

# Applied Research Results

*Investing in Transition: A Path to Sustainable Early Childhood Development and Education*

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# Outline

- Research Design
  - Program Intervention
  - Approach
  - Key Findings
- Context and Need for the School Readiness Camps
- Goals and Design of School Readiness Camp
- Evaluations and Findings
- Recommendations



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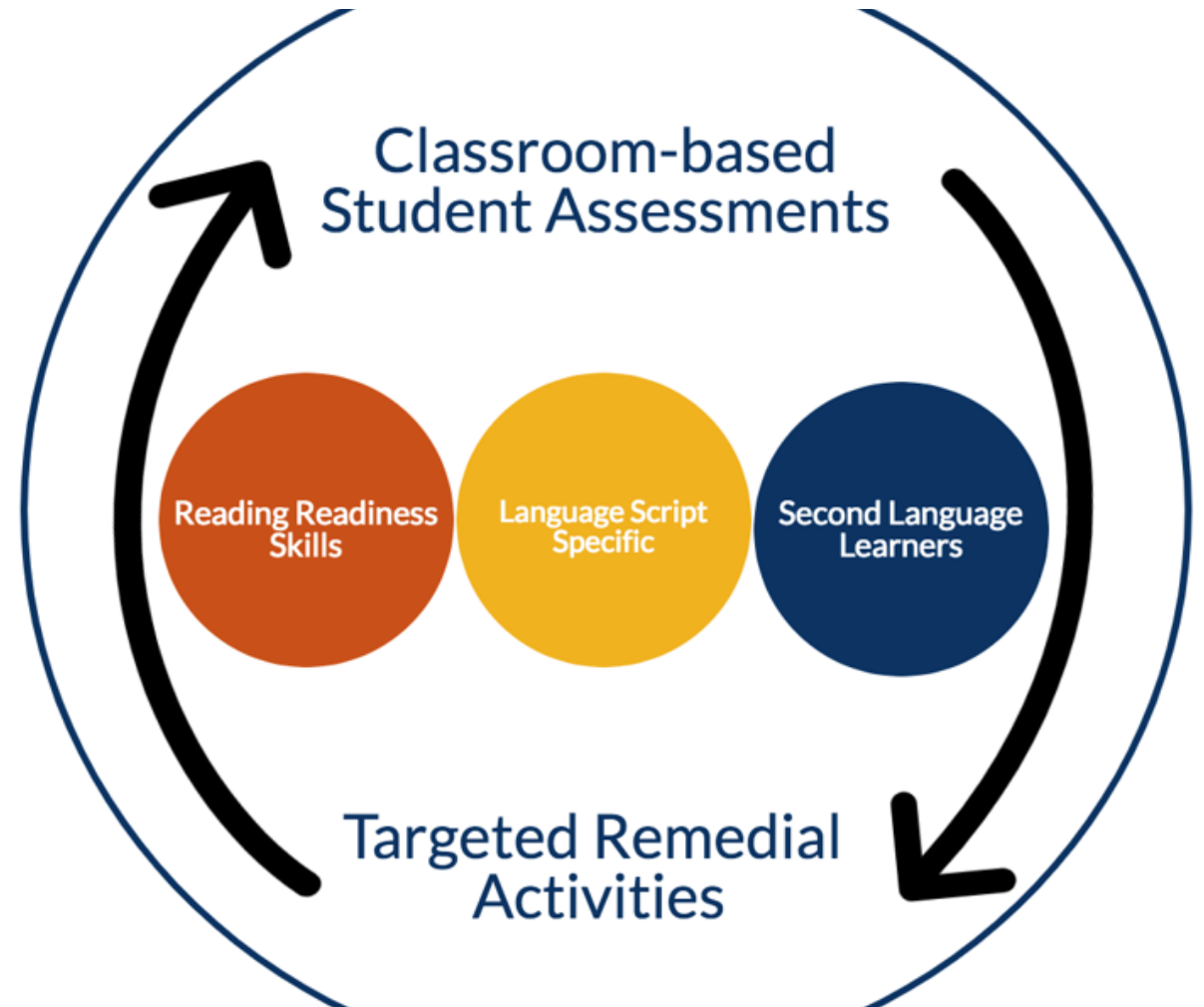
# Research Design

- CRS partnered with the American Institute for Research to co-design a child literacy program which will address the low student reading levels in Laos.
  - **Why:** 2012 National Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes showed only 23% of Grade 3 children read at an “independently proficient level.”
  - **How:** Creation of classroom-based formative assessments on literacy and teacher development on remedial metrologies to improve weak literacy skills
    - The package focused on the unique nature of alpha-syllabic languages and responsive instruction
  - **What:** improve the way teachers teach reading (literacy instruction) in Grades 1 and 2 in order to improve children’s reading outcomes

# Program Intervention

The program pairs classroom-based assessments with simple, targeted remedial teaching activities. Is unique in three ways:

- 1) Focuses on emergent literacy skills
- 2) Tailored to the writing systems of South and Southeast Asian orthographies
- 3) Focuses on second (or later) language learners



# Approach

- **Community:** Engaging Village Education Development Committees (VEDC) and parents to support children's literacy outside of school.
- **Classroom:** Building the capacity of teachers in the use of both Reading Readiness and Formative assessments and targeted remediation activities



# Study Approach

- **Qualitative: KIIs, FGDs, Classroom Observations, & Coaches Observation Notes**

- **Themes:** Toolkit usability, implementation processes, strengths and weaknesses of program model, and overall sustainability
- **Participants:** Teachers, principals, district- and provincial-level officials (DESB and PESS), CRS staff, program coaches (CM/PAs), and G2 students

- **Quantitative: Student Assessment Data, Coaches Monitoring Data, & Teacher Surveys**

- **Indicators:** Student literacy skill levels, teachers classroom performance & skill levels
- Assessment and coaches monitoring data were collected throughout the program lifecycle. Qualitative data were collected at midline (February '18) and endline (May '18).



# Key Findings from Research Study

## Teacher Training and Coaching:

- Respondents found the training and coaching to be useful.

## Effects on Students:

- Nearly all respondents perceived some effect on students. The perceived effects were largely:
  - Students showed an increased motivation to learn and greater engagement in the classroom
  - Students' *overall* reading ability was also perceived to improve as a result of the program

**However....** *Non-Lao speaking children still entered Grade 1 and Grade 2 with lower Lao-language skills and struggled to develop Laos literacy skills.*



# Context and Need for School Readiness Camps

Responsive Programming through Research  
Translation



# Context of School Readiness Camps

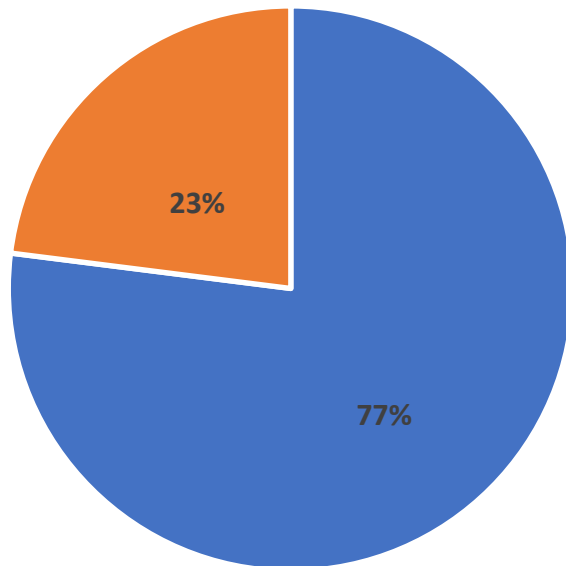
- The unique context of Laos PDR requires all classroom instruction beginning Grade 1 (G1) to be in Laos language
- Dropout rate in Savannakhet Province is more than double the national average
- For most children in Savannakhet, Grade 1 is their first exposure to a classroom setting
- High percentage of children do not speak Lao as their first language



# Need for School Readiness Camps

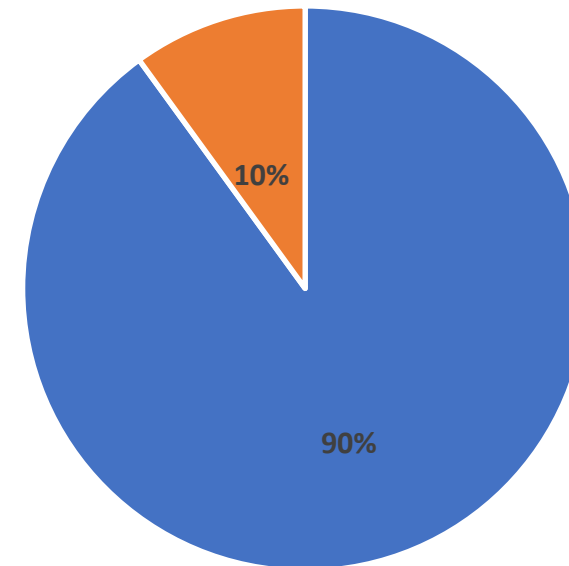
## Savannakhet Province

Grade 1 dropout (2014/15)



## Laos Nationally

Grade 1 dropout rate (2014/15)



# Need for School Readiness Camp

Responsive Programming through Research Translation: With the high rate of drop-out, CRS designed a small pilot program and research study focused on children entering G1

## **School Readiness Camp goals**

- Provide children with early exposure to a classroom-like setting
- Provide children with early exposure to reading, writing, and print
- Support Lao-speaking and non-Lao speaking children to develop receptive and expressive Lao language skills before G1
- Improve, in the longer term, the literacy of school age children by improving their chances of success in G1, thereby decreasing drop out rates



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# Goals and Design of School Readiness Camp

# Goals of School Readiness Camps

To enhance students **receptive** and **expressive** Laos language before entry in G1.

## **End of camp learning objective:**

1. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex Lao language and communication from others
2. Child understands and uses a variety of Lao words for a variety of purposes
3. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words



## Design of the Camp

**Where:** Small sample of schools in Phin District of Savannakhet Province

**When:** Camps ran in July and August of 2018 for 6 weeks, 2 sessions a week, 2 hours each session

**Who:**

- Facilitated by Community Volunteers (CVs)
- Average age of camp enrollee: 5 ½ years
- Even split between boys and girls (boys: 50.4%, girls: 49.6%)





# Design of the Camp

**Week 1:** Welcome to Camp

**Week 2:** My Body

**Week 3:** My Family

**Week 4:** Animals

**Week 5:** Colors and Shapes

**Week 6:** Numbers and Nature

Time	Session
20 minutes	Welcoming children, talk with them and with parents, free play
30 minutes	Circle time: songs, games, and/or books
15 minutes	Bathroom break/washing hands
30 minutes	Desk time: activities that align with basic 'school' behaviors
15 minutes	Movement activities
10 minutes	Clean up and good byes



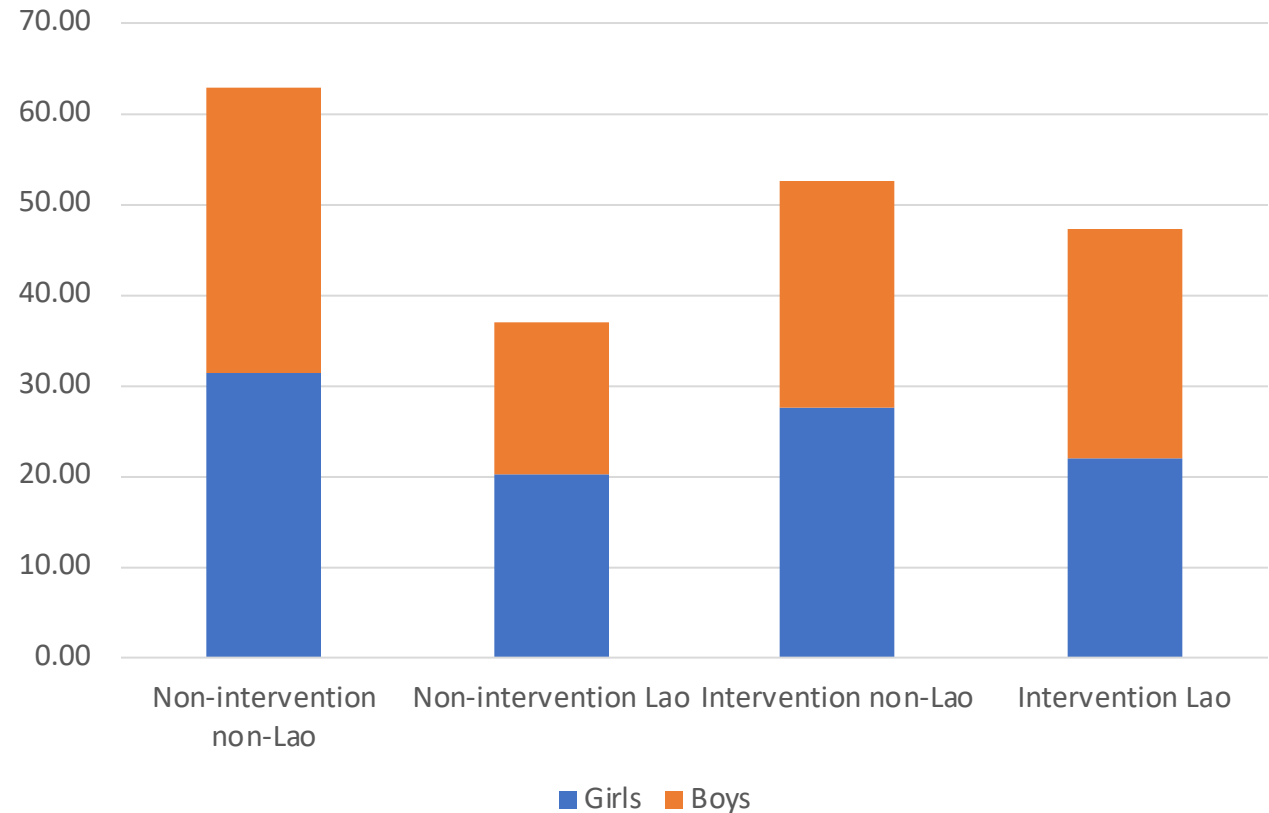
# Evaluation Findings

## Evaluation Findings

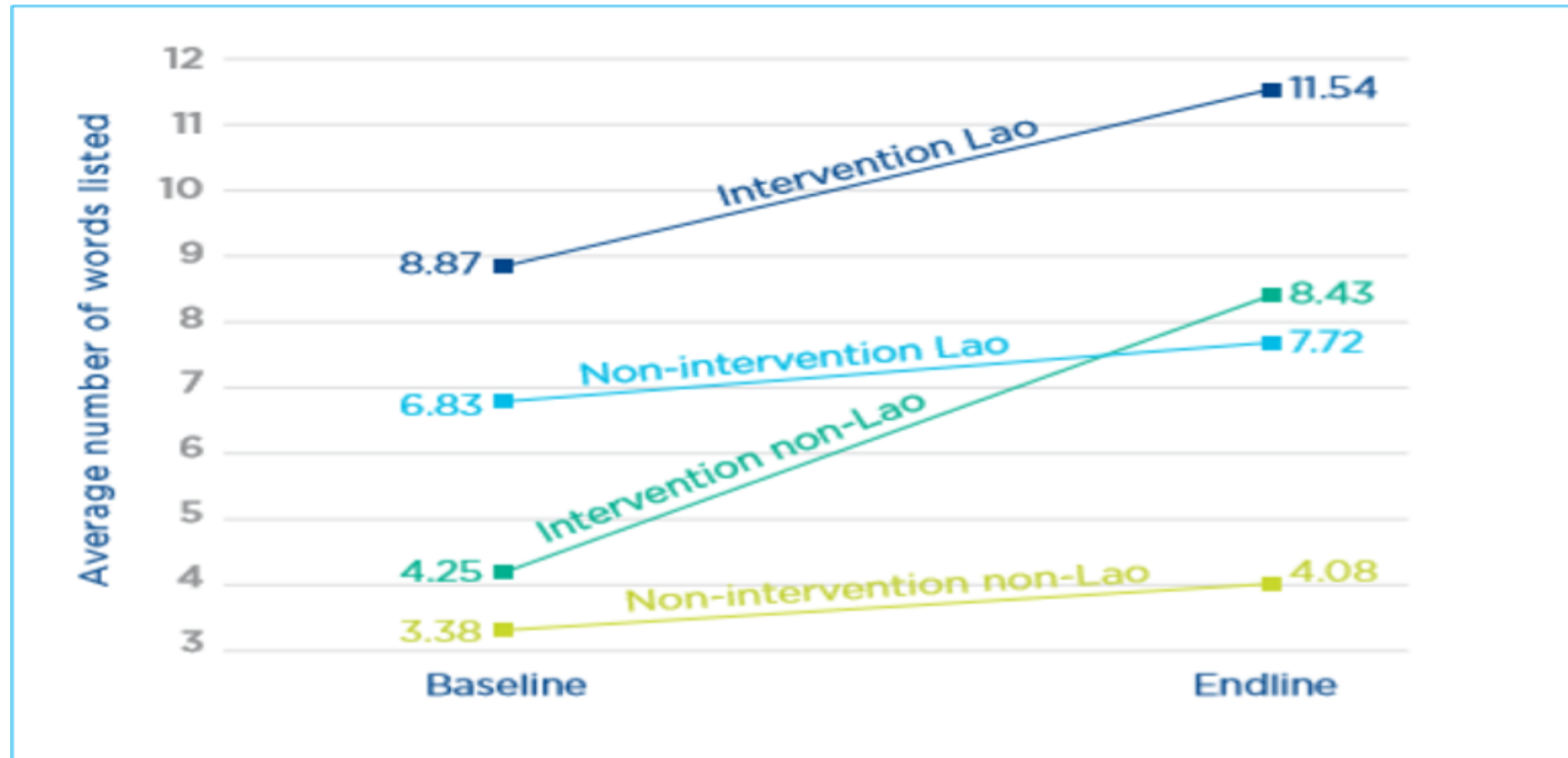
Between Baseline and Endline, data was collected from:

- 609 camp participants from 23 schools
- 159 non-intervention students from 11 schools

Proportion of Lao and non-Lao speakers in non-intervention and intervention groups by gender



## Quantitative: Semantic Fluency Results



## Recommendations

- Increase the duration of the camp beyond the 24 hours of instruction
- Use experienced community volunteers to maximize community ownership and past experience
- Revise the curriculum to add additional time for more complex activities and increase the use of visual aids and games

