4 - 6 classrooms) with latrine facilities (3 – 4 toilets) costs between USD **40,000 - USD 70,000**, accommodating 100 to 200 students.

It is also possible to contribute partially to the total funding (e.g. 20% or 50%).

As with all our projects, a narrative final report with photos is provided together with a detailed financial reconciliation, at no later than two months after completion of the project.

We encourage donors to attend school opening festivities where the local community celebrates their new school building.

![Approx. Budget Breakdown of a School Building Project](image_url)

- **Construction Materials 55%**
- **Labour Costs 24%**
- **Interior Equipment / Furniture 8%**
- **Transportation 2%**
- **Project Implementation and Monitoring Costs 4%**
- **Administration Overhead 7%**