



World Change Starts with Educated Children.®

Local Language Publishing Laos

THE NEED

Historically, only one ethnic group in Laos, the Lao Loum, relied on formal education. Consequently, most other groups had no written language. Most education took place in Buddhist *wats* (temples) where monks taught male students. During their occupancy, the French established a secondary system in the French language, which produced a small group of elite, well-educated Laotians. The Pathet Lao provided Lao language instruction beginning in the 1950's. In a government-led effort to increase literacy, Lao was simplified to render the language more accessible and egalitarian. Although literacy is on the rise, the lack of available reading material means that literacy is often short-lived. It is still rare to see a book in rural villages. The dearth of colorful, appealing, child-friendly Lao-language stories and supplementary books and resources that support the school curriculum has led Room to Read to self-publish its own books.

THE PROGRAM

The goal of the Local Language Publishing (LLP) program is to promote literacy and the habit of reading among children in the areas where the program operates. Our teams works toward this goal by publishing a variety of culturally relevant materials for children written in the local language(s); building the capacity of local authors and illustrators; and distributing our LLP books to Reading Rooms where usage is promoted and the books are a fundamental component of our Reading Room library program.

LLPs Published in 2009	18 titles
Total LLPs Published from 2005—2009	64 titles
LLPs Published in 2010 (projected)	18 titles

THE APPROACH

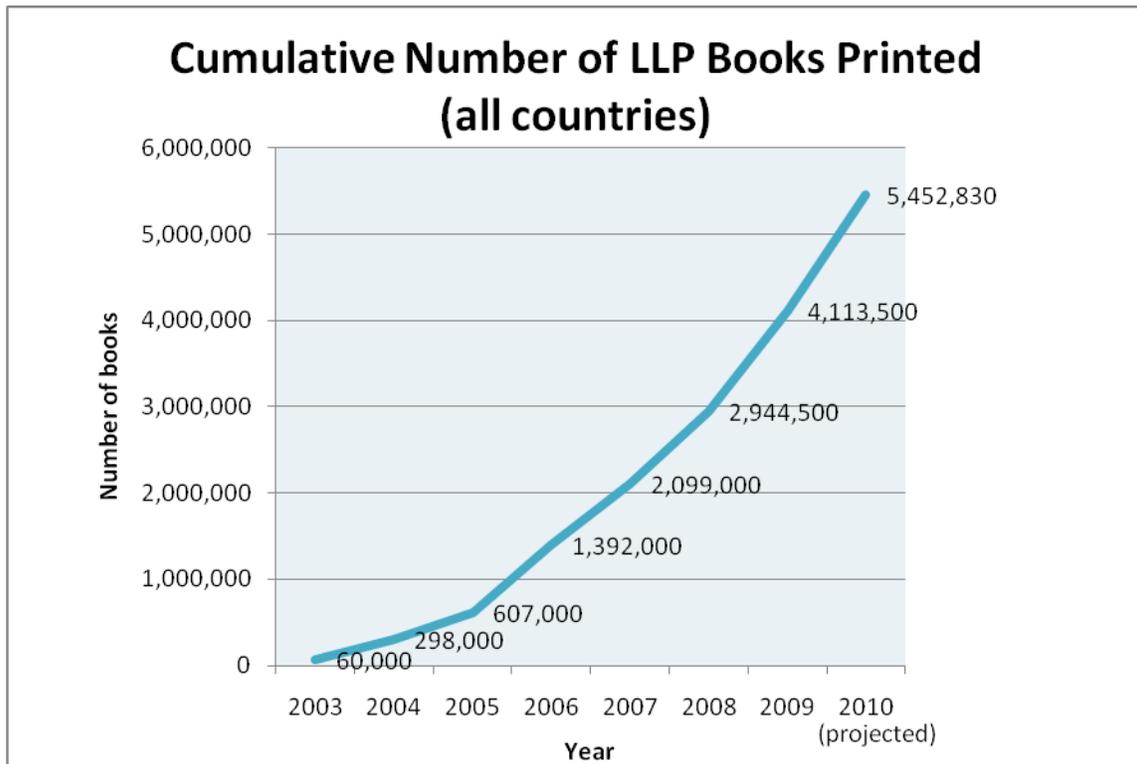
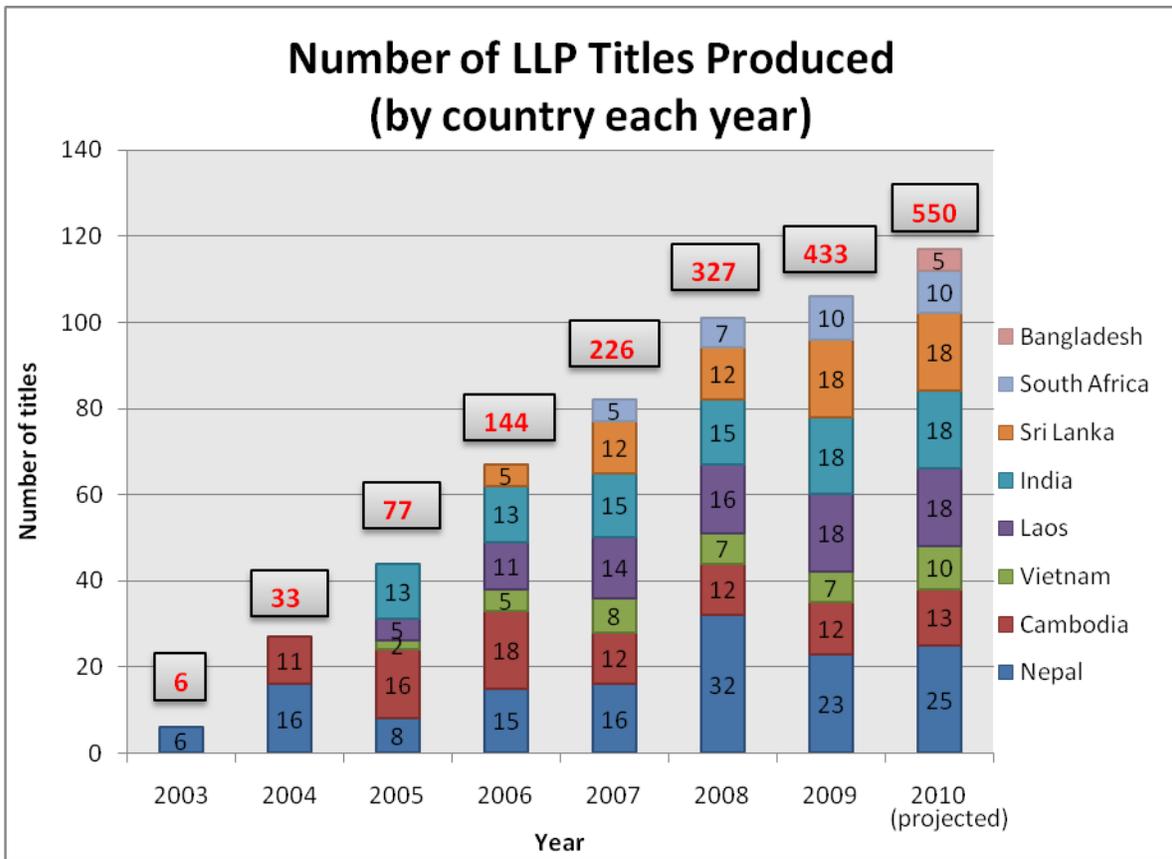
Language of Publication	Lao
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A core component of the LLP program in Laos is not only to publish high quality, child-friendly local language

books and educational materials, but also to build the talent of local writers and illustrators. In order to source new content and to promote a culture of writing, Room to Read Laos holds writing competitions and workshops for writers, illustrators, and editors.

For the past two years, Room to Read Laos has focused its efforts on new publishing initiatives: teaching aids that encourage interactivity between teacher and students; books that highlight the Lao culture; books about curricular areas such as science information books and books for early readers to support literacy and encourage a habit of reading. Room to Read Laos has been building strong partnerships with the Ministry of Education in developing LLP titles. During the 2009 Laos Book Excellence Awards, Room to Read's Local Language Publishing titles won two of the four awards given annually by the Ministry of Information and Culture. The winning stories were *Nang-Oy's Dream*, about a girl's right to have an education, and *Many Bags*, about two children learning how to recycle plastic bags. Published by Room to Read, the books were selected from 678 adult and children's books published in the country in 2008. This is the second consecutive year that Room to Read has received this award.

Books are distributed throughout Room to Read's network of libraries and schools as well as to other schools in need throughout Laos. Room to Read's books have also been a fixture at national book fairs in the country.

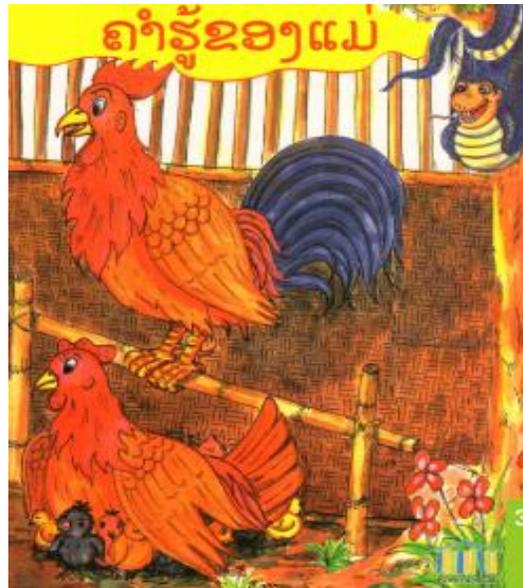


PHOTOS



Lao Numbers Made Fun

Lao Numbers Made Fun is a book that makes learning Lao numbers simple and easy. It is a rhyming book that plays with repetition and shapes to teach numbers to young children.



The Stubborn Baby Chicken

Baby chicken ventures into the forest where he meets a sneaky snake who convinces the chick to invite him back to the hen house.