



PROGRAMMATIC DESIGN AND PILOT SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) EXPANSION INTO LAOS

2019-2020 Workshop in Development Practice Final Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2 |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| I. CLIENT BRIEF..... | 3 |
| II. LAO PDR COUNTRY OVERVIEW | 4 |
| III. EDUCATION SYSTEM OF LAOS | 6 |
| IV. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)..... | 8 |
| V. SEL AT PENCILS OF PROMISE..... | 9 |
| PROJECT OBJECTIVE | 10 |
| METHODOLOGY | 11 |
| PHASE I: BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND PREPARATION | 12 |
| PHASE II: DATA COLLECTION | 13 |
| PHASE III: DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTIVITY SELECTION | 14 |
| PHASE IV: DELIVERABLE PREPARATION | 15 |
| FINDINGS | 16 |
| I. LAO CULTURE | 16 |
| II. SCHOOLS IN LAOS..... | 18 |
| III. GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP..... | 21 |
| DELIVERABLES | 22 |
| I. SEL ACTIVITY GUIDE..... | 22 |
| II. GOVERNMENT PRESENTATION | 23 |
| FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS | 24 |
| CONCLUSION | 27 |
| REFERENCES | 28 |
| APPENDIX | 30 |
| APPENDIX A. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS | 30 |
| APPENDIX B. SEL ACTIVITY MASTER LIST | 42 |
| APPENDIX C. FINAL SEL ACTIVITY GUIDE..... | 50 |
| APPENDIX D. FINAL GOVERNMENT PRESENTATION AND SPEAKING NOTES | 68 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pencils of Promise (PoP) is a nonprofit organization that creates schools, programs, and global communities around the idea that every child should have access to quality education. All of their work is done in collaboration with local governments and education ministries from the countries in which they operate. Currently, PoP supports over 1,500 teachers and has impacted over 100,000 students in Ghana, Guatemala and Laos.

As a way to reinforce the Teacher Support (TS) Program in Laos, PoP is looking to integrate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which has been proven successful in its schools in Ghana, and is starting to be implemented in its schools in Guatemala. PoP believes that in a welcoming, encouraging and safe environment, children are more likely to meet their full potential, and including SEL in the classroom activities can encourage the expression of these positive characteristics.

PoP has requested the assistance of a SIPA Workshop team to develop activities for an SEL program that will be introduced and piloted with Lao teachers at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Following a review of literature and desk research, the SIPA team conducted field research in Luang Prabang, as well as conducted remote interviews, with key stakeholders and informants in order to better understand the Lao culture and education context in terms of SEL implementation. With close collaboration with PoP staff in Laos and the U.S, the team created an Activity Guideline, with SEL activities designed to fit the Lao context, as well as a presentation to explain the benefits of SEL to the Education Ministry in Laos to be presented by the PoP Laos staff. The SIPA team also presents final recommendations to Pencils of Promise in order to move forward with the pilot and implementation of an SEL curriculum for students in Laos.

INTRODUCTION

I. Client Brief

Pencils of Promise (PoP) believes that every child should have access to a quality education. Its holistic approach includes creating safe and healthy school environments, full of well trained and supported teachers, where students can thrive. PoP acts by building schools, implementing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs at the school level, and coaching teachers through a Teacher Support (TS) program, working in conjunction with communities, local governments, and education ministries to ensure the sustainability of its programs.¹

The organization operates with an annual budget of almost \$8 million dollars and has built over 500 schools, supporting over 1,500 teachers and impacting over 100,000 students in Ghana, Guatemala, and Laos.²

Teachers are the key to the success of any education program, and that is why PoP's TS Program is the most relevant program for this workshop project. The teachers in PoP's schools receive training to ensure students stay engaged and receive high-quality education with a literacy-focused model, enhancing the delivery of national curriculums of the countries in which they operate.³

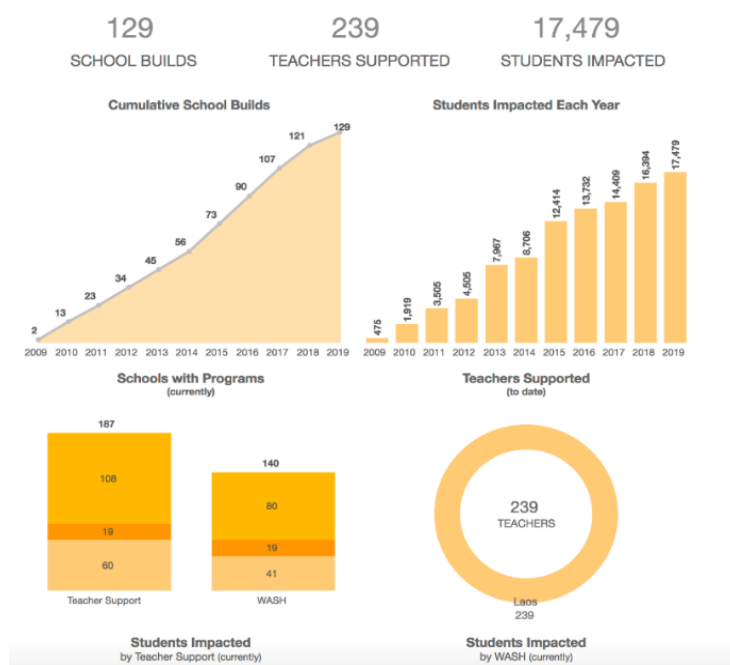


Figure 1. Pencils of Promise Impact in Laos⁴

¹ Pencils of Promise, "Workshop in Development Practice. Preliminary Terms of Reference. Fall 2019 – Spring 2020," October 19, 2019.

² Pencils of Promise, "2018 Annual Report," July 17, 2019, https://issuu.com/pencilsofpromise/docs/annual_report_2018_-_final

³ Pencils of Promise, "Teacher Support," Accessed December 2, 2019, <https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/teacher-support/>

⁴ <https://pencilsofpromise.org/results/>

II. Lao PDR Country Overview

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked socialist nation in Southeast Asia, bordered by Myanmar and China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the southeast and Thailand to the west and southwest. It has a population of 7.06 million people, most of them (65%) living in rural areas.⁵ Its capital city is Vientiane.

This culturally and ethnically diverse nation was a former French protectorate from 1893 to 1953. In 1975, after years of civil wars and the Vietnam war, Lao PDR was officially proclaimed. This is key to understanding both internal and external policies of the country: indeed, since then, it has been a socialist state endorsing communism, and has had only one political party in power, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party.⁶

This party has historically had a hostile posture towards the West, and has long depended on its neighbors China, Vietnam and Thailand for investment and political patronage whilst also trying to counterbalance their power.⁷ In addition, the country is willing to cooperate with international actors across the ideological spectrum in development matters, but has remained strictly opposed and strongly resists any international pressure for democratic reform.

The country is divided into sixteen provinces, as well as the Vientiane municipality and the Xaisomboun special zone. All provinces are further subdivided into districts and villages.⁸ At each level of local government, there are party committees and administrative committees.⁹

Economic Context

Despite important economic reforms in the late 20th and early 21st centuries which strengthened the tourism industry and gradually led to a shrinking of the country's debt, Lao PDR remains one of Asia's poorest nations.¹⁰ Over the last decade it has witnessed a GDP growth of on average 7.7%, and has advanced tremendously on issues such as health, sanitation, poverty and hunger goals. However, there still remains a great potential for economic and social growth, and development of human capital.

According to the new five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) endorsed by the Lao Congress, the government continues to pursue high economic growth in order to officially graduate from the "least-developed country" status by 2020.¹¹ However, most economic growth has concentrated in the national and provincial capitals, and rural poverty remains three times higher than in urban areas.¹²

⁵ The World Bank, "The World Bank in Lao PDR", 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/laos>

⁶ BBC, "Laos profile - timeline," *BBC News*, January 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15355605>

⁷ Mike Ives, "How Laos Tries to balance its powerful Neighbours", *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/07/world/asia/laos-history-politics-human-rights.html>

⁸ Arthur J. Dommene et al., "Laos", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 24, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Laos>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, "Laos Country Report, Transformation Index", *BTI Project*, 2018, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/LAO/>

¹² Ibid.

Ethnicity, Language and Religion

Lao PDR is an extremely ethnically and linguistically diverse country. The Lao-Tai ethno-linguistic family represents 67% of the population, the Mon-Khmer represents 21%, the Hmong-Lu Mien 8% and the Chinese-Tibetan 3%. These categories further subsume a total of 49 official ethnic groups, divided into 149 sub-groups and 80 different languages.¹³ Regional and linguistic differences among various groups contribute to divisions among ethno-linguistic groups, especially as it pertains to living standards:¹⁴ the Lao-Tai mainly reside in urban areas, whereas other groups are found in midland rural areas and northern highland areas.¹⁵

Buddhism was the state religion of the pre-republic kingdom of Laos, and the organization of a community of monks and novices parallels the political hierarchy. Although Buddhism has been adopted as the official state religion, French education has exerted a secularizing influence notably upon the Lao elite.¹⁶

NGO Presence

Between the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and 1986, only three international NGOs were allowed to operate in the country, mainly in the field of humanitarian assistance and development services to restricted geographical areas. After the adoption in 1986 of the New Economic Mechanism, more NGOs gained permission to operate in the country, mostly working in community development and service. In 2014, the government passed rules strictly regulating the activities of international NGOs.¹⁷ In addition, there remains little improvement in the areas of civil society and political participation.

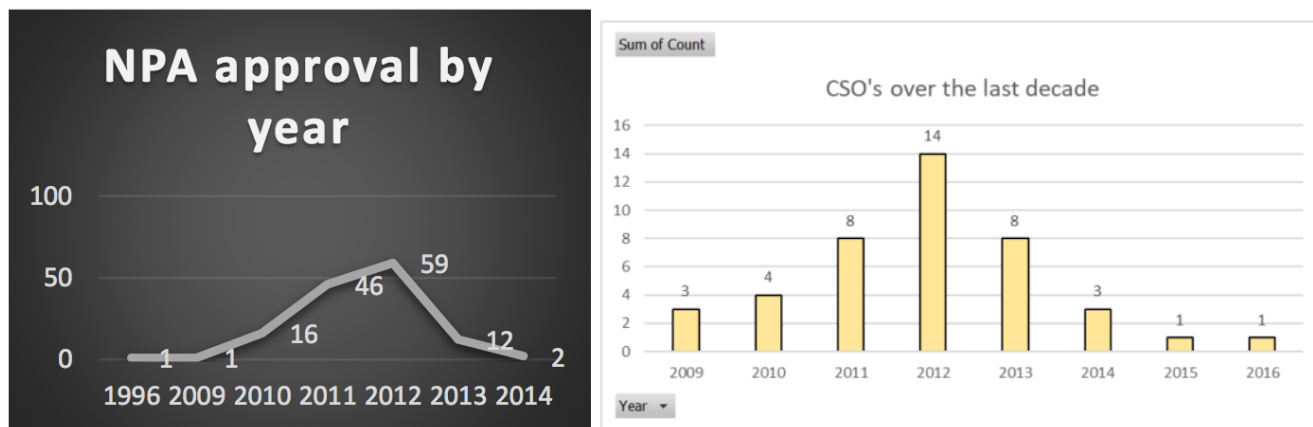


Figure 2. Evolution of Non-Profit Associations (NPA) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Laos over the last decades¹⁸

¹³ Grégoire Schlemmer, "Ethnic Belonging in Laos: a politico-historical perspective", *Changing Lives in Laos: Society, Politics and Culture in a post-socialist state* (2017): 251.

¹⁴ Joel M. Halpern and Marilyn Clark Tinsman, "Education and Nation-Building in Laos", *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Oct., 1966), pp. 499-507

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Asian Development Bank, "Civil Society Briefs: Lao People's Democratic Republic", September 2011.

¹⁸ Lao CSO Report, Cuso, 2015

III. Education System of Laos

In the past, the teaching of Lao culture, reading and writing took place in Buddhist temples and was available only to men.¹⁹ In the early 20th century, the French brought in European style- education which led to the development of elementary schools throughout the country in the following decades. In 1975, upon independence, Laos's new government assumed full responsibility for education-related policies, inaugurating a program to bring primary education to all areas of the country and launching a major adult literacy campaign.²⁰

It is key to understand that for most of the 20th century, the government's concern in education was essentially a political one: their goal was to disseminate knowledge about the party's policies through the Lao curriculum. It is only in recent decades that textbooks were revised and the ideological rhetoric was put aside in favor of more relevant socioeconomic learnings. Today, the national curriculum reflects policymakers' aim to navigate between Western influences and Lao traditions in education policies.²¹

Policies and challenges

Following the country's independence, Laos found itself lacking the training and skills required to develop a proper national educational system, in part due to the colonial neglect of their educational needs. A government report of 1963 acknowledged that 75% of the total population had never attended any kind of formal schooling.²²

In terms of human resource development, educational levels and literacy rates in Laos today are well below The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) averages: according to UNESCO, the gross enrollment ratio for tertiary education is 15%, and the literacy rate is 84.66%.²³ However, the government understands the critical role that primary education plays to achieve its economic growth goal, and since 2015, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has been in the process of revising the national curriculum for primary schools (a 5-year plan).

Since 1996 and the adoption of a new curriculum, the educational system in Laos has struggled with underfunding, inadequate teacher training and insufficient facilities.²⁴ The new methods of teaching that were agreed upon – textbooks for every pupil, teacher guides and teacher training – faced obstacles due to lack of materials and, in some cases, contextual factors such as school education traditions, gender and ethnicity.²⁵ Children who live in poor and large ethnic minority families often live in remote areas and do not

¹⁹ Dommene et al., "Laos."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kongsy Chounlamany, "School education reform in Lao PDR: good intentions and tensions?" *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres*, 2014.

²² Joel M. Halpern and Marilyn Clark Tinsman, "Education and Nation-Building in Laos", *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Oct., 1966), pp. 499-507

²³ UNESCO-UIS, "Lao People's Democratic Republic", Data for the Sustainable Development Goals, 2018, <http://uis.unesco.org/country/LA>

²⁴ Dommene et al., "Laos."

²⁵ Chounlamany, "School education reform in Lao PDR"

have opportunities to continue studying at the secondary level. In addition, gender inequalities remain high between rural and urban residents and among ethnic groups. Many women lack access to education and economic opportunities. In 2013, the MoES decided to prevent private tertiary institutions from granting bachelor's and master's degrees, which could in turn only be granted by one of the five state universities. The rationale was to place the education sector fully under public – rather than private – control.

Indeed, educational governance in Lao PDR is still a top-down process. The education system is organized hierarchically, with the President being the starting point of any policy incentive. At the central level, the education system is administered by the Ministry of Education. Offices of the Provincial Education Service (PES) are responsible for educational development within their jurisdiction, including teachers' supplies, inspection and the coordination of support for schools.²⁶ Although reforms have encouraged an enhanced role for teachers, the traditionally hierarchical organization remains in place, limiting implementation in practice. It should be noted that often, the emphasis on formal frameworks of learning means that there has not been a focus on students' life experiences. As a result, some teachers have started to use new methods of teaching and to engage in more student-centered education.

Current National Education Strategy

The Laos MoES has been in the process of revising the national primary school curriculum since 2015, led by Research Institute for Educational Sciences (RIES) with technical assistance from the Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL) program.²⁷ The new primary school curriculum, set to begin to take effect with Grade 1 in September 2019, consists of nine core subjects: Lao language, Mathematics, Science and Environment, Arts and Handicraft, Music, Physical Education, English, Social Studies, and Moral Education.²⁸

Additionally, the MoES's Education Sector Plan (2016-2020) aims to guide the development of programs to increase equitable access to education. The government's education vision to 2030 states "By 2030 all Lao population equally and equitably have access to quality education in order to become good citizens, disciplined, healthy, knowledgeable, highly-skilled with professionalism in order to sustainably develop the country, to align and be compatible with the region and the world." To achieve this, the Ministry plans to focus on five strategy areas: Improving the quality of education in both formal and non-formal systems; Improving the quality of teacher training; Developing and training the workforce; Improving education administration and management; and Improving and developing sports and physical activity in order to encourage both physical and mental health.²⁹

²⁶ UNESCO-IBE, "Lao People's Democratic Republic", *World Data on Education 7th edition*, June 2011, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/Lao_PDR.pdf

²⁷ BEQUAL, "National Primary Curriculum," Accessed May 01, 2020, <http://www.bequal-laos.org/about-bequal/key-results-areas/national-primary-curriculum/>

²⁸ BEQUAL, "New Primary Curriculum to be Rolled out Starting in September 2019," Accessed May 01, 2020, <http://www.bequal-laos.org/new-primary-curriculum-to-be-rolled-out-starting-in-september-2019/>

²⁹ Laos Ministry of Education and Sports, *Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020)*, December 2015. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2016-lao-pdr-esdp-2016-2020.pdf>

IV. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and Emotional Learning, abbreviated SEL, is understood as the “process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”³⁰ It is based on the assumption that children learn better in a supportive environment, where they can express their feelings and engage with others in a meaningful yet challenging way both inside and outside of the classroom. The five cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies of SEL, as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), are:³¹

1. *Self-awareness*: the ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. For example, it includes accurately assessing both one’s strengths and limitations, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism, and a growth mindset.
2. *Self-management*: the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. It includes effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself and setting and achieving goals.
3. *Social awareness*: the ability to take the perspective and understand and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The goal is to understand social and ethical norms for behavior.
4. *Relationship skills*: the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This entails learning to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively and seek and offer help when needed.
5. *Responsible decision-making*: the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It entails assessing the consequences of actions and the well-being of oneself and others.

The goals of SEL programs are to encourage students to positively reflect on their own emotions as well as those of others, and as a result to improve their attitudes and beliefs both about themselves and about their peers. Ultimately, in the long run, the goal of SEL programs is to provide solid foundations at the individual and collective level for students to become better citizens of the world.

³⁰ CASEL, “Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Preschool and Elementary School Edition,” Casel Guide, 2012.

³¹ Ibid.

V. SEL at Pencils of Promise

The SEL program was first proposed to PoP by Dr. Alyssa Simmons in 2014, and after a Needs Assessment survey, it was first implemented in four PoP schools in Ghana. After the pre-pilot phase was deemed a success, the program went into a pilot phase with twelve more schools in 2016. The program in Ghana was scaled up in the following year, with the introduction of the Skills Enabling Emotional Development (S.E.E.D) training manual for teachers and teacher training colleges, in order to train and enable teachers to apply SEL activities in the classroom and create the possibility for students to engage fully with each other and their educators. The success of the program in Ghana led to the implementation of a pilot in PoP schools in Guatemala in 2019, incorporating SEL activities into the curriculum for eleven schools as of 2020. The SEL curriculums already in place in Ghana and Guatemala are generally grounded by the CASEL Five Competencies, and are mainly comprised of two categories of activities:

1. Morning Meeting and Morning Message: a method to start the day for students to practice greeting, listening, responding and group problem-solving
2. S.E.E.D. (Skills Enabling Emotional Development): a way for students in grades 3-6 to build on social and self-awareness, relationship management, and decision-making skills.

In Fall of 2019, PoP partnered with Columbia University SIPA to design and implement an SEL program that was contextually and culturally appropriate for PoP schools in Laos. With the design of activities and approval from the Lao government and RIES, PoP aims to pilot the inclusion of SEL in the Moral Education curriculum for PoP primary schools in Luang Prabang for the 2020-2021 school year.

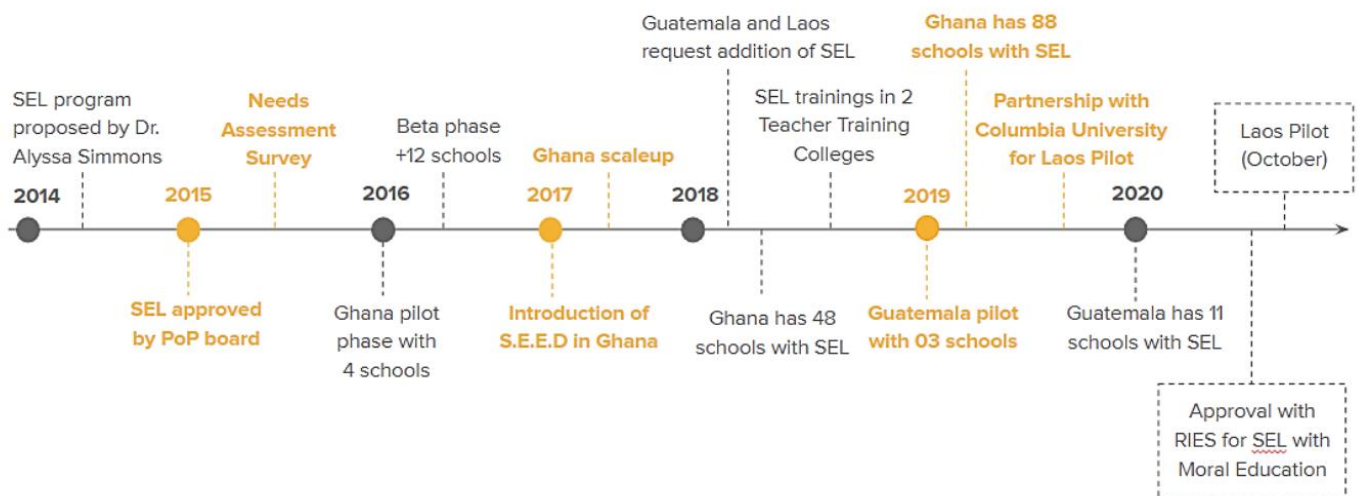


Figure 4. Timeline of SEL activities in Pencils of Promise

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this workshop project was to assist PoP in developing activities and design for an SEL program to be introduced and integrated into the Lao Moral Education curriculum. PoP's aim is to be piloting SEL in Grade 3 classes in their schools in Luang Prabang for the 2020-2021 school year.

In order to fulfill this objective, the team conducted research and interviews in order to gain background about the Lao culture and traditions, understand the Lao Moral Education curriculum, and learn about SEL both in the contexts of overall implementation around the world, as well as specifically PoP's implementation in Ghana and Guatemala. This research informed the design and development of possible SEL activities that can be tested and refined for implementation in a pilot phase.

In order to further support PoP's SEL program implementation in Laos, the team developed a detailed activity guide of the adapted activities, meant to be translated to Lao and be used as step-by-step instructions for teachers. Finally, the team created a presentation slide deck, accompanied by detailed speaking notes, proposing the inclusion of SEL into the Lao curriculum, to be presented by PoP Laos staff to Ministry of Education officials.

The final deliverables of the project were as follows:

1. A SEL Activity Guide appropriate to the Lao context
2. Presentation for the Education Ministry
3. Final Report and Presentation including:
 - a. Review of SEL practices
 - b. Findings on Lao culture and education landscape in relation to SEL
 - c. Final Recommendations of SEL implementation for PoP in Laos

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the project was guided by four phases: (1) Background Research and Preparation, (2) Data Collection, (3) Data Analysis and Activity Selection and (4) Deliverable Preparation. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the project trajectory and modes of data collection due to restriction of travel in March to Laos, as well as school closures in Luang Prabang. The methodologies were adjusted and adapted accordingly, in order to continue through the four phases and achieve the project objectives.

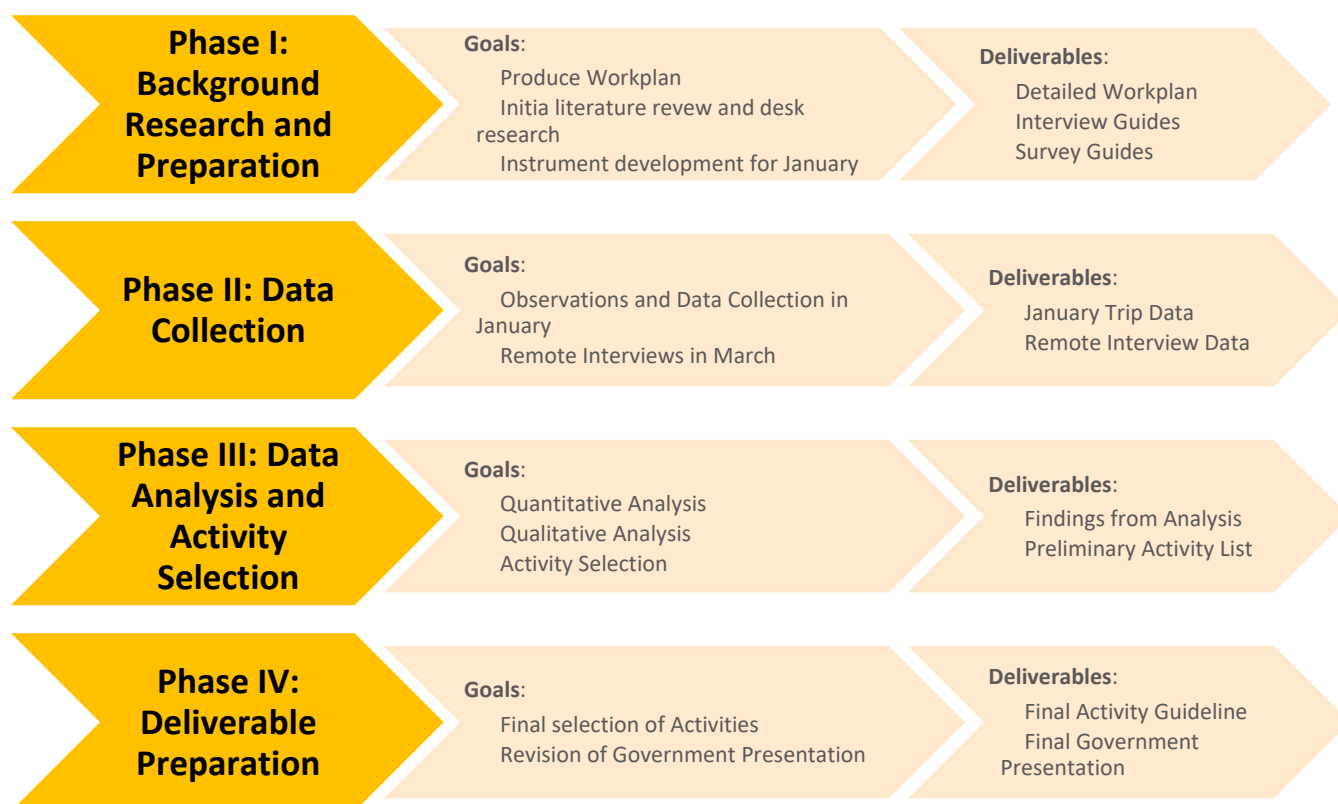


Figure 5. Methodology Phase Overview

Phase I: Background Research and Preparation

Literature Review and Desk Research

The team began by conducting literature reviews and desk research on SEL curricula in the United States and around the world, especially focusing on implementation in East and Southeast Asia. Desk research also included an overview of the S.E.E.D manual from PoP Ghana, as well the materials for the SEL curriculum from the PoP Guatemala pilot.

Additionally, the team conducted research on Laos's cultural and historical background, as well as the Lao national education system, national and local policies, to better inform decisions on what aspects of SEL would be most appropriate to introduce to communities. All of this informed the development of the project, including the development of interview and survey protocols to be used in the January field trip.

Instrument and Tool Development

To prepare for initial data collection in Luang Prabang in January, the team first identified key stakeholders to interview. Once stakeholders were identified, the workshop team and PoP developed data collection tools accordingly (Appendix A), including:

- Interview Guides contextualized for teachers, head teachers and PoP staff,
- Teacher Surveys to be translated and distributed, and
- Classroom Observation Guide

Instruments were shared with the client before the trip to gain feedback from the local staff on what was appropriate or not, and final approval was gained before surveys were translated into Lao.

After the initial data collection in January, which was more exploratory in nature, the team narrowed the scope of questions for the interviews in March to focus on (1) Cultural Context in Laos (2) School Life and Teacher Needs and (3) Experience in working with the Lao Government, all within the context of SEL implementation. When travel restrictions were put into place before the second round of data collection due to COVID-19, the guides were adapted for remote interviews.

Additionally, as it was no longer possible to interview or distribute surveys to more teachers and principals due to local school closures related to COVID-19, the team shifted focus to interviewing current and former PoP staff in Laos and the U.S, as well as expanding the scope of potential informants to include officials from international organizations working in Laos such as UNICEF, UNFPA, and Save the Children, as well as university affiliates with work experience in Laos.

Phase II: Data Collection

Field Data Collection

In January 2020, two members of the team conducted a 9-day field trip to Luang Prabang province. Unfortunately, as this was during midterms exams in all public schools, in-classroom observations were not possible. Nonetheless the team was able to visit seven schools around the Luang Prabang metropolitan area, resulting in nine interviews with school teachers and head teachers, and three interviews with PoP local staff. Teachers in PoP's schools were scheduled to have Teacher Support training after the team had left, at which the Lao staff were able to administer the teacher survey the team had prepared for twenty teachers during the training, sending translated results back in the beginning of February.

It is important to note that the team was accompanied by a member of the local staff that served as a translator for the interviews and interactions on the field, as well as an official member of the Government on all school visits and interviews. The constant presence of a Government official could lead to bias in the data collection from school staff and the team tried to diminish that bias by interviewing PoP staff who were also teachers and knowledgeable of the school environment as well to weigh the responses given by school staff in the presence of the Government official. The team was also aware of the risk of information being “lost in translation”, since the language barrier could impact the data collection as well. It is a risk embedded in our process and taken into consideration when drafting questions and proofing them with the Lao staff before the interviews.

Remote Data Collection

Since the March trip to Laos was cancelled due to COVID-19, the team conducted remote interviews through Skype and Google Meetings with current and former PoP staff in Laos, the U.S and elsewhere, as well as officials and affiliates with work experience in Laos. Lao staff interviews were especially valuable, not only due to their expertise in PoP program implementation and working with the Lao government, but also their experiences going through the Lao education system themselves, as well as perspectives as parents for many who had children attending schools in the area.

In total, the team conducted 38 interviews and 20 teacher surveys, the distributions of which can be seen below:

| Surveys Conducted | | | | Interviews Conducted | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Respondents | January | March | Total | Interviewee | January | March | Total |
| Teachers | 20 | 0 | 20 | PoP Laos Staff | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| | | | | PoP NY Staff | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| | | | | Other PoP Staff | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| | | | | Teachers | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| | | | | Head Teachers | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| | | | | Multilateral Organization | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | NGOs working in Laos | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | | | | SIPA Affiliates | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | Total Interviews: | 19 | 19 | 38 |

Figure 6. Distribution of Interviews and Surveys Conducted

Phase III: Data Analysis and Activity Selection

Data Analysis

As previously detailed, data was collected through 19 in-person interviews, 19 remote interviews, and 20 surveys. Quantitative data, mainly from the teacher surveys, were analyzed using Excel to generate summary data. Qualitative data, mainly through the interviews, were analyzed by first categorizing into three aspects: (1) the interviewees' general impression of Lao culture from living in the country, (2) their experiences observing school life or children's behavior and activities, and (3) their experiences working with the government. The answers from each aspect were then compiled using Word Clouds in order to analyze the words and phrases used most frequently across interviews in order to find common themes and trends.

SEL Activity Selection

As agreed upon with the client, one of the final deliverables of the project included the development of an SEL Activity Guide which would propose SEL activities to be used by teachers in Laos. After the literature and desk review of SEL practices, including common programs in the U.S, the team concluded that the best pool of SEL activities to choose from would be the ones already implemented by PoP in Ghana and Guatemala, especially as they had already been implemented in some form by PoP and in non-US contexts. Additionally, detailed guides of these activities were readily available through the S.E.E.D teacher manual as well as documentation from the Guatemala pilot.

Following initial understanding of Lao contexts and cultures, the team went through each activity from Ghana and Guatemala (99 in total) to determine adaptability to the Lao context. In order to do so, the activities were first grouped by the Five SEL Competencies. Next, team members, in pairs, determined rankings of "High" "Medium" and "Low" probabilities of Lao adaptation for each activity within the skill. The rankings were then shared, discussed, and confirmed by the entire group. The final rankings were then used to narrow a pool of 57 to 20 activities, 4 activities per SEL skill (Appendix B). The activities were then flagged, redesigned and/or refined, with the goal of expanding on and rethinking these activities to ensure they were fit and appropriate to work in a Lao context. For example, an activity involving volcanoes was modified to include windstorms, which are more common in a Lao context and would be more familiar to children.

The 20 refined activities were then shared with Laos staff for feedback. At this stage, the team began weekly calls with the New York and Laos staff in order to continuously get feedback and collaborate to ensure that the activities suggested were suitable to the Lao context, and could easily be implemented by teachers given the resources at their disposal and the social norms in place in the country. From the 20 activities, the Laos staff were asked to determine the 10 that would be best suited for the pilot according to their judgement, 2 from each SEL skill category. The Laos staff preferred 12 activities to develop further into an activity guide to be used by teachers for the pilot.

Phase IV: Deliverable Preparation

SEL Activity Guide

After the Laos staff provided their 12 preferred SEL activities, the team worked to develop a guide, and make it as comprehensible and user friendly for both Pencils of Promise staff and the teachers in Laos who would be using it. After an introduction on the definition and objectives of Social and Emotional Learning programs, each activity is detailed following an identical structure. A script is provided for the teacher, who can follow it to animate the activity without presenting extra labor for classroom planning. The following structure was used to create the Activity Guide:

1. First, the activity is broadly **presented** and the initial **instructions** are provided (if students are to be divided into groups, what will the activity consist of, etc.).
2. The **main activity is described** step by step, with a script for the teacher to follow.
3. A potential **reflection** is outlined that the teacher encourages students to have once the activity is completed. During the reflection phase, the teacher asks students simple questions about their experience in the activity.
4. A **conclusion** to the activity is suggested, with the main takeaways to deliver to the students. During this phase, the teacher uses the information from the reflection and integrates it with the main idea of the activity for the final message.

In addition to the in-detail explanation of each activity, the guide also specified the objectives of the activity, its duration, the resources needed - if any -, and the indicators that are to be used to measure the success of the activity for students.

Government Presentation

In addition to the SEL Activity Guide, the team was tasked with the development of a government presentation to introduce and get approval for the project from the Lao government, and also to present the project and concepts to the extended Pencils of Promise's Lao staff.

The goal of the presentation is to present Social and Emotional Learning in a clear and concise way, to demonstrate the benefits it can have for both students *and* teachers in Laos with data from PoP and other countries, and show how Pencils of Promise has experience in implementing successful SEL programs in the other countries of operation. The outline for the presentation, therefore, was as follows:

1. What is SEL?
2. Why SEL?
3. SEL at Pencils of Promise
4. SEL in Laos
5. Pencils of Promise's Proposal

Social norms

- There is a prioritization of the greater good before individual gain. This can make it difficult to bring about individual qualities. It may be difficult to express an opinion, even more about the government or their employment, and one may not be used to sharing their feelings, especially in public.
- The concept of “saving face” was mentioned as prominent in the Lao culture, which can make communication difficult at times.
- Neighbors are welcoming, and foreigners are often treated like special guests.
- The lifestyle may be slower paced than Westerners are used to, as there is an expectation of a relaxed community that avoids conflict and cares for each other.
- Unfortunately, there are still some prejudices between ethnicities, and some are described as less intelligent or other ill-intentioned stereotypes. The government's top-down approach is focused on promoting Lao and is not very inclusive of other ethnicities.

Gender norms

- Roles in society seem to be very clear, but are not spoken about. Normally, women are expected to cook, clean and do house chores. Men are usually the ones that bring money to the households, but they give it to the women for them to control.
- It is evident that there are differences between rural and urban communities, and that the latter are becoming more open and accepting of different gender expressions, while this may still be behind in rural villages.
- There is a majority of male leaders, especially in villages. However it was also mentioned that PoP is in a unique situation with a woman in charge and leading government interactions.

Symbolism and Traditions

- The majority of our interviewees mentioned the Lao flag, the Lao national flower (dok champa), rice fields, and rice in general, as well as thunderstorms, waterfalls, cliffs and the Mekong river as very powerful symbols in the Lao culture.
- In terms of animals and nature that children could draw, many mentioned elephants, cows, horses, birds, buffalos, farmers, coconut trees and mountains.
- Most of our interviewees mentioned the Baci Ceremony, and explained that this is something everyone who lives in Laos or has been to Laos experiences at some point, and it is a key tradition of the culture.

Children's Games and Activities

- Many interviewees mentioned jumping rope, petanque, marbles, and a game similar to “duck, duck, goose” in the U.S. Some also talked about different textiles per ethnicities, and traditional dances that almost every child knows.

II. Schools in Laos

Nine interviewees painted a picture for us to further understand the challenges faced by teachers in Laos, listed as follows:

- Teachers are generally overloaded but underpaid. As mentioned in the previous section, teachers in Laos teach all the 9 curriculum subjects for at least one grade, sometimes even for two or three grades. Their work starts from 8 am to 4 pm during weekdays, but they also spend an additional one to two hours per day after school hours, to prepare for teaching plans and other work.
- Teachers lack teaching techniques and resources. Teachers only get training from the government when there is an update or change in the curriculum, which is not regular nor often. In the meantime, the training they received is more about the change of content on textbooks rather than the teaching techniques or methods. Teachers are in short of supplies and resources, especially in rural areas.
- Because of the challenges mentioned above, the lack of motivation or initiatives among teachers for the fear of extra workload might turn out to be the biggest barrier for SEL's implementation.

Teachers and School Staff

The teacher survey revealed some interesting details about the day to day life of the teachers, and the challenges they have to face with the lack of resources, interactions with the children and their parents, as well as government interaction:

- There are teachers from different ethnicities, but from our pool, the majority, 45%, were ethnic Lao. Most were also males, and the ages varied from 28 to 34, although most of them had a lot of experience teaching (more than 5 years).
- One teacher normally teaches all of the 9 subjects for a specific grade.
- Most of the teachers in our survey taught more than one grade at the same time. This means that while teachers have an average of 21 students, they can have up to 40 students.
- Teachers work 8 am to 4 pm during weekdays, and spend 4 hours on average preparing classes outside of the school schedule.
- When asked about the bad behavior of children in school, the majority agreed that raising their voice was the most common trait of students when misbehaving, followed by walking around the classroom without informing the teachers. To correct these bad behaviors, most teachers talk to the students or tell their parents.
- There is a medium to high perceived involvement of parents in school activities, but teachers would like to see them more involved. Most teachers avoid having to call parents but they communicate in cases where the child does not come to school, in joint activities in the schools, and when the student has misbehaved.

SEL Potential in Laos

One potentially concerning aspect of SEL as defined by CASEL, especially as a US-based organization, was if there would be any conflicts between the emphasis on the understanding and regulation of one's self as it aligns with the U.S and many Western individualistic attitudes, with more collectivist attitudes which may be more common in East and Southeast Asia, including in Laos. Additionally, the interviews revealed that international influence is usually considered as a threat instead of an asset, that teachers experience a heavy workload and limited capacity, and school staff can be highly unmotivated.

However, a review of current international practices revealed not only existing SEL implementation in countries such as China³², South Korea³³, Vietnam³⁴ and the Philippines³⁵, but also that SEL can in fact align well with teaching of moral and collectivist education. Thus, the team recognized especially to frame the self-management and self-awareness aspects of SEL in relation to role and responsibility of self in group interaction, interpersonal relationships, and teamwork.³⁶

Additionally, a growing body of research, including large meta-analyses and studies, show the benefits of social and emotional learning programs on academic achievement and student outcomes. When CASEL conducted a value-added analysis based on two large-scale reviews (Durlak, et al., 2011 and Taylor et al., 2017), they found that adding an SEL program would likely lead to 27% more students improving their academic performance, 24% more improving social behaviors and lowering levels of distress, and 22% showing fewer conduct problems, among other benefits.

A review of the Lao Government's education policy strategy suggests that these are certainly desired outcomes in their vision and goals, providing a rationale for the inclusion of SEL in primary school curricula. However, teacher needs as revealed in interviews suggests that any potential SEL intervention or addition to the curriculum should emphasize benefits to teachers as a classroom management tool, and enough training would be provided in order for the addition to be an asset instead of a burden.

³² UNICEF. "UNICEF in China and Beyond." UNICEF, April 2019. <https://www.unicef.cn/en/reports/unicef-china-and-beyond>

³³ Sun Kyung Lee and Mimi Bong, "Social and emotional learning as a solution for adolescent problems in Korea," In *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, pp. 233-251. Springer, Singapore, 2017.

³⁴ Summary of UNICEF's 2018 Education Results, 2018

³⁵ Rainer Allen Ronda, "DepEd to integrate social emotional learning in public school curriculum," *Philstar Global*, August 13, 2009, <https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/education-and-home/2009/08/13/495233/deped-integrate-social-emotional-learning-public-school-curriculum>

³⁶ Kai Yu and Zhen Jiang, "Social and emotional learning in China: Theory, research, and practice," In *Social and emotional learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, pp. 205-217. Springer, Singapore, 2017

III. Government Partnership



Figure 9. Word Cloud of interview answers regarding partnership with the Lao Government

When asked about how to promote the partnership with the Lao government for the project implementation, nine of the interviewees shared their experiences and insights with the team. Examining the words in larger sizes, the following observations were highlighted when it comes to proceeding with implementation with the Lao government:

- The Lao government appreciates data-driven and evidence-based analysis and proposals.
- The project needs to be presented and orientated as a match with the pre-existing political framework, goals, agendas, and priorities.
- It is imperative to strengthen the partnership at all levels of the government (including the national level, provincial level and district level), as each level of the authority is responsible for different phases of the implementation.
- Emphasizing the benefit of the project is key; in the case of SEL, improvement of classroom management should be stressed

In addition to what has been mentioned in the analysis, one of our interviewees who has been working by the side of the Lao government for years, provided some suggestions regarding the partnership. Even though these points were not echoed much in other interviews, they added value onto the project and are worthy of some attention. The interviewee's suggestions were:

- Work in full consultation with the government, and bring them on board of the project from the beginning of the programming cycle.
- Respect the government's input to the project, confirm and reaffirm their ownership of the project.

DELIVERABLES

I. SEL Activity Guide

When discussing, redesigning and refining SEL activities for the Lao context, interviews and discussions with the Laos staff revealed several key considerations:

- Sharing feelings might be something challenging for the Lao people, but that is more prominent in adults than children.
- Students might have reservations about sharing their feelings in front of the whole classroom, and it may work better if for these exercises the teacher used a third person that the students could talk about, instead of themselves.
- Children are expected to be happy at school, so they will be probably more open to share positive than negative feelings in this environment.
- Expectations parents have for their children are very focused on respect for other members of their community and helping in the house with chores.
- For an activity related with future careers, some of the most prestigious in Laos include: nurse, doctor, teacher, policeman, government official and lawyers.

Based on these invaluable insights, as well as other findings on Lao culture and norms, as well as common games and activities, the team selected and refined 20 SEL activities, of which 12 were preferred by the Laos team to be developed further into an Activity Guide (Appendix C).

The Activity Guide contains detailed activities ready for teachers to follow, which should also be helpful for teacher training workshops on SEL activities and the classroom implementation. The idea was to hand the teachers all the information they need so they don't have to take extra time for preparing classes. However, the guide is also designed in a way where teachers are encouraged to put their own touch and make the activities their own as they see fit; the guide allows and encourages flexibility and creativity.

The Activity Guide was initially developed to be integrated into the Lao Moral Education Curriculum for Grade 3. However, due to the fact that the moral curriculum for primary school is still under change led by Research Institution of Education and Science (RIES) within the Lao Ministry of Education, the team refrained from limiting the guidelines to exclusive use of certain grades or certain courses. Instead, they could potentially be used in other classes and moments of the day when teachers see fit, to help motivate or control their classroom. However, it is recommended that teachers implement at least one activity of each skill. If the activities are successful in the pilot, the Laos team can use the remainder of the activities in the master list of 20 as a platform for expansion of activities.

II. Government Presentation

From our interviews and discussions in the context of the specific Government Presentation to be prepared, the following insights were gained:

- The government likes data driven analysis and believes in evidence-based proposals.
- Some suggested including a hard copy report with evidence and literature about the concept of SEL and how it would be applied to Laos, to go with the presentation itself.
- Several interviews suggested that it is very important that the government can see this as a strategy that can help them to achieve the mission of the Ministry of Education (“MoE”), and not as a cookie cutter program that was created in Western countries and would be implemented in Laos.
- It would be helpful to explain the program as a tool that will support and complement their own strategies, improve classroom management, especially multi grade classrooms, and make teacher’s workload more manageable.

Following the guidance of the Lao staff that have experience in dealing with the government, the presentation is data driven for it to efficiently present the benefits of SEL for the Lao people and get Government approval. The presentation clearly explains the concepts as well as the evidence backing the benefits of SEL. SEL implementation especially in the Asia region was included to demonstrate the cultural adaptability of SEL, as it is not a Western concept or program but rather a method to increase emotional literacy and student outcomes that has been implemented across several contexts. The presentation also includes the alignment of SEL with the Ministry of Education’s priorities for the country as outlined in their national strategy documentation. Additionally, detailed speaking notes accompanied the presentation slides, to provide additional context and evidence for the Lao staff to refer to when proposing SEL (Appendix D).

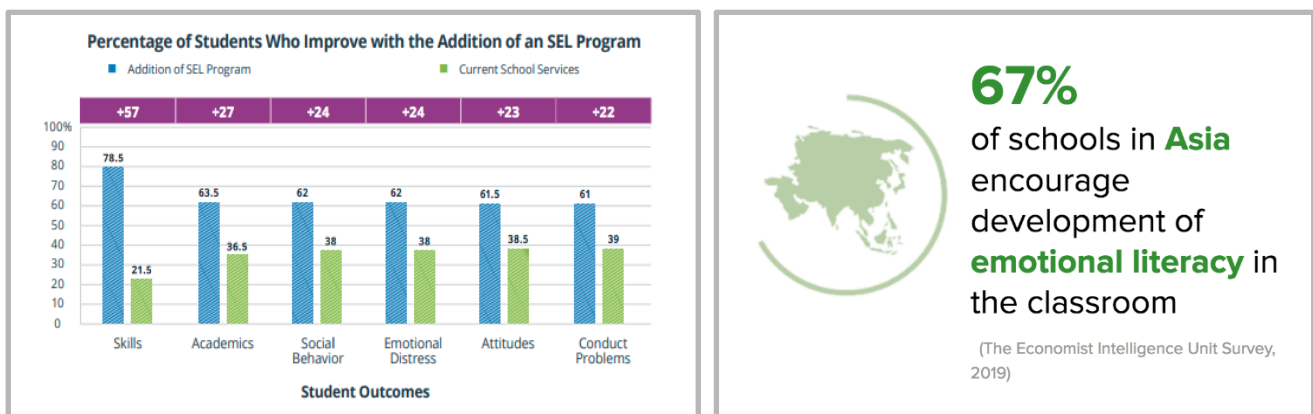


Figure 10. Sample of Slides from Final Government Presentation

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The project recommendations are linked to the main deliverables, the SEL activity guide and the presentation for the Lao government. In this section we will include some final recommendations to apply these tools in a way that PoP can make the most out of them.

I. School Staff and Teacher Buy-in

1. To approach teachers, it is very important to consider they are already overloaded and under-resourced, so the program has to come as a minimum effort and non-time-consuming task.
2. The program must be presented as a tool that can decrease the teachers' work in the medium and long run, that will help the students to engage more in class, prevent and help control conflicts between students, and improve classroom management.
3. By including the program as a part of the Moral Education curriculum, teachers are more likely to not see SEL as a new topic they must learn to teach, but as a section of the Moral Education course. This will give the impression that the program is not an extra load, but instead goes in line with the current Lao curriculum.
4. There are teachers, especially young teachers, that are more excited about implementing newer approaches and trying new tools to improve the classroom environment and educational experience for students. These are the teachers the program can target, so they become champions of SEL and can share their testimony to teachers all over the country.
5. It is important that the government is convinced of the program and gives the order for the schools to implement it, in order to ensure that the activities will take place in the school. Hierarchy and obedience are very salient in the Lao culture, and if top officials are not convinced of the program it will be more challenging to get teacher buy-in.

II. Lao Government Presentation

1. Emphasis should be placed on SEL as something that adds and supports the Ministry of Education plan for the development of education in Laos, and that can bring many benefits to the schools, teachers and students.
2. It should be emphasized that SEL would be adapted to Lao context and curricula, and that international implementations are only examples, not templates, of local adaptations.
3. The presentation focuses on clarifying the concept of SEL rather than proposing a concrete work plan. The thought process behind this is that the government can have a say in the pilot design and the execution of the program. It is important to have the government on board, and there is no better way to do so than by making them an important stakeholder with decision power from the beginning.
4. Keeping the above recommendation in mind, PoP must still assume their position as SEL specialists and have a preliminary framework for the program implementation that can be nurtured by the

government suggestions.

5. It can be beneficial to discuss with the government if the best approach to include the SEL program is throughout the Moral Education curriculum, and if there is a possibility of including some SEL activities during the school schedule in other classes.
6. A video of a teacher interview from Ghana and a video of an activity from the Laos guideline in action may be useful additions to the presentation.
7. A trial run of the presentation within the Laos staff would be useful to change, add or remove anything that can give a more comprehensive understanding of SEL and its benefits.

III. Pre-Pilot

1. With the help of the government, 3 schools should be identified to implement the pre-pilot in Grade 3.
2. Schools that are monolingual and urban schools with easy access should be preferred for the pre-pilot. We want to test the activities in this first stage, and it is better to do so isolating other issues schools might face.
3. For this first stage, we recommend picking schools that have teachers that believe in the proposal and can become champions of SEL.
4. Incorporate feedback from government officials.
5. Have in place a strategy to collect feedback from teachers and students (and parents if possible) to adapt the activities and the program for the next phase.
6. Collect data from the activities, using the indicators developed in the Guide, to understand if the activities are achieving their goals.

IV. Pilot

1. Emphasize the importance of teachers in the process of implementing SEL for children. To promote students' Social and Emotional competence, it is important to have schools where there is an emphasis on fostering a supportive staff environment that, in some ways, also cultivates the social and emotional competence and capacity of the teachers. Successful SEL implementation will depend on how well staff work together to facilitate SEL instruction and foster a positive school community.
2. To have more reliable results from the pilot, with the help of the government, randomly select a set of 10 schools that include both urban and rural schools.
3. Keep working with Grade 3 only.
4. Track challenges that appear in rural areas with non-monolingual students
5. Track the activity indicators and continue to collect data from teachers, students and parents if possible.

V. Expansion

1. This is the phase where the government input will be the most important, because the capacity of the government will establish the expansion possibilities of the program.
2. The idea is to adapt the program, expand the activity guide and start a strategy to include SEL in all of the PoP schools in Luang Prabang, or even better at the national level, as a government adoption is one of PoP's long-term vision goals. To do this, it is important to keep the good and close relationship that PoP has been able to build with the government throughout the years, and make the government excited about the program at every step. Keep frequent communication and present results and testimonies of teachers and students that have already received the program.

VI. "Bonus" Activities

1. Incorporate Morning Meeting and Morning Message in the daily school routine. We believe these activities help create structure and routine for children at the start of every school day, getting children excited about the learning process.
2. Consider the possibility of including SEL in pre-school grades. The class format is easier to adapt and we believe that if children have access to SEL from a younger age they could first benefit more from the program and be more eager to participate in the activities.

CONCLUSION

With the development of the SEL Activity Guide and Government Presentation, our workshop team hopes that we are able to help in providing rationale, evidence, and resources for the incorporation of Social and Emotional Learning in Laos's primary education curriculum. By conducting literature reviews and desk research, field observations and interviews with teachers and school staff, and virtual interviews with key stakeholders and informants, our findings show that there is a need for increased motivation and engagement of both teachers and students in the classroom. While SEL has proven to have positive impacts on student learning and outcomes, as well as be useful as a classroom management tool, our findings also show that teacher and government buy-in will be crucial for the successful introduction of SEL. In order to do so, SEL must be presented as culturally adaptable to ensure the government that it is relevant and beneficial to the Lao context, especially as a possible integration into the existing Moral Education course; government buy-in and ownership must be nurtured; teacher enthusiasm must be encouraged and leveraged to further the development and expansion of activities; and detailed instructions and resources must be provided to teachers so as not to increase their burden. Our workshop team hopes that our findings in this report, as well as contributions to the Activity Guide and Government Presentation will be helpful in pushing the work of Pencils of Promise forward with pilot implementation and approval in order to make instruction of Social and Emotional Learning a reality for students in Laos.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Data Collection Instruments

Key informant: Headteacher, school 1 (*TBD by client*)

Interviewer: 2 SIPA workshop members - 1 interviewer and 1 note-taker

Time: Approximately 45 minutes

Lead interviewer: _____

Note-taker: _____

Translator: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Interview assumptions:

- Headteacher manages other teachers in the school and is the point of contact with PoP staff;
- Given their position, they will be knowledgeable about current curriculum, time each activity currently takes and main objectives;
- Expect headteacher to be aware of changes in the curriculum proposed by the government in partnership with BEQUAL and possible SEL activities;
- Headteacher is a local who can give us insights on cultural aspects inside the classroom;

Interview objectives:

- Learn if teachers are knowledgeable about the SEL curriculum;
- Learn how SEL curriculum could be used to enhance current curriculum;
- Gather knowledge on classroom dynamics and a typical day in the school;

Part 1: Introductions [*3 minutes - ensure the interviewee knows the team and is aware of the project and its main goals*]

Good morning/afternoon. It is very nice to meet you and thank you for welcoming us to your school. My name is [*lead interviewer's name*] and this is [*note taker's name*]. We would first like to apologize because our Lao

is not as good as we'd like, so [*translator's name*] has agreed to act as our translator for the duration of our trip here in Laos.

We are student researchers from Columbia University in New York and we are working with Pencils of Promise to introduce a new curriculum to the school that includes Social and Emotional Learning activities. We are here to explore ways in which we can introduce Social and Emotional activities in the classroom, and understand more about Laos culture and how it shows inside the classroom environment.

As headteacher, you are the expert of everything that happens in this school and your opinion is very important to us. If you agree to it, we would love to hear more about your work at this school and with PoP.

Getting Consent: [*3 minutes - confirm the interviewee understands his or her right to not participate in the interview or opt-out or withdraw any information at any moment in the future*]

1. Before we begin, we would like to confirm that you agree to speak with us today. Your participation is completely voluntary, which means no subsidy will be provided in exchange for your participation, and you are absolutely free to leave should you not wish to take part.

[pause for agreement]

[If the interviewee does not give consent to proceed with the interview, stop the interview and thank participant]

2. In order to accurately capture your ideas, we would like to take notes and record during the time of our discussion. These notes will be used for the sole purpose of our work and will be shared with no third party. Please let us know if you would rather not have us take notes.

[pause for answer]

3. The sole purpose of the information you provide us is to inform our recommendations for the pilot curriculum for PoP and anything you share with us is confidential to the project and in no way will it damage your relationship with the PoP team. The final report will be shared with Pencils of Promise and Columbia University only and we will not use your name unless you give us permission to do so.

4. At any point in the process, please let us know if you feel uncomfortable with the questions or do not wish to answer a specific question or continue with the conversation. We can stop at any moment. Do you understand?

[pause for agreement]

5. Before we begin, do you have any questions for us?

[Pause for questions]

Part 2: Opening questions *[10 minutes - ice breakers and rapport building, get an insight on the interviewee's role in relation to the project]*

Transition: How interesting! [Adapt this to what the person shared to make sure it makes sense] Thank you for sharing this with us. We would now like to get a better grasp of your work in this specific school and how it relates to PoP.

1. How long have you worked in this school?

2. Could you walk us through a typical day at school? *(add timetable)*
 - a. What are your main responsibilities as a headteacher?
 - i. Follow-up, if not mentioning teaching responsibility: do you also teach?

3. Regarding the primary school's operations:
 - a. How many students in the school? The proportion of ethnicity, gender? The range of students' age?
 - b. What are the teaching objectives for each year?
 - c. How do you assess teachers' are meeting these objectives?

Transition: thank you for sharing your life at school with us. We would like to continue with more specific questions based on your experience as a teacher and your daily interactions with students.

Part 3: General questions on school curriculum *[10 minutes - the goal is to get a better idea of what the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum in Laos are, and determine where there is a need for better solutions given the context of the country]*

1. Based on your experience, what are the main challenges to pupils' learning process in school? Can you give an example?

- a. Follow up question: do you believe these challenges could be reasonably addressed through a change in the teaching approach in schools?
 - If yes: which elements of the teaching approach should be changed in priority?
 - If no: how do you believe these challenges could be most efficiently addressed?
2. Do you have any activity in place to engage students with each other and keep them motivated throughout the day?
 - If yes: Provide an example. What made you perceive there was a difference after the new activity was placed?
3. Which skills do you believe students are developing well?
4. Which skills do you believe the students still need more help to improve?
5. What values do you believe are important for the students to learn?
6. How do you think these skills and values will benefit the students in their future?

Transition: Thank you very much for your answers. We know that Pencils of Promise just launched a Social and Emotional Learning project in Laos, which complements the government's launch of a revised curriculum for the whole country. We would like to hear more about these two initiatives from your perspective.

Part 4: Laos' new curriculum and past program implementation[12-15 minutes - Discover what the interviewee thinks about the impact of the new school curriculum and how PoP's project complements this government initiative]

1. Are you aware that the government is piloting a new curriculum for grades 1-6 in the country?
 - [pause]
 - If yes:
 - a. Follow up question: have you observed any concrete impacts brought on by the reform in your school?
 - i. → If yes: Could you describe or give an example of some of them?
 - ii. Would you consider them to have improved the learning process of your pupils?
 - If no: [briefly explain the reform] Since 2015, since 2015 the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is in the process of revising the national curriculum for primary schools (a 5-year plan) with the help of BEQUAL, an international organization supporting education in Laos.

2. Have you participated in projects that have intended to modify the school curriculum in the past? Could you describe what the experience was like?
 - a. Probe for: When did the planning phase start, how much time did the planning phase take,, when did implementation start, how much time did the implementation take.
 - b. Probe for: Which stakeholders were involved in planning phase and implementation phase.
 - c. Probe for: Resources needed
 - d. Probe for: Challenges faced, strategies used.
 3. What would you have done differently if you could implement this project again?
-

Part 5: Exploring SEL curriculum potential challenges *Transition: as you may know, PoP has started a project of Social and Emotional Learning curriculum for schools in Laos based on their current SEL curriculum in Ghana, to be piloted at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. We would love to get your input on this project. [8 minutes: find out what the potential challenges could be to the implementation of PoP's project, gain insight on Lao culture]*

1. According to you, what key aspects should a successful SEL program feature?
 2. What do you think is important for PoP to do to get teachers involved and supporting this project?
 - a. → If yes: How do you see teachers getting involved with the SEL program?
 - b. → If no: How do you think would be the best way to engage teachers
 3. Based on your experience as a head-teacher, how involved would you say parents are in the school-life of their children?
 - a. Follow up question: do you believe pupils' parents would welcome PoP's project positively?
 - i. If not: what potential challenges could parents pose to the piloting of the project?
-

Part 6: Closing Questions *[5 minutes - final questions, remind the interviewee of any follow-ups, reaffirm our non-disclosure principle, and inform about our availability for any other discussion and contact]*

1. Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with us and answer all of our questions. This has been extremely helpful. Before we conclude this discussion, is there anything else you would like to share with us? Or any questions you have for us?

[pause]

To reiterate, the information you have provided us with today will not be shared in any way unless we get previous consent from you. If you have any further question, please feel free to contact our team, [translator's name] has our contact information.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

<end interview>

Key informant: PoP Local staff (*TBD by client*)

Interviewer: 2 SIPA workshop members - 1 interviewer and 1 note-taker

Time: Approximately 45 minutes

Lead interviewer: _____

Note-taker: _____

Translator: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Interview assumptions:

- Local staff is knowledgeable of school dynamics and cultural differences from other country offices;
- Expect local staff to be aware of changes in the curriculum proposed by the government in partnership with BEQUAL and possible SEL activities;

Interview objectives:

- Gather information on what their roles are and their relationship with schools.
- General perceptions about how schools operate in Luang Prabang (values, discipline, structure) and explore past experiences in project implementation.

Part 1: Introductions [*3 minutes - ensure the interviewee knows the team and is aware of the project and its main goals*]

Good morning/afternoon. It is very nice to meet you and thank you for welcoming us to your school. My name is [*lead interviewer's name*] and this is [*note taker's name*]. We would first like to apologize because our Lao is not as good as we'd like, so thank you for agreeing to speak to us in English.

We are student researchers from Columbia University in New York and we are working with Pencils of Promise to introduce a new curriculum to the school that includes Social and Emotional Learning activities. We are here to explore ways in which we can introduce Social and Emotional activities in the classroom, and understand more about Laos culture and how it shows inside the classroom environment.

As _____ (*insert position*), you are the expert of how PoP operates in Laos and your opinion is very important to us. If you agree to it, we would love to hear more about your work at this school and with PoP.

Getting Consent: [*3 minutes - confirm the interviewee understands his or her right to not participate in the interview or opt-out or withdraw any information at any moment in the future*]

1. Before we begin, we would like to confirm that you agree to speak with us today. Your participation is completely voluntary, which means no subsidy will be provided in exchange for your participation, and you are absolutely free to leave should you not wish to take part.

[pause for agreement]

[If the interviewee does not give consent to proceed with the interview, stop the interview and thank participant]

2. In order to accurately capture your ideas, we would like to take notes during the time of our discussion. These notes will be used for the sole purpose of our work and will be shared with no third party. Please let us know if you would rather not have us take notes.

[pause for answer]

3. The sole purpose of the information you provide us is to inform our recommendations for the pilot curriculum for PoP and anything you share with us is confidential to the project and in no way will it damage your relationship with the PoP team. The final report will be shared with Pencils of Promise and Columbia University only and we will not use your name unless you give us permission to do so.
4. At any point in the process, please let us know if you feel uncomfortable with the questions or do not wish to answer a specific question or continue with the conversation. We can stop at any moment. Do you understand?

[pause for agreement]

5. Before we begin, do you have any questions for us?

[Pause for questions]

Part 2: Opening questions [*10 minutes - ice breakers and rapport building, get an insight on the interviewee's role in relation to the project*]

1. Could you begin by telling us a bit more about your professional background up to date? Have you always worked in the nonprofit and education sectors?

Transition: How interesting! [Adapt this to what the person shared to make sure it makes sense] Thank you for sharing this with us. We would now like to get a better grasp of your work in this specific school and how it relates to PoP.

2. How long have you worked with PoP?
3. What are your main responsibilities as a _____ (*insert position*)?
4. Could you walk us through a typical day at work?

Transition: thank you for sharing your life at PoP with us. We would like to continue with more specific questions based on your experience as a staff member and your daily obligations.

Part 3: General questions on school structure and operations [10 minutes - the goal is to understand the relationship between PoP staff and schools they support. Explore schools' resources and identify challenges.]

1. Could you mention one or more schools that in your opinion do a better job of meeting their goals?
 - a. What do they do differently compared to schools that don't stand out?
2. What would you say are the main challenges schools face regularly?
 - a. Probe for: External Factors
 - b. Probe for: Internal Factors
3. What, in your opinion, are the main values the schools transmit to primary school students?
 - a. What activities or strategies do they use to teach these values? Could you mention an example?
4. How do schools apply discipline with primary school students?
 - a. Follow up question: is this common throughout the country or is it specific to PoP's schools?

Part 4: Relationship and work with local schools [10 minutes - the goal is to understand the relationship between PoP staff and schools they support.]

5. Do you work directly with schools that PoP supports?
→ If yes, in what way? What activities require direct coordination with schools?
6. Do you face any challenges working with schools?

→ If yes: What are the main ones?

→ If no: What do you think makes your work with schools be challenge-free?

7. Do schools' schedules and capacity vary between schools?

→ If yes: In what aspects do they vary? (Students per class, subjects per day, # of teachers, class duration, start and end time, teaching objectives?)

Transition: Thank you very much for your answers. We know that Pencils of Promise just launched a Social and Emotional Learning project in Laos, which complements the government's launch of a revised curriculum for the whole country. We would like to hear more about these two initiatives from your perspective.

Part 5: Laos' new curriculum, PoP past projects and SEL Program [20 minutes - Discover what the interviewee thinks about the impact of the new school curriculum and how PoP's project complements this government initiative]

1. Are you aware that the government is piloting a new curriculum for grades 1-6 in the country?

→ If yes:

a. Follow up question: have you observed any changes in schools' activities since this was announced?

i. → If yes: Could you describe or give an example of some of them?

ii. Would you consider them to have improved the learning process of your pupils?

→ If no: [briefly explain the reform] Since 2015, since 2015 the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is in the process of revising the national curriculum for primary schools (a 5-year plan) with the help of BEQUAL, an international organization supporting education in Laos. SEL is a process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Transition: as you know, PoP has started a project of Social and Emotional Learning curriculum for schools in Laos based on their current SEL curriculum in Ghana, to be piloted at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. We would love to get your input on this project.

2. Have you participated in projects PoP has implemented related to the schools' curriculum in the past?

→ If yes: Could you describe what the experience was like? (*Encourage them to tell a story about a specific experience. Let's ask questions for them to be as detailed as possible.*)

- i. *Probe for:* At what point in time were you involved in the project? Since the beginning with the NY staff or with execution locally?
- ii. When did the planning phase start, how much time did the planning phase take, when did implementation start, how much time did the implementation take.
- iii. What other people were involved in the planning phase and implementation phase, outside of PoP Staff?
- iv. What resources were needed for the implementation of the project?
- v. Did you face any challenges with the implementation? What strategies were used to overcome them?
- vi. What would you have done differently if you could implement this project again?

→ If no: Have you participated in other projects PoP has implemented in the schools? Could you describe what the experience was like?

- vii. *Probe for:* At what point in time were you involved in the project? Since the beginning with the NY staff or with execution locally?
- viii. When did the planning phase start, how much time did the planning phase take, when did implementation start, how much time did the implementation take.
- ix. What other people were involved in the planning phase and implementation phase, outside of PoP Staff?
- x. What resources were needed for the implementation of the project?
- xi. Did you face any challenges with the implementation? What strategies were used to overcome them?
- xii. What would you have done differently if you could implement this project again?

3. Could you share what you know about the new SEL curriculum?

- a. Probe for: Objectives
- b. Probe for: Main characteristics
- c. Probe for: Goals

4. What do you believe are the key aspects of a successful SEL program?

- a. Follow up question: Do you foresee teachers being involved and supporting this project?

→ If yes: How do you see teachers getting involved with the SEL program?

→ If no: How do you think would be the best way to engage the teachers?

Part 6: Closing Questions [*3 minutes - final questions, remind the interviewee of any follow-ups, reaffirm our non-disclosure principle, and inform about our availability for any other discussion and contact*]

1. Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with us and answer all of our questions. This has been extremely helpful. Before we conclude this discussion, is there anything else you would like to share with us? Or any questions you have for us?

[*pause*]

To reiterate, the information you have provided us with today will not be shared in any way unless we get previous consent from you. If you have any further question, please feel free to contact our team, [*translator's name*] has our contact information.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

<end interview>

Appendix B. SEL Activity Master List

| Skill | Activity Name | Objectives | Methodology | Duration | Resources/Materials |
|-----------------|-------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | What am I trying to accomplish? What are the main ideas of this activity? | Separate steps by paragraphs. Name of step bolded or underlined. Described in detail activity. | How much should the activity last approximately? | Detailed list of materials |
| Self-management | The Volcano | The students learn to control their temperament They learn to promote a reflection on the things that make them angry and which methods they can use to calm down . | Presentation: The students sit in a semi-circle facing the board and the teacher draws, using chalk, a volcano with flowers and a river on the bottom of and the eruption on top. While the teacher draws the volcano, they explain that the bottom part is a place of peace and calmness, and the top part is a place of anger. Main activity: The teacher asks the students to think of things that make them angry/sad. Then the teacher hands the first student of the semi-circle and object that should go around with a "hot potato" dynamic. When the music stops, the student holding the object shares what makes them feel angry/sad. Each time a student shares, the teachers add to the drawing with fire or smoke coming out of the volcano. Exploration/Reflection: After all the students have shared, the teacher asks what they can do to make them happy again. The emphasis is on the methods they can use to not let themselves get carried away by their emotions and bring themselves back to a state of peace. Conclusion: The students should be able to identify methods why those things make them feel what they feel and how to calm down when they need to. | 15min | Inside activity Black board Chalk |
| Self-management | Worry box | Learners will become familiar with the concept of placing limits on anxiety and fear . | Presentation: Teachers start by talking about how worry can sometimes take over our feelings and prevent us from thinking about other things that are going on in our days. They divide the students into pairs and ask each pair to design a worry box. The students can either draw the box in a notebook or describe how they would picture it. Teachers encourage students to decorate and customize the box as they want. Main activity: Once each pair has designed their worry box, the teacher asks them to "open" the box, name their worries and "put them into the box." When the teacher says "go", students close their eyes, think about something that worries them, and place their worry in the worry box. The teacher then says "done" and students take their imaginary worry box and close the lid, so as to "trap their worries" inside the box. Exploration/Reflection: After every student has expressed their worries and put them in the box, the teacher explains that all worries are now trapped inside the box, and aren't allowed to come out to bother them unless they actively open the box in their mind. Conclusion: The teacher shows students that by using the worry box, they can manage the things that make them scared. The worry box follows them wherever they go, and they can use it whenever they need to. That way, it is them <u>who decide when to deal with a worry, and they can manage and control their fears.</u> | 5 minutes for the explanations 20 minutes for the activity | Inside activity Optional: Paper, color pen, decorations for the box |
| Self-management | Fill in the blank | Students learn to identify their emotions . They learn to come up with strategies to best navigate these emotions . | Presentation: In the classroom, the teacher starts by explaining that students are going to work on expressing what they are feeling. He writes down three incomplete sentences on the chalkboard: "When I", "I am feeling", "I need to" and tells the students that they will have to fill in the blanks. Main activity: the teacher goes on to fill in the first sentence with an action - for example the verb to "cry". He then asks students to express what feeling come into their heads when they think of someone crying, to complete the second expression. The last step is to consider what action students think they should take in the face of someone crying. Exploration/Reflection: Once the activity is over, the teacher helps student to reflect on what each emotion means for them, and how to tackle them when they show up in their lives - either when they are experiencing the emotion, or when someone they know is experiencing it. Conclusion: the teacher uses all of the students responses to show how each and everyone can experience an emotion differently, and to stress how important it is to identify an emotion to answer in the best way possible. | 60min | 1 Projector 1 blank sheet of paper per participant 1 Set of colored pens per participant |

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| Self-management | Simon says | <p>The goal is to help students manage their behavior in order to remember information.</p> <p>Help students ignore distractions to focus on a specific task.</p> | <p>Presentation: Before the game starts, the teacher explains to students how our brains tell our bodies when and how to move. They explain that the goal of this game is to help students listen carefully before they respond. All students stand up and face the teacher. The teacher tells the students that they only have to do what says if he begins by the phrase "Simon says".</p> <p>Main activity: The teacher begins the game by saying something like "Simon Says touch your head and knees", or "simon says act like a monkey, stand on one foot, hug yourself,...." To create variations, the teacher can also trick students and say "Simon says, <i>do not</i> touch your head" for example. If students say something that does not correspond to what "Simon says" they are out of the game.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: After the game, teachers ask students what they did to keep themselves from moving during the game, what it felt like when they were trying not to move.</p> <p>Conclusion: The teacher explains that this activity shows the importance to "stop and think" before acting. They explain that what was learned during this activity can be used outside of the game, by creating ways to "stop and think" throughout the day - but taking a deep breath for example.</p> | 20 minutes | Inside activity |
| Relationship Skills | Compliment Circle | <p>Develop empathy for others</p> <p>Help students understand the importance of praise and how to give and receive compliments</p> | <p>Presentation: Divide the class in small groups (5 students). The class is formed by a diverse group, each has their own qualities.</p> <p>Main activity: The teacher distributes paper hearts (or flowers) to each student and asks them to think of a compliment to say about the student on their right. They should say the compliment to their friend and give them the paper heart (flower?) - teacher first models the activity. When they hear the compliment they should say thank you. Option: after the activity in circles is finished students can get up and give compliments to other students outside of their original circle.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: Teacher asks students to form files, facing each other, with the same number of students in the circle (5). Teacher asks questions for students to share with the friend in from of them "how did you feel when you said nice things to your friend?" or "How did you feel when you listened to the compliments?"</p> <p>Conclusion: Students learn the importance of praise and develop empathy for others</p> | 10min | <p>Inside/Outside activity</p> <p>Blank sheets of paper Scissors to cut the shape</p> |
| Relationship Skills | Team Drawing | <p>Make students recognize the importance of team work</p> <p>Promote self-reflection among participants for them to realize the importance of collective work to achieve big goals</p> | <p>Presentation: The teacher explains that the class is going to draw a landscape together, but each group is going to draw a piece like a puzzle. The teacher divides the class into small groups (5-6) and each group receives a paper.</p> <p>Main activity: The students bring the papers together and see that it makes an even bigger sheet. They have to decide what they want to draw, it can be anything! Once they have agreeded on the drawinfg, each group is responsible for their sheet of paper,. At the end, the students should have one big drawing formed by small pieces made by each group.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: The teacher asks each group to present their drawing and asks about the challenges in making the drawing and how they collaborated to get the task done Then teacher reflects about the importance of team work to complete the task</p> <p>Conclusion: Students learn how to work as a team and the importance of it to achieve bigger goals</p> | <p>5 min for explanation</p> <p>15min for drawing</p> <p>5min for reflection</p> | <p>Inside activity</p> <p>5-6 (depending on # of groups) sheets of blank paper Colored Pencils/Crayons</p> |

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| Relationship Skills | Turning! | <p>Students recognize the importance of team work</p> <p>Promote self-reflection among participants about the importance of team work and listening and following attentively for directions</p> | <p>Presentation: Outside on the patio or on the grass, the teacher divides the class in 2 teams and one student from each time have to close their eyes, while the others guide them around objects on the floor, only with words.</p> <p>Main activity: The teacher spreads around several objects on the floor. When the 2 teams have chosen one person each to be with their eyes closed the game starts. Each team has to guide their friend with the eyes closed around the objects, making sure the student does not hit any of them. The students can take turns to be the person being guided.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: Teacher poses open questions for student to reflect on what were the challenges of guiding someone or being guided through the field of objects. The students reflect on the importance of attentive listening and following instructions and also on the importance of team work to conclude the task</p> <p>Conclusion: Through a game the students learn the importance of team work and also listening and following instructions</p> | 20-30min | <p>Outside activity</p> <p>Several objects of different shapes and sizes to be put on the floor</p> |
| Relationship Skills | Silent messaging | <p>Students will observe the ways in which different parts of the body are used in the communication process.</p> | <p>Presentation: The teacher divides the classroom into groups of five students. Every group of five students should have one person who is going to record what the group decides in a notebook. All groups sit on the floor, and choose that one person who has a notebook and a pencil.</p> <p>Main activity: once the students are divided in groups, they are asked to draw an animal. The teacher explains that students have to find ways to describe the animal and agree on how to draw it without speaking or writing anything down. Once they agree on the animal to draw, the person with the notebook and the pencil will make the drawing, and then will come back to the group.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: after each group is done drawing their animal, the teacher leads a discussion around the following questions: - was it easy or hard to agree on what to draw? why? how long did it take to agree? what were the expressions used that worked well? how did you know what your classmates were "saying" without using their voices?</p> <p>Conclusion: the teacher explains that every face-to-face communication involves both spoken and silent messages. He stresses that problems can arise when a person's spoken and silent messages do not match, and that it is important to also pay attention to non-verbal modes of communication.</p> | <p>10 minutes to decide on the animal and draw it</p> <p>15 minutes of discussion</p> | <p>Inside activity</p> <p>Requires notebooks and pencils</p> |

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| Social Awareness | Draw me your mind | <p>Present a conceptual drawing activity for students to recognize different perspectives.</p> | <p>Presentation: The teacher starts by introducing the activity to students, describes the instructions, and explains the goal of it.</p> <p>"I will provide all of you a sheet of paper and a set of colored pencils. Once everyone gets the materials, I will name an object, plant, animal, or a place. While I mention this object, plant, animal, or place, I would like for each of you to close your eyes and imagine it. After, I will ask you to open them and draw what you imagined. There are no right or wrong drawings, no good or bad drawings, just draw as best as you can what you imagined. I will give you 20 minutes for this. After we are all finished, I will ask you to compare your drawings to other student's drawings. Finally, we will regroup and answer a few questions I will ask you. Did everyone understand what we are going to do? What am I going to do first? What are you going to do? And what are going to do after?"</p> <p>After one or several students explain the activity again, the teacher recalls the instructions that weren't mentioned by the students to make sure everyone understands the activity. (Duration: 5-7 minutes)</p> <p>Main activity: Phase 1: Students are provided a sheet of paper and a set colored pencils. The teacher asks students to close their eyes. The teacher mentions an object, plant, animal, or place, and asks the students to draw what they imagined as best as they can.</p> <p>Phase 2: After all students are finished or time runs out, the teacher asks students to get up and look at the others student's drawings. "Think about what is different between those drawings and yours?" (Duration: 7-10 minutes)</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: After all students have gone around the room looking at different drawings, everyone sits down in their original seats. The teacher asks students to answer some reflection questions about the differences in the drawings they noticed, why they think the drawings are different, etc</p> <p>The teacher can ask for volunteers or point to specific students to answer. Ask at least 3 students the same question, before moving to the next. (Duration: 7 -10 minutes)</p> <p>Conclusion: After questions are answered, the teacher summarizes the students answers. The teacher tries to mention as many details he/she remembers from what the students mentioned during their answers. The teacher ends by pointing out that despite everyone drawing something different, they all referred to the same thing he/she mentioned at the beginning.</p> <p>Finally, the teacher finishes with a concluding message "Even if we all share the same things, everyone has a different perspective about them". (Duration: 3-5 minutes)</p> | <p><i>Presentation:</i> 5 - 7 minutes</p> <p><i>Main Activity - Phase 1:</i> 7 - 10 minutes</p> <p><i>Main Activity - Phase 2:</i> 7 - 10 minutes</p> <p><i>Exploration/Reflection:</i> 7 - 10 minutes</p> <p><i>Conclusion:</i> 3 - 5 minutes</p> <p>Total duration: 31 minutes minimum - 42 minutes maximum</p> <p>* These are estimated times, for reference, if you take more or less time it is ok</p> | <p>One set of colored pencils per student</p> <p>One sheet of paper per student</p> |
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| Social Awareness | Respect for all | <p>Pose questions that make students identify other people's needs</p> <p>Promote thinking about other's needs to make students recognize everyone deserves equal respect</p> | <p>Presentation: "All of the students will form a circle, I will give 4 students an object and when I say "now" you will start to pass the objects around, while singing (choose a short song every student is familiar with like: xxxxxxxx*), when the song ends whomever is left with an object will answer one question. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer the best way you can. After we finish listening to your friends answers we will sit down and talk about the activity. Are there any questions? Are the instructions clear? Can anyone tell me what we are going to do?" *choose a song that is familiar to all children and that does not last about 1 minute.</p> <p>Main activity: <i>Phase 1:</i> Organize students in a circle and hand 4 of the children an object, the students that receive the object should be separated from each other. The teacher tell the students to pass around objects between themselves, while singing the children's song. When the song is over the teacher signals students to stop. <i>Phase 2:</i> Each student that is left with an object have to answer a question while the other students listen. The teacher asks the following questions about identifying and helping others in need, like what would they do to help an elder, someone that is sick, help around the house, etc</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: The teacher instructs the students to sit down in the shape of a circle and then asks them to reflect about why they chose to help these people the way they did by asking a few questions. For example: "What did you think about your friend's answers? What do you think are a hurt's child needs? What do you think they feel in that situation?" "What do you think are a sick person/elder/parents's needs? what do you think they feel in that situation?"</p> <p>Conclusion: Teacher summarizes answers from students and finishes with a concluding message: "People have different needs, and may feel differently than you, but they all deserve the same respect".</p> | <p><i>Presentation:</i> 5 - 7 minutes</p> <p><i>Main activity - Phase 1:</i> 3 - 5 minutes</p> <p><i>Main Activity - Phase 2:</i> 8 - 10 minutes</p> <p><i>Reflection:</i> 8 - 10 minutes</p> <p><i>Conclusion:</i> 3 - 5 minutes</p> <p>Total activity time: 27 minutes minimum - 37 minutes maximum</p> <p>* These are estimated times, for reference, if you take more or less time it is ok</p> | Four objects (one for each question) to pass around |
| Social Awareness | Favorite characters | <p>Present questions for students to identify other people's perceptions and goals.</p> <p>Dramatize role for students to develop empathy.</p> | <p>Presentation: Teacher explains instructions of activity to students and how they will be chosen to answer questions.</p> <p>Main activity: Students form a circle. Teacher gives commands (Examples: jump,duck, laugh,cry) to students who have to respond by doing the opposite to what the teacher asks. The ones that make mistakes have to answer the teacher's questions: - What person do you admire the most and why? - Who would you like to be when you grow up? - What work would you like to have when you grow up? The student that is sat opposite to the student that answered in the circle is asked to act as the role the first student wants to work as.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: Teacher asks students why they think their friends chose different characters?</p> <p>Conclusion: Teacher summarizes answers from students and finishes with a concluding message: "Everyone has different goals and dreams, and can accomplish them through different paths".</p> | | A space in the classroom to organize the circle of students |

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| Social Awareness | Activities in my community | <p>Introduce group activity that helps students recognize different traditions in their communities.</p> <p>Engage students through play and questions for them to acknowledge the activities that their communities value.</p> | <p>Presentation: Teacher presents the activity he will use to select two students at a time, who will have to answer a question:</p> <p>Main activity: The teacher gives out two paper balls to two students, and starts to sing a popular Laotian children song, the children must pass around the paper balls until the song is over, when the song ends the two children that are left with the paper balls have to answer the following question: - What is one of your favorite community activities and why? (Encourage children not to repeat those that have been mentioned already)</p> <p>Repeat the activity until at least 10 of the children have answered the question. At the end teacher asks students to draw the activity they liked the most.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: - Teacher asks students to share their drawings and say why they chose that activity? - Ask students if they knew about that activity or not, before the game? - Mention any activity you haven't heard before</p> <p>Conclusion: Teacher summarizes answers from students and recognizes the diversity in them. Finishes with a concluding message: "Each community has a diverse and rich culture. We should be proud of it".</p> | | Two Paper balls |
| Decision Making | Goals for Me and You | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reach an agreement to select a goal 2. Promote self-control to hold onto the goal | <p>Presentation: Teacher will pair students in the morning and instruct them to decide on 1 goal for the day: can be school/work related or behavior related (example: letting others wash their hands before them).</p> <p>Main Activity: Students in pairs will decide on and write down their goal for the day. Students will monitor themselves and each other throughout the day to see if they are achieving their goal.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: At the end of the day, teacher will instruct the pairs to meet back up again to discuss whether they were able to reach their goals for the day, and what challenges/scenarios they faced, and what they can do better next time to achieve their specific goal. The teacher will then lead a group (whole classroom) discussion on broader concepts of why it is important to set a goal and/or to have self control, as well as general themes of challenges students faced throughout the day and successful strategies to overcome those challenges.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will gain better understanding on the processes and importance of goal-setting, as well as self-control and decision-making in order to reach those goals</p> | <p>Set goals: 10 Minutes</p> <p>Group reflection: 10 Minutes</p> <p>Closing/Reflection: 20-30 Minutes</p> | Inside Activity Pens, paper |
| Decision Making | Little Plane | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize the different options when making decisions | <p>Presentation: In an outdoor space, there will be a plane/grid drawn on the ground of 10 squares large enough to "step inside", and each square will have a different direction drawn (forward, backward, left, right). One end of the grid will be the starting point, and the other the end point.</p> <p>Main Activity: Students will be instructed to line up at the starting point, and one by one, must jump from one square to another based on the direction, with the goal of reaching the endpoint.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: After the end of the activity, teacher will lead a group (whole classroom) discussion about the different paths the students took to reach the end goal, as well as what factors influenced the students' decisions and actions to reach the end point.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will be able to recognize that there are different options when making decisions, and the importance of making decisions based on doing the right thing and moving forward</p> | <p>Game: 35 Minutes</p> <p>Closing/Reflection: 15 Minutes</p> | Outside Activity Object to mark sand/courtyard (stick; chalk) |

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| Decision Making | Color stations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the scenario described by the question Differentiate the implications of different decisions in each contexts | <p>Presentaion: In an outdoor space, 3 large circles are drawn, and placing colored flags or paper in the circles to represent the response options of (1) Yes (2) No (3) (Sometimes). Students will stand to the side of the circles, and will step into the circled depending on their response to the activity presented by the teacher.</p> <p>Main Activity: The teacher will read out different activities relevant to the students' lives (ex: Playing football, doing homework, helping with housework, playing hide and seek, etc.) The students run to the circle that best represents their typical decision in response to the activity.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: After the activity is over, the students will sit in a circle and the teacher will lead a discussion on: why it is important to make responsible decisions, what should we do after making the decision; who will help us to make the decision, do we make the same decisions.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will be able to reflect on their own decision making as it relates to their daily lives, and will be able to recognize strategies for good decision-making skills for the future</p> | <p>Game: 25 Minutes</p> <p>Closing/Reflection: 25 Minutes</p> | <p>Outside Activity</p> <p>3 Different Colored Flags/Paper Marker/Pen to label Flags/Paper Object to mark sand/courtyard (stick; chalk)</p> |
| Decision Making | The Boat is Sinking | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify one or more solutions to one problem Practice group decision-making and participation | <p>Presentation: In an open space, newspaper (or other paper) will be spread out in an area (wide enough for ~6 students to be able to stand on). The teacher will present this area of newspaper as a boat. The teacher will have a story to read out out loud (written on a card/paper) and will explain to the students that any time the story mentions a certain number of students on the boat, that number of students have to be on the newspaper area.</p> <p>Main Activity: Example:"We are all travelling in a boat and one part of the boat breaks; to avoid hurting ourselved, we have to group ourselves in 4 on the boat" - meaning 4 students need to be on the newspaper area. Students must jump in/out depending on the instruction, and deciding upon themselves the solutions. Eventually, the story will require a number of students too large for the newspaper area, so the students must solve this problem among themselves.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: After the activity, the teacher will lead a group discussion on the success and challenges of making a decision in a group. Discuss dynamics such as who participated alot, was there chaos or a lot of people talking at once, was it easy or hard to come to a consensus, etc.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will learn productive,effective, and respectful ways of making decisions and participating within a group of their peers</p> | <p>Game: 20 Minutes</p> <p>Closing/Reflection: 15-20 Minutes</p> | <p>Inside or Outside Activity</p> <p>Newspaper/Scrap Paper/Fabric (to cover large area and to step on)</p> <p>Pre-written Story for Activity</p> |
| Self-Awareness | I am... | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize one's own values Practice attentive listening of others | <p>Presentation: In the classroom, students sit in a circle as teacher presents in the front. Teacher goes through a brief description of values and then students have to think of values that represent themselves (I am kind/responsible/punctual).</p> <p>Main Activity: Students toss a ball (or other subject) around the circle and the student who gets the ball says their value ("My name is ____ and I am ____"). Then the next student who catches the ball must repeat what the previous student said ("She/he is ____ and she/he is ____") before saying their own value, and the process continues until all students have taken a turn.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: After the activity is over, the teacher leads a discussion on the importance of recognizing beneficial traits and values as well as aligning those values and goals to oneself.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will be able to recognize positive values they possess themselves as well as values of others</p> | <p>Entire Activity: 20-30 Minutes</p> | <p>Inside Activity</p> <p>1 Paper, Pen, Ball, or other tossable item</p> |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Self-Awareness | Coin Toss | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify emotions associated with different contexts 2. Practice choosing positive coping methods for negative situations/feelings | <p>Presentation: In the classroom, begin with a group discussion on feelings associated with Fear in a certain situation such as the first day of school alone, and feelings associated with Love/Compassion/Caring. Teacher will write these emotions on the board (Fear on one side; Love on the other). Discuss the reasons for feeling fear, how it is helpful, how it is harmful, etc.</p> <p>Main Activity: The teacher will divide students in pairs. One student will role-play as a younger sibling, and the other an older sibling. The younger sibling will express feelings of fear about attending school alone for the first time, and the older sibling will respond by "flipping" those feelings of fear into reassurances coming from a loving/caring perspective. For example: if younger sibling says they are scared of the walk to school, the older sibling can reassure that they will feel proud once they get to school</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: The teacher's discussion can include strategies of turning negative thoughts into positive, as well as the reflecting on the importance of understanding and recognizing ones own emotions even if they are negative/from fear.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will be able to recognize that they also have the option to choose "fear" or "love"/compassion</p> | <p>Group Discussion: 30 minutes</p> <p>Pairs Discussion: 20 minutes</p> | <p>Inside Activity Chalk Chalk Board</p> |
| Self-Awareness | Worry Weeds & Sunny Flowers | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify negative and positive thoughts 2. Develop strategies to change negative thoughts to positive ones | <p>Presentation: In the classroom, teachers will define terms for students for the activity. For example, "sunny petals" are positive thoughts, "weed pullers" are ways to combat negative thinking, etc. Then, teacher will pass out blank paper to students</p> <p>Activity: Students draw a "mind garden" by describing their positive thoughts and drawing flowers, negative thoughts as weeds, and weed pullers or other objects (watering cans, etc) are coping strategies.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: The teacher can lead a group discussion on examples of positive and negative thoughts the students drew, as well as common strategies to turn to change negative and positive thoughts.</p> <p>Conclusion: Students will be able to recognize and define their emotions and gain skills to cope with negative emotions</p> | <p>Entire Activity: 50 minutes</p> | <p>Inside Activity Blank Papers (1 per student) Pencil/Pens per student If Available: Sets of Colored Pencils or Crayons</p> |
| Self-Awareness | My Portrait | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote self-identifying and self-reflection 2. Practice aligning goals with themselves | <p>Presentation: On the board, teacher demonstrates the activity drawing a portrait/face (could be the teacher or a fictional character), and then brainstorm different goals of the person of the portrait.</p> <p>Activity: Students individually draw a "self portrait" of themselves, and write down their own goals surrounding their portrait. After drawing the portrait, students are assigned into groups where each student presents their portrait.</p> <p>Exploration/Reflection: The students and teacher can discuss individual as well as class goals, and discuss why they chose those goals</p> <p>Conclusions: Students will be able to recognize and strive for goals that they decide for themselves.</p> | <p>Entire Activity: 50 mins</p> | <p>Inside Activity Blank Paper and Pen/Pencil per student</p> |

SEL ACTIVITY GUIDE – LAOS

 COLUMBIA | SIPA
School of International and Public Affairs

 **PENCILS
PROMISE**

Core SEL Competencies:



Social Awareness¹:

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others

¹ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020. <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

ACTIVITY 1: DRAW ME YOUR MIND

1. **Presentation** (5-7 min):

The teacher starts by introducing the activity to students, describes the instructions, and explains the goal of it.

"I will provide all of you a sheet of paper and a set of colored pencils. Once everyone gets the materials, I will name an object, plant, animal, or a place. While I mention this object, plant, animal, or place, I would like for each of you to close your eyes and imagine it. After, I will ask you to open them and draw what you imagined. There are no right or wrong drawings, no good or bad drawings, just draw as best as you can what you imagined. I will give you 20 minutes for this. After we are all finished, I will ask you to compare your drawings to other student's drawings. Finally, we will regroup and answer a few questions I will ask you. Did everyone understand what we are going to do? What am I going to do first? What are you going to do? And what are going to do after?"

After one or several students explain the activity again, the teacher recalls the instructions that weren't mentioned by the students to make sure everyone understands the activity.

2. **Main activity** (14-20 min):

Phase 1 (7-10 min): Students are provided a sheet of paper and a set colored pencil. The teacher asks students to close their eyes. The teacher mentions an object, plant, animal, or place, and asks the students to draw what they imagined as best as they can. Examples of things that the teacher can mention are: Lao national flower, River, Mountain, Family, Town, Elephant, Buffalo, Chicken, Rice field, etc. (These are only examples; the teacher can come up with different things to mention. The activity works best if the teachers mentions a thing that students are familiar with).

Phase 2 (7-10 min): After all students are finished or time runs out, the teacher asks students to get up and look at the others student's drawings.

"Now, we are all going to stand up and calmly walk around the room to look at others drawings. You are not allowed to draw on other people's drawings, just look at them. While you do that I want you to think about, what is different between those drawings and yours?"

3. **Exploration/Reflection** (7-10 min):

After all students have gone around the room looking at different drawings, everyone sits down in their original seats. The teacher asks students to answer the following questions:

"Did you notice any differences between your drawing and others?"

"Is there anything you drew that you didn't see in another drawing?"

"Why do you think your drawing was different than the others?"

The teacher can ask for volunteers or point to specific students to answer. Ask at least 3 students the same question, before moving to the next.

4. **Conclusion** (3-5 min):

After questions are answered, the teacher summarizes the students answers. The teacher tries to mention as many details he/she remembers from what the students mentioned during their answers. The teacher ends by pointing out that despite everyone drawing something different, they all referred to the same thing he/she mentioned at the beginning.

Finally, the teacher finishes with a concluding message "Even if we all share the same things, everyone has a different perspective about them".

Objectives:

- Present a conceptual drawing activity for students to recognize different perspectives.

Total Duration:

31-42 Minutes

Resources/Materials:

- One set of colored pencils per student
- One sheet of paper per student

Indicators:

- Each student is able to identify at least two differences between their drawing and the drawings of five other students.

ACTIVITY 2. RESPECT FOR ALL

1. **Presentation** (5-7 min):

Teacher explains the activity to students on how the children will be selected to answer questions.

"All of the students will form a circle, I will give 4 students an object and when I say "now" you will start to pass the objects around, while singing (choose a short song every student is familiar with like: xxx*), when the song ends whomever is left with an object will answer one question. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer the best way you can. After we finish listening to your friends answers we will sit down and talk about the activity. Are there any questions? Are the instructions clear? Can anyone tell me what we are going to do?"

*choose a song that is familiar to all children and that does not more than 1 minute.

2. **Main activity** (11-15 min):

Phase 1: Organize students in a circle and hand 4 of the children an object, the students that receive the object should be separated from each other. The teacher tell the students to pass around objects between themselves, while singing the children's song. When the song is over the teacher signals students to stop.

Phase 2: Each student that is left with an object have to answer a question while the other students listen. The teacher asks the following questions:

- How would you help a hurt child?
- How would you help a sick person?
- How would you help an elder?
- How would you help in the house when your parents are busy?

Give time for every student to answer and pay attention to the main ideas.

3. **Exploration/Reflection** (8-10 min)

The teacher instructs the students to sit down in the shape of a circle and then asks them to reflect about why they chose to help these people the way they did by asking the following questions.

"What did you think about your friend's answers? What do you think are a hurt's child needs? What do you think they feel in that situation?"

The teacher leaves time for at least 2 students to answer the questions, and moves to the next question.

"What do you think are a sick person needs? what do you think they feel in that situation?"

Repeat the same dynamic as the first question and move to the next.

"What do you think are an elder's needs? what do you think they feel in that situation?"

Repeat the same dynamic as the first question and move to the next.

" What do you think are an your parent's needs? what do you think they feel in that situation?"

The teacher lets the children answer and then moves to the conclusion.

4. **Conclusion** (3-5 min):

Teacher summarizes answers from students and finishes with a concluding message:

"People have different needs, and may feel differently than you, but they all deserve the same respect".

Objectives:

- Pose questions that make students identify other people's needs
- Promote thinking about other's needs to make students recognize everyone deserves equal respect.

Total Duration:

27-37 Minutes

Resources/Materials:

- Four objects (one for each question) to pass around

Indicators:

- Each student is able to identify at least two relevant needs from one of the question's categories.
- Each student is able to retain the activity's final message.

Core SEL Competencies:



Self Management²:

The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. It includes effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself and setting and achieving goals.

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal-setting
- Organizational skills

² Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020. <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

ACTIVITY 1. THE WINDSTORM

1. Presentation (3-5 min):

The teacher starts by introducing the activity to students, describes the instructions, and explains the goal of it.

“You will sit in a semi-circle facing the board and I will draw, using chalk, a scene with a windstorm on top and a field with flowers and a river on the bottom. While I draw the thunderstorm, you will imagine that the bottom part with the river and flowers is a place of peace and calmness, and the top part, with the lightnings and dark clouds is a place of anger. We will pass an object and sing a song, (pick a song familiar to children). The student who has the object at the end of the song will start participating. I will ask you to think about things that make you angry, and after, things that make you happy. I will ask you to share them with everyone. Everybody understands what we are going to do? Could someone explain to their classmates the activity again?”.

2. Main activity (16-20 min):

Phase 1 (8-10 min): The teacher asks the students to think of things that make them angry/sad and then explains they are going to pass around an object and sing a song (*any short song children are familiar with*) while passing the object around the semi-circle. When the song stops the students holding the object shares the thing that makes them feel angry/sad. When the student is done sharing, the teacher adds lightning or more dark clouds to the drawing on the board. Go around again, enough times for every student to share. The teacher encourages the students to think of different things from the ones mentioned by their classmates.

Phase 2 (8-10 min): After all the students have shared, the teacher asks about the things that make them happy. Students start answering one by one. Once a student answers, the student stands up and draws a flower in the drawing the teacher made.

3. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher concludes the activity by showing that although there can be lots of things that make them angry or sad (points to the top part of the drawing), there is also a place of happiness and calmness. Teacher finishes by saying, “We have shared many different things that make us angry or happy (The teacher mentions some of the things shared by students as examples). When we are feeling angry, we can think about the things that make us happy to calm ourselves (ask them to repeat the last sentence)”.

The students should be able to identify methods why those things make them feel what they feel and how to calm down when they need to.

Objectives:

- Students identify things that make them angry and happy.
- Students learn methods to control their temperament.
- Promote reflecting upon the things that make each student angry and methods they can use to calm down.

Total Duration:

22 – 30 Minutes

Resources/Materials:

- One Chalkboard
- One Set of Chalk
- Object to pass around (any object, it can be a book, chalk, a pencil...)

Indicators:

- Each participant will be able to describe at least one situation that makes them angry.
- Each participant will be able to describe at least one situation that makes them happy and/or calm.
- Each participant repeats the last sentence of the teacher’s message correctly.

ACTIVITY 2. WORRY BOX

1. **Presentation** (3-5 min):

The teacher starts by talking about how worry can sometimes take over our feelings and prevent us from thinking about other things that are going on in our days.

"Today, we are going to work on a special skill which we can use to help ourselves when we feel worried about something. Sometimes, when we are worried about something, the worry can start to take over our day. The more we worry, the more our worry grows! Have any of you felt this way before? (Wait for students to answer, ask for examples if possible. Mention simple examples if they can't think of any). What we want to try and do now is to come up with some ways to make this worry become smaller, so it becomes so small we can put it into a box and close the lid on it!"

The teacher then divides the students into pairs and asks each pair to design a worry box. The teacher encourages students to use their imaginations to come up with some ideas about what their worry box could look like. The teacher encourages the students to be creative: "The idea is that if we make a worry box in our minds, we will have it with us whenever we need it. You can make yours colorful; you can decorate it with symbols or special stones, or it can just be made of clay—it is up to you and your partner to come up with some ideas about how you want your worry box to look. There are no bad worry boxes!"

2. **Main activity** (14-20 min):

Phase 1 (7-10 min): During the first phase, the students design their worry box with their partner. They can either draw it in a notebook, or imagine together what they would want it to look like.

Phase 2 (7-10 min): Once each pair has designed their worry box, the teacher asks them to "open" the box, name their worries and "put them into the box." When the teacher says "go", students close their eyes, think about something that worries them, and place their worry in the worry box. The teacher then says "done" and students take their imaginary worry box and close the lid, so as to "trap their worries" inside the box. "Now, I want you to think about moving that worry into your worry box. Make sure it is there. You have named it, you have given it your attention and now...we are going to close the lid on the box. When I say "Done!", I want you to take your imaginary worry box and close the lid, like this (make the motion of forcefully closing a box). 1,2,3...Done!"

3. **Exploration/Reflection** (3-5 min)

After every student has expressed their worries and put them in the box, the teacher explains that all worries are now trapped inside the box, and that it is their decision to let them out or not. Sometimes trapping the worries will be difficult, and other times they will let the worries out to deal with them.

"Now our worries are inside the box, and they aren't allowed to come out and bother us unless we open the box. If you have your worry popping up in your mind, you can remind yourself that you can choose to keep it in the worry box until you are calm. Once you feel safe to open it, you can. Your parents, family or teachers can also help you open the box and deal with the worry."

4. **Conclusion** (3-5 min):

The teacher shows students that by using the worry box, they can deal with the things that make them scared or worried. The worry box follows them wherever they go, and they can use it whenever they need to. That way, it is them who decide when to deal with a worry, and that they are in control of their fears.

"When we use our worry boxes, it helps us keep calm when things appear that make us afraid or worried. And now, your worry box will be with you wherever you go, and whenever you need to use it!"

Objectives:

- Students identify their worries by participating in a creative activity.
- Students become familiar with a method to deal with anxiety and fear.

Total Duration:

23 – 35 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- Optional: One set of paper, color pencils, and decorations for the box per pair of students

Indicators:

- Each student describes at least one situation that makes them worry.
- Each student describes their worry box and participates actively in activity.

ACTIVITY 3. SIMON SAYS

1. **Presentation** (3-5 min):

For this activity, students will follow the teacher's directions and movements only when the teacher starts the sentence with "Simon Says".

Before the game starts, the teacher explains to students how our brains tell our bodies when and how to move. The teacher explains that the goal of this game is to help students listen carefully before they respond.

Afterwards, all students are asked to stand up and face the teacher. The teacher tells the students that they only have to do what the teacher says if he begins by the phrase "Simon says". For example: Simon says touch your head. If the students do something that doesn't correspond to what "Simon Says", they are out of the game.

2. **Main activity** (10-15 min):

The teacher begins the game by saying "Simon Says touch your head and knees", or "Simon says act like a monkey, stand on one foot, hug yourself, etc..." (These are only examples. The teacher can choose other instructions). To create variations, the teacher can also trick students and say "Simon says, do not touch your head" for example. If the teacher says "touch your head" without starting by Simon Says, then students have to remain still and not move. If they move and do the action although the teacher did not start by Simon says, the student that moved is out of the game!

Additional examples for Facilitator(s) to use:

Simon says...

1. Rub your stomach and pat your head at the same time
2. Act like a monkey
3. Stand on one foot
4. Hug yourself
5. Yawn

3. **Exploration/Reflection** (8-10 min)

After the game, teachers ask students what they did to keep themselves from moving during the game, what it felt like when they were trying not to move. What was most difficult for them? What could they do to follow instructions better next time they play?

4. **Conclusion** (3-5 min):

The teacher explains that this activity shows the importance to "pause and think" before acting. They explain that what was shown during this activity can be used outside of the game, by creating ways to "pause and think" throughout the day. The teacher ends with the next message "We need to pause and think before acting, to make sure we do things correctly."

Objectives:

- Help students manage their behavior in order to ignore distractions, improve focus and memory.

Total Duration:

24 – 35 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- None. Activity can be done inside the classroom or outside.

Indicators:

- Each participant doesn't make more than 2 consecutive mistakes during the game.
- Each participant is able to remember the final message.

Core SEL Competencies:**Self awareness³:**

This refers to the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. For example, it includes accurately assessing both one's strengths and limitations, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism, and a growth mindset.

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

³ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020. <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

ACTIVITY 1. I AM...

1. Presentation (3-5 min):

Inside the classroom, students sit in a circle while the teacher presents in the front. The teacher will introduce the activity to students, describe the instructions, and explain the goal of it.

"Today, we are going to play a game about values. The game includes 4 parts. First, we will brainstorm together about values. Then I will give you two minutes, each of you will use the three minutes to identify the values you have. After recognizing your values. We will start to pass this ball (or other subjects, depending on the situation) while singing (choose a short song every student is familiar with*).

When the song ends, whoever is left with this ball (or other subjects) will share one of their values with the class. For those who share - you choose one of your values and say "My name is ____ and I am ____". [teacher can give an example]. For the rest of the class, you will need to listen to it carefully. Because the next student who catches the ball will have to repeat what the previous student said ("She/he is ____ and she/he is ____") before saying their own value, and the process continues until all students have taken a turn.

After we finish listening to your friends' answers we will sit down and talk about the activity. Are there any questions? Are the instructions clear? Can anyone tell me what we are going to do?"

*choose a song that is familiar to all children and that does not last more than 1 minute.

2. Main activity (15-21 min):

Phase 1 (5-7 min): Brainstorm values with the students.

"Before the game starts, let's think together, what are the values one might have? [wait for students to answer, and write their answers on the black board] Yes, all of them are good answers. Values could be... (repeat some of the students' answers), and also could be.... (give some more examples that were not mentioned*).

Phase 2 (2-4 min): Teacher asks the students to identify their values.

"Now, I will give you 2 minutes, each of you will use the three minutes to identify the values that you think you have or want to have in your own life. There are no right or wrong answers, just choose those values you think can represent yourself the best"

Phase 3 (8-10 min): Students toss a ball (or other subjects) around the circle and the student who gets the ball says their value ("My name is ____ and I am (Value)"). (Encourage students to name different values to the ones already mentioned. Then the next student who catches the ball must repeat what the previous student said ("She/he is ____ and she/he is ____") before saying their own value, and the process continues until all students have taken a turn. If a student that already picked the ball catches it again, he or she chooses who answers next.

* core values include but not limited to: kind, hardworking, responsible, honest, punctual, kind, creative, funny, compassionate, optimistic...

3. Exploration/Reflection (8-10 min)

After the activity is over, the teacher asks some questions to students (3-4 should answer each question):

"Would someone share what made them choose the value they chose?"

"What actions do you take to show that you have that value?"

"What do you think values help us with?"

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher ends by pointing out that now everyone can see they have their own values and that there are different situations where those values are shown and applied. Teacher ends with the following message: "Knowing your own values is important, they guide us in our life!"

Objectives:

- Introduce students to identify the importance of knowing their values.
- Present an activity that helps students identify their own values.

Total Duration:

29 – 41 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- One Blackboard
- One Chalk
- One ball or other tossable item

Indicators:

- Each student identifies at least one value they have and associates it with an action.
- Each student describes at least once why a value they chose is important to them.

ACTIVITY 2. WORRY WEEDS & SUNNY FLOWER

1. Presentation (3-5 min):

Inside the classroom, the teacher will explain the activity and define terms for students for the activity.

“Today, we are going to draw our ‘mind garden’. I will provide all of you a sheet of paper and a set of colored pencils. Once everyone gets the materials, we will start to draw. In this garden, draw sunny flowers that stand for your positive thoughts, for example, ‘I helped my parents with housework today, and they praised me’, or ‘It is such good weather today’. You can also draw weeds in this garden, which stand for negative thoughts. For example, ‘arguing with my friend makes me feel sad’, or ‘I am worried about the coming exam’. You can write down your thoughts next to the flowers and weeds you draw. There are no right or wrong answers, I hope you can put your honest thoughts in. I will give you 15 minutes for this. After we are all finished, I will introduce you some strategies about shifting negative thoughts into positive ones. And I will ask you to practice those strategies with your own drawings. Did everyone understand what we are going to do?”

2. Main activity (18-24 min):

Phase one (8-10 min): teacher passes out blank paper to students, and asks students to draw their ‘mind garden’ in 10 minutes.

Phase two (5-7 min): teacher introduces some strategies to change negative thoughts into positive ones, or to eliminate negative thoughts while promoting positive ones.

“We all have both positive and negative feelings. Because sometimes we could be troubled by negative thoughts, we want to try to eliminate them. Now as everyone has their mind garden drawn, I will introduce some strategies that we can use.

First, you can try to promote your positive thoughts by watering your sunny flowers. If your flowers stand for thoughts like ‘I feel good for helping parents with housework’. You can promote these positive thoughts feeling by helping parents more. If you flower stands for ‘It is such good weather today’, you can promote it by spending 5 minutes today to enjoy the weather. Once you identify the ways to promote it, you can draw a watering can next to your sunny flowers.

The second option is to try to shift your negative thoughts into positive ones. For example, if you drew weeds that stand for ‘I am worried about the coming exam’, you can shift this thought by thinking ‘even though the exam might be hard, but as long as I try my best to prepare for it, it is not scary anymore’. Another example, if your weeds stand for ‘arguing with my friend makes me feel sad’, you can go talk to your friends, try to find out the reasons for the quarrel, and decide together what you are going to handle your disagreement next time. After developing these strategies to shift your thoughts, you can go back to your paper, and change your weeds into flowers.”

Phase three (5-7min): The teacher asks students to go back to their drawings, and try to develop strategies to practice either promoting their positive thoughts or shifting negative thoughts into positive ones. But if any student has trouble developing strategies on their own, they can share their drawings with someone else or with the class, and ask for help.

3. Exploration/Reflection (5-7 min)

The teacher can lead a group discussion on examples of positive and negative thoughts the students drew and voluntarily shared, as well as common strategies to turn to change negative and positive thoughts. Some questions that can be asked:

“Would someone share with the class what one positive thought they drew and what strategies they will use to promote it?”

“Would someone share with the class one negative thought they drew and what strategies they will use to shift it?”

“Is it important to know your positive and negative thoughts?”

“Is it important to know strategies to help with positive and negative thoughts?”

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher summarizes some of the examples students shared, what strategies they used to promote positive thoughts, and/or the strategies they used to shift negative thoughts into positive ones. The teacher ends the game by recognizing that it could be difficult at first trying to change one’s thoughts, but practices will make it easier over time.

Objectives:

- Present students with a game that helps them identify negative and positive thoughts
- Develop strategies to promote positive thoughts and eliminate negative ones

Total Duration:

29 – 41 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- One blank sheet of paper per student
- One pencil per student
- If Available: Sets of Colored Pencils or Crayons

Indicators:

- Each student can identify at least one positive thought and one negative thought
- Each student develops at least one strategy to promote positive thoughts or changing negative thoughts

Core SEL Competencies:**Relationship skills⁴:**

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This entails learning to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively and seeking and offering help when needed.

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship-building
- Teamwork

⁴ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020. <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

ACTIVITY 1. COMPLIMENT CIRCLE**1. Presentation** (3-5 min):

The teacher explains the activities to students. He/She divides the class in small groups of 5 students. The teacher explains that the class is formed by a diverse group of students, each with their own qualities. The teacher explains to the class what compliments are and gives examples of it. "Compliments are positive comments we make to others based on things we honestly think are good about them. They help make others feel better." (Some examples that the teacher can use are: "you are a kind person" or "you have nice hair").

2. Main activity (12-15 min):

The students sit on the floor in their groups, each forming a circle. The teacher then distributes paper hearts (or flowers?) to each student and asks them to think of a compliment to say about the student on their right. When they are ready, they should turn to the student on their right, say a compliment to that person about something positive they genuinely see in them and give them the paper heart (Could be paper flowers as well). When they hear the compliment they should say thank you. The teacher explains that, when they are done, they can get up and give compliments to other students outside of their original circle with extra hearts (flowers) the teacher has on the table.

3. Exploration/Reflection (7-10 min)

The teacher asks students to sit in their groups again. The teacher asks questions for students to share with their group: "How did you feel when you said nice things to your friend?" or "How did you feel when you received compliments?"

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher explains the importance of praise and compliments. By reflecting on how they felt, and listening to how their friends felt when using compliments, they are able to understand how sharing positive comments can make others feel better.

Objectives:

- Students are able to identify other feelings.
- Students understand the importance of praise and compliments to make others feel better.

Total Duration:

25 – 35 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- Blank paper of any color to make three hearts (or flowers) per student.
- One pair of scissors

Indicators:

- Each participant identifies and describes one compliment that made them feel better.
- Each participant listens to others describing how the compliments they got made them feel better.

ACTIVITY 2. TEAM DRAWING**1. Presentation (3-5 min):**

The teacher explains the activities to students. He/She divides the class in small groups of 5 students. The teacher explains that the class is formed by a diverse group of students, each with their own qualities. The teacher explains to the class what compliments are and gives examples of it. "Compliments are positive comments we make to others based on things we honestly think are good about them. They help make others feel better." (Some examples that the teacher can use are: "you are a kind person" or "you have nice hair").

2. Main activity (12-15 min):

The students sit on the floor in their groups, each forming a circle. The teacher then distributes paper hearts (or flowers?) to each student and asks them to think of a compliment to say about the student on their right. When they are ready, they should turn to the student on their right, say a compliment to that person about something positive they genuinely see in them and give them the paper heart (Could be paper flowers as well). When they hear the compliment they should say thank you. The teacher explains that, when they are done, they can get up and give compliments to other students outside of their original circle with extra hearts (flowers) the teacher has on the table.

3. Exploration/Reflection (7-10 min)

The teacher asks students to sit in their groups again. The teacher asks questions for students to share with their group: "How did you feel when you said nice things to your friend?" or "How did you feel when you received compliments?"

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher explains the importance of praise and compliments. By reflecting on how they felt, and listening to how their friends felt when using compliments, they are able to understand how sharing positive comments can make others feel better.

Objectives:

- Promote self-reflection among participants for them to realize the importance of collective work to achieve big goals

Total Duration:

21 – 29 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- One sheet of paper per group of students
- One set of Colored Pencils/Crayons per group of students

Indicators:

- Each participant identifies at least one challenge they faced.
- Each participant will identify at least one reason why working as a team was important.

ACTIVITY 3. TURNING!**1. Presentation (3-5 min):**

Outside on the patio or on the grass, the teacher divides the class in 2 teams. One student from each team has to close their eyes, while the others guide them around objects on the floor, only verbally. The teacher explains that students who can't see will have to listen carefully for the instructions of their team to be able to go through the objects without touching them, as well as the students who can see have to collaborate and give clear instructions to help their friend.

2. Main activity (10-15 min):

The teacher spreads around several objects on the floor. When the 2 teams have chosen one person each to be with their eyes closed, the game starts. Each team has to guide their friend with the eyes closed around the objects, making sure the student does not hit any of them. The students take turns to be the person being guided. After all students have gone through the path, the game ends.

3. Exploration/Reflection (8-10 min)

The teacher poses open questions for the students to reflect on. What were the challenges of guiding someone? What were the challenges related to being guided through the field of objects? What would have happened if they hadn't had their friends guiding them? The students reflect on the importance of attentive listening, trusting the teammates and following instructions and also on the importance of team work to conclude the task.

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher summarizes the challenges and ideas shared by the students. He/She finishes the activity by sharing the following final message, "There are many problems in life that we can't solve on our own. We need to trust people around us and ask for help when we need it."

Objectives:

- Students recognize the importance of teamwork through self-reflection.
- Students recognize the importance of trusting others.

Total Duration:

24 – 35 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- Several objects of different shapes and sizes to be put on the floor - it can be anything you find easily around the school.

Indicators:

- Each student recognizes at least one challenge of not being able to see.
- Each student describes the importance of listening to teammates while passing the obstacles.

Core SEL Competencies:



Responsible decision-making⁵:

This refers to the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It entails assessing the consequences of actions and the well-being of oneself and others.

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

⁵ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020. <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>

ACTIVITY 1. COLOR STATIONS

1. Presentation (3-5 min):

The teacher will set up the activity in an outdoor space. The teacher will use a stick (if drawing on sand) or chalk (if on pavement) to draw three large circles of equal size on the ground. Each circle will be labeled with one colored “flag”: The red paper labeled “No,” yellow paper labeled “Sometimes,” and green paper labeled “Yes.”

The teacher will gather students on one side, outside of the drawn circles, while the teacher stands centered in the front, facing the students, to instruct.

The teacher will describe the activity to the students: “There are three large circles representing three decisions: Yes, Sometimes, and No. I will read out loud an activity. When I finish reading the activity, I want you to step inside the circle that best represents what decision you would make. For example, if I say “playing soccer,” you will step inside the “Yes” circle if you would decide to play soccer; “Sometimes” if you play soccer from time to time; or “No” if you do not usually play soccer. Once everyone is in the circles, I may ask you to describe why you chose the decision that you did. Once I am done asking you questions, everyone will gather again to the side, outside of the circles. I will name another activity, and we will repeat the process.”

2. Main activity (8-10 min):

The teacher will name 5-7 different activities. For each activity, the students will step inside the circle that represents their decision. For each activity, the teacher will walk up to each circle, and choose one student to explain their decision. The teacher should choose a different student for each activity mentioned. Some examples of activities include:

- Playing Soccer
- Run/play outside
- Doing Homework
- Washing dishes
- Cleaning your room/house
- Eating breakfast
- Drawing or Coloring

3. Exploration/Reflection (8-10 min)

Once the main activity has been completed, the teacher will instruct the students to sit in a circle to reflect on the activity. Some examples of questions can be:

- “After finishing this game, do you see that we all make the same decisions, or that we each sometimes make different decisions?”
- “When do we make decisions?”
- “Why do you think we might make different decisions?”
- “What happens when we each make different decisions? Do we get the same results?”
- “What makes take different decisions?”

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher will conclude that we all need to be conscious and think responsibly in order to make appropriate decisions for each context, and that it is all important to understand why and how people make different decisions than us.

Objectives:

- Present students to analytical thinking through a game activity.
- Students observe that different decisions imply different consequences

Total Duration:

22 – 30 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- One Chalk or One Stick to draw large circles on the ground.
- Three different colored papers: Red, Yellow, and Green.

Indicators:

- Each student is able to identify at least one difference between a decision they made and the one of another.
- Each student identifies at least one difference between the consequences of their decision compared to the one of another classmates.

ACTIVITY 2. THE BOAT IS SINKING**1. Presentation (3-5 min):**

In a large, open space, the teacher will set up newspapers, paper, or fabric to cover a large area. The teacher will present the area of the paper as boats, make sure the space is big enough for 4-5 students. The students will have to be distributed into groups of 6-7. The teacher will have a story to read out loud (written on a card/paper) and will explain to the students that any time the story mentions a certain number of students on the boat, that number of students have to get on the newspaper area (boat). The students have to make the decisions as a group on who will enter/leave the boat.

2. Main activity (10-15 min):

Phase 1 (7-10 mins): The teacher will read out loud the story [*see attachment*]. Each time a number of students is mentioned, the teacher will pause for the students to get in or outside of the “boat.”

“We are all traveling on a boat. We go from one place to another, during the trip a part of the ship is broken, and so as not to hurt ourselves we all have to group ourselves into 4 people. We continue traveling, when suddenly a huge rock appears in the middle of the river. So that the ship does not sink, we have to group ourselves into 2 people.”

Phase 2 (3-5 mins): The teacher will read the end of the story, which will indicate a number of students more than can fit in the area (depends on the size of the papered area and the number of children per group). The teacher will say “I want you all to help each other and figure out a way to fit X number of people on the boat! You need to decide as a group the best way to do this.” Wait 3-5 minutes to see what the students complete - end the activity after 5 minutes regardless of if the students achieve the goal number or not.

3. Exploration/Reflection (7-10 min)

The teacher will gather the students in a circle to reflect on the activity and, and what it revealed about the best ways to make decisions in a group. Some examples of questions are:

- Was it difficult to reach a decision with your teammates?
- (Depending on the previous answer) What do you think made it easy? What do you think was difficult about it?
- Is there only one correct decision, or multiple possibilities?
- The next time we have to make decisions as a group, what can we do to make it easier to reach a decision?

4. Conclusion (3-5 min):

The teacher will summarize the students’ answers and end with the message “no matter how well we organize ourselves, there are many times when we need the help of others to achieve goals.”

Objectives:

- Identify one or more solutions to one problem
- Introduce students to group decision-making

Total Duration:

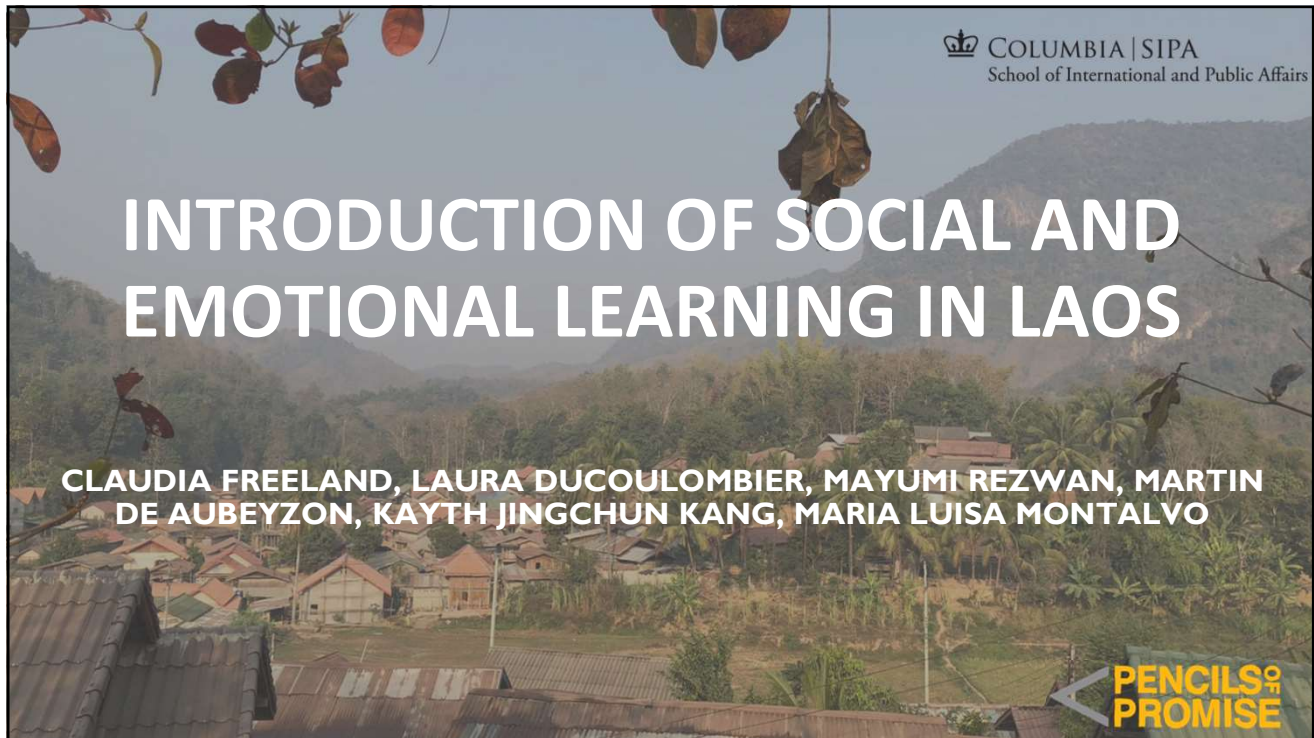
23 – 35 minutes

Resources/Materials:

- Newspapers, Scrap paper, or Fabric to cover large area (for 6-8 students to stand on)

Indicators:

- Students will come up with one or more solutions to the problem
- Each student actively participates in group decision-making process



Agenda

- 01 What is SEL
- 02 Why SEL
- 03 SEL at PoP
- 04 SEL in Laos
- 05 PoP's proposal



What is SEL

It is the “process through which children and adults:

- **Understand and manage emotions,**
- Set and achieve **positive goals,**
- Feel and show **empathy for others,**
- Establish and maintain **positive relationships,** and
- Make **responsible decisions.**”

Assumption: children learn better in a supportive environment, where they can express their feelings and engage with others in a meaningful yet challenging way.

Five core competencies



(1) Self-awareness (2) Self-management (3) Responsible decision-making (4) Relationship skills (5) Social awareness

Example of an SEL Activity?

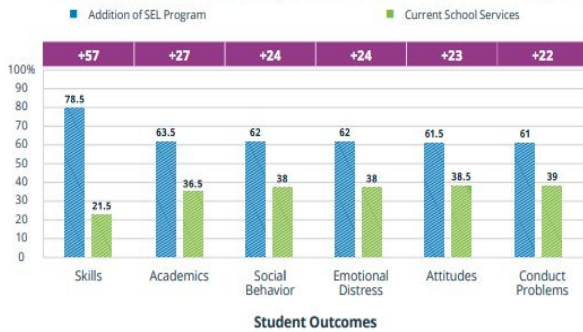
- **Respect for all**
- Objectives:
 - Pose questions that make students identify other people's needs
 - Promote thinking about other's needs to make students recognize everyone deserves equal respect
- Activity
 - How would you help a hurt child?
 - How would you help a sick person?
 - How would you help an elder?
- Conclusion

"People have different needs, and may feel differently than you, but they all deserve the same respect".

Why SEL - Theory and Evidence

Students:

Percentage of Students Who Improve with the Addition of an SEL Program



Durlak and Mahoney (2019). "Practical Benefits of SEL."
 Belfied et al., (2015). "The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning."
 Bridgeland and Harihan (2013). "The Missing Piece..."
 Brown et al. (2017). "CARE for Teachers..."
 "SEL for SDGs..." (2019). UNESCO

Teachers:

Emotionally Positive Classrooms

Better Use of Time

Higher Student Engagement

Beyond the classroom

- Reduction of Risky Behaviors - Substance Abuse, Violence, Dropping Out (CASEL)
- 11:1 Economic Benefit-Cost Ratio (Columbia University)
- Fundamental skills to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO)

Why SEL - International Implementation



67% of schools in **Asia** encourage development of **emotional literacy** in the classroom


(The Economist Intelligence Unit Survey, 2019)

- + **Vietnam:** SEL Curriculum Pilot in 2020; Nationwide launch of revised curriculum in 2021 (UNICEF Viet Nam)
- + **Philippines:** Department of Education integrated SEL into the national curriculum in 2009
- + **South Korea:** Emerging SEL research and integration focus in Character Education and National Curriculum


Why SEL - International Implementation

China


- + 2012: SEL Pilot introduced by MoE and UNICEF - 250 schools across 5 Provinces
- + Pilot Assessment Findings:
 - Students: **Improved Self-Confidence, Communication, Interpersonal Skills and the ability to Cope with Challenges**
 - Schools: **Improved Teaching Attitudes and Skills and Relationships between Teachers and Students**
- + 2016: SEL included in Chinese Children's Core Competencies for Future Development by MoE
- + 2018: 525 Schools Reached by SEL Program, Benefitting:



525
Principals



18,160
Teachers

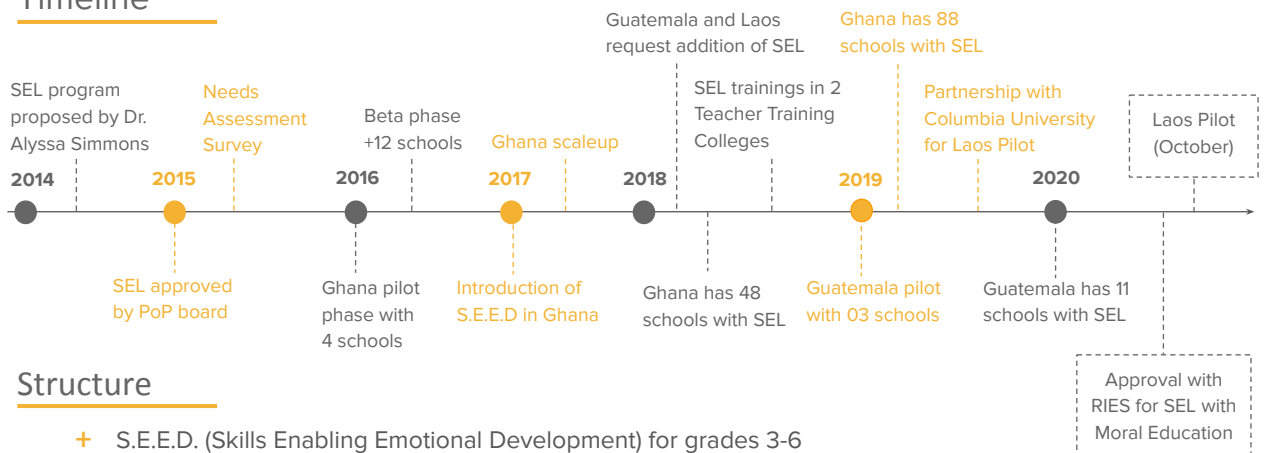


291,300
Students
- + 2019-2020: Plans to expand SEL to junior secondary schools, and extend SEL training to teacher training universities

UNICEF in China and Beyond™ (2019)

SEL at Pencils of Promise

Timeline



Structure

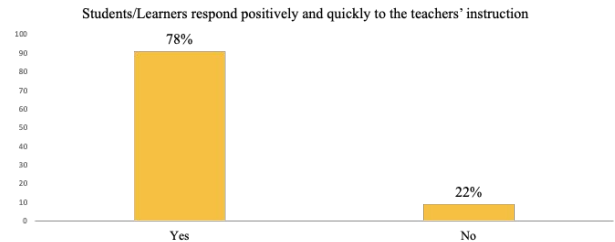
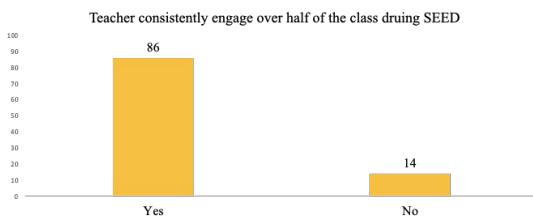
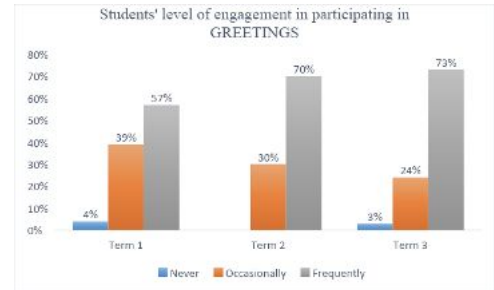
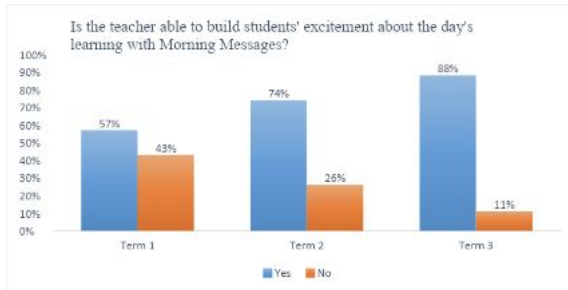
- + S.E.E.D. (Skills Enabling Emotional Development) for grades 3-6
 - Morning meeting and Morning message
 - Energizers
 - Greetings and sharings
 - Fun & games

SEL in Action



SEL in Action

SEL Results for PoP



Education in Laos

Education Vision to 2030:

"By 2030 all Lao population equally and equitably have access to quality education in order to become **good citizens, disciplined**, healthy, knowledgeable, highly-skilled with **professionalism...**"

Education and Sports Development to 2025:

"Improve the education system in order to develop human resources with knowledge, skills, have **moral and right values, love the country**, faithfulness, discipline, physical and **mental health...**"

Education Sub-sector Development Plan (2016-2020)

- Primary Education:

"Strategy 1: Support all children to enrol in and complete primary education **with quality without discrimination...**

Strategy 2: **Enhance learning and teaching quality** for primary education."

SEL and Laos

Benefits for Students:

1. Improve class attention and participation
2. Learn to understand and control their emotions
3. Improve learning outcomes

Benefits for Teachers:

1. Improvement in classroom management
2. Does not represent an increase in workload
3. Higher engagement of students

COVID-19 Effects on Children

- Increased worry and anxiety
- Increased fear of dying, falling ill, or having to receive medical treatments.
- Regressive behaviors (e.g. wanting to be closer to parents)
- Increased irritability or anger

(WHO, 2020)

SEL Benefits

- Improves capacity to regulate feelings like anxiety and fear
- Improves self-confidence
- Encourages safe and healthy behaviors
- Improve capacity to express thoughts and feelings verbally
- Promotes seeking help and support

(Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloodworth, Tompsett, Weissberg, 2000)

PoP's proposal

Pencils of Promise suggests to work hand in hand with the government to design and implement a pilot for the inclusion of **SEL** in the Lao's academic curriculum.

Thank you



Source: Pencils of Promise

Government Presentation Speaking Notes

Slide 1:

Cover slide

Slide 2:

Agenda / Table of content of the presentation

Slide 3:

Part I - What is SEL ?

Social and Emotional Learning, abbreviated SEL, is understood as the *“process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”*¹ It is based on the assumption that children learn better in a supportive environment, where they can express their feelings and engage with others in a meaningful yet challenging way both inside and outside of the classroom.

Generally speaking, five sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies can be identified, and have been defined by CASEL as follows²:

1. **Self-awareness:** this refers to the ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. For example, it includes accurately assessing both one’s strengths and limitations, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism, and a growth mindset.
2. **Self-management:** this is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. It includes effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself and setting and achieving goals.
3. **Social awareness:** this refers to the ability to take the perspective and understand and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The goal is to understand social and ethical norms for behavior.
4. **Relationship skills:** the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This entails learning to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively and seeking and offering help when needed.
5. **Responsible decision-making:** this refers to the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It entails assessing the consequences of actions and the well-being of oneself and others.

¹ CASEL, “Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Preschool and Elementary School Edition”, Casel Guide, 2012.

² Ibid.

The goals of Social and Emotional Learning programs are to encourage students to positively reflect on their own emotions and those of others, and as a result to improve their attitudes and beliefs both about themselves and about their peers. Ultimately, in the long run, the goal of SEL programs is to provide solid foundations at the individual and collective level for students to become better citizens of the world.

Slide 4:

Respect for all - An activity example [please feel free to insert a video to show how this activity could be done in real life if possible, it would be more vivid and easily receptive]

Here is an example of SEL activity, it is called 'respect for all', the objectives of this activity are 1) help students to identify others' needs, and 2) to make sure students understand that everyone deserves equal respect

During this activity, students will be organized to sit in a circle and be given an object to pass around while singing a children's song. At the end of the song, whoever it is left with object will stand up and answer one of the questions like

- How would you help a hurt child?
- How would you help a sick person?
- How would you help an elder?
- How would you help in the house when your parents are busy?

After the student answers the question, there will be a reflection session where the teacher organizes all the students "What did you think about your friend's answers? What do you think are a hurt's child needs? What do you think they feel in that situation?". After another student answers the same question and the group finishes the two rounds of reflection, move to the second question, and change the reflection question to "What do you think the sick person's needs are? what do you think they feel in that situation?", and repeat the same process until all the students are involved

At the end of the activity, the teacher will conclude by "People have different needs, and may feel differently than you, but they all deserve the same respect".

As you can tell, for children, SEL activities are very fun to participate. But of course, this is not the only benefits SEL can bring to school.

Slide 5:

Part II - Why SEL

A growing body of research, including large meta-analyses and studies, show the benefits of social and emotional learning programs on academic achievement and student outcomes. When CASEL conducted a value-added analysis based on two large-scale reviews (Durlak, et al., 2011 and Taylor et al., 2017), they found that adding an SEL program would likely lead to 27% more students improving their academic performance, 24% more improving social behaviors and lowering levels of distress, and 22% showing fewer conduct problems, among other benefits. One of the studies also found that these

benefits are long lasting, up to 18 years ([CASEL](#)).

Implementing SEL has also generally been found to be supported by teachers and educators. A teacher survey administered by CASEL found that 93% of teachers want a greater focus on SEL in schools, while an [Economist Intelligence Unit survey](#), administered to 760 educators across 15 countries, found that 80% of educators believe positive emotions are important for academic success. Additionally, SEL based programs and training can have positive effects on teachers as well. One study found that the CARE teacher training program led to teachers feeling greater sensitivity to their students' needs, and had classrooms that were more emotionally positive, as well as demonstrating a better use of time, and observing more engaged students ([Jennings et al., 2017](#)).

Beyond the classroom, effective SEL programs can help to prevent a variety of problems such as dropping out, substance use, bullying, and violence ([CASEL](#)). Additionally, a cost-benefit analysis by Columbia University found that the benefits of an SEL program outweigh the costs at a ratio of 11:1 ([Columbia University](#)). Finally, on a broader level, experts say that the objectives of SEL go towards building resilient individuals, who also exhibit prosocial behaviors that contribute overall to human flourishing and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals ([UNESCO](#)).

Slide 6:

SEL in the world

There is growing research and implementation of SEL internationally, especially in the Asia-Pacific. In **Viet Nam**, UNICEF launched an SEL curriculum pilot in 2020, and plans to incorporate SEL into the revised curriculum to be launched nationally in 2021. The **Philippines** had integrated SEL back in 2009 into their Character Education curriculum, and stressed the inclusion of natural songs, folk dances, and other literature, customs and traditions. A growing movement of SEL focus is developing in South Korea, with the Character Education Promotion Act in 2015 to address psychological and behavioral problems in adolescents ([Lee and Bong, 2017](#)), as well as SEL growing in scholarly interests for research and practice ([Kim and Hong, 2019](#)).

Slide 7:

SEL in the world

Finally, UNICEF and the China Ministry of Education also introduced an SEL program in China in 2012 starting with 250 schools across five pilot provinces, and expanded to 275 additional schools in 2017. The implementation and research in China especially highlights the cultural adaptation ability of SEL as a modern approach to moral and collectivist education, especially through the emphasis of role and responsibility of self in group interaction, interpersonal relationships, and teamwork ([Yu and Jiang, 2017](#)).

Seeing as SEL is a growing trend in schools throughout Asia, we believe that it could be a good step

forward for the education strategy in Laos.

Slide 8:

Part III - SEL at PoP

SEL was proposed by Dr. Allyssa Simmons in 2014. After a needs assessment, and a careful design, with the collaboration of the local staff, the first pilot was implemented in Ghana in 2016. After the proven success, the country directors of Guatemala and Laos requested for their curriculums as well. The first one to approve it was Guatemala, and now we want it for our children.

SEL at PoP is structured with simple activities that seek to give teachers the structure to follow the curriculum and give structure for the day, as well as present options for classroom management in new ways and get students engaged in the learning process.

Slide 9:

Photos

Here you can find some evidence about the SEL activities being implemented in schools in Ghana and Guatemala, we have a board with the “Morning Message” which is an activity implemented every morning in these schools, and we can see how some of these activities are done inside the classroom and others in outdoor spaces. They use very simple elements and resources such as a ball or a piece of paper, and others only need the teacher and the students.

Slide 10:

Video

This is a video recapping some of the SEL activities that have been implemented in Pencils of Promise schools in Ghana.

Slide 11:

Results: Evidence from Ghana and Guatemala (PoP)

Pencils of Promise has been able to capture some of the results that the inclusion of SEL activities have produced in the Ghana schools, with the help of the L&E team. This exercise would be replicated in Guatemala and it's a very important part of the program.

Some of the results that have been captured by the L&E team are:

- Children are more excited about their day at school, are more engaged in school activities
- Teachers report a higher level of engagement from students for over half the lecture when using SEL (SEED is the program's name in Ghana)
- Teachers report that after starting with SEL activities students are more obedient and respond positively and quickly to instructions given by the teachers.

Slide 12:

Part IV - SEL in Laos

We believe SEL goes hand in hand with the goals and vision of the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports and that it would be an excellent asset to help the education sector achieve its mission.

It aligns with the Education vision that all Lao population have equal and equitable access to quality education in order to become good citizens, disciplined, healthy, knowledgeable, and highly-skilled with professionalism by 2030, because it improves the quality of education and help students become good citizens and improve their learning outcomes.

It would support the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports' achieve the visions and goals laid out in the [Education and Sports Sector Development Plan \(2016-2020\)](#), as well as the strategy to 2025 by improving the education system to develop human resources with moral values and discipline; and the Primary Education sub-sector plan (2016-2020) activities such as providing materials for learning and teaching of physical and arts education, and providing in-service teacher training and improve the teaching approaches to increase quality of primary education.

It would bring benefits to both students and teachers by contributing to an improvement in class attention and participation, students controlling their emotions in a better way, reducing conflicts, and an improvement in the learning outcomes in the long term. On the side of teachers this can be a very effective tool for classroom control, without representing a significant increase in their workload, in fact the success of the strategy would mean a decrease given that classes can be more efficient and effective, and a higher engagement of students

Slide 13:

Part IV - SEL in Laos

SEL could be very timely and important now, as COVID19 brought everyone unprecedented and grave challenges, children included.

According to WHO, the impact of COVID on children includes Increased worry and anxiety, Increased fear of dying, falling ill, or having to receive medical treatments, Regressive behaviors (e.g. wanting to be closer to parents), and Increased irritability or anger.

But SEL could help to relieve these as it can help children to improve their capacity to regulate feelings like anxiety and fear, Improve self-confidence; SEL can also encourages safe and healthy behaviors, Improve capacity to express thoughts and feelings verbally, and promote seeking help and support

Slide 14:

Part V - PoP's proposal

Following the government's education strategy and in line with the Education Sector Development Plan, Pencils of Promise would like to work hand in hand with the government to design a pilot for the inclusion of Social and Emotional Learning in the current primary school curriculum

To do this we would introduce activities to the current academic program, that are thought and designed specifically for Laos and that will strengthen the 5 SEL skills in the students.

To move forward with this initiative we would like to know have the government's input in the following things:

- In what stages of the process would the government want to be engaged? (design, implementation, pilot, etc)
- Where can the government engage? And what could you add?
- With what schools or regions of Luang Prabang should the pilot start?