

EVALUATION OF SAVE THE CHILDREN NORWAY IN CAMBODIA'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME (2006 – 2009)



April - June 2010

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The evaluation of the SCNiC Education programme involved numerous PEOPle working at all levels of the education system.

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Cover Photo: Children on the way to school - Boribo District, Kampong Chhnang Province

SAVE THE CHILDREN NORWAY (SCNIC) EDUCATION PROGRAMME TARGET PROVINCES (2006 – 2009)

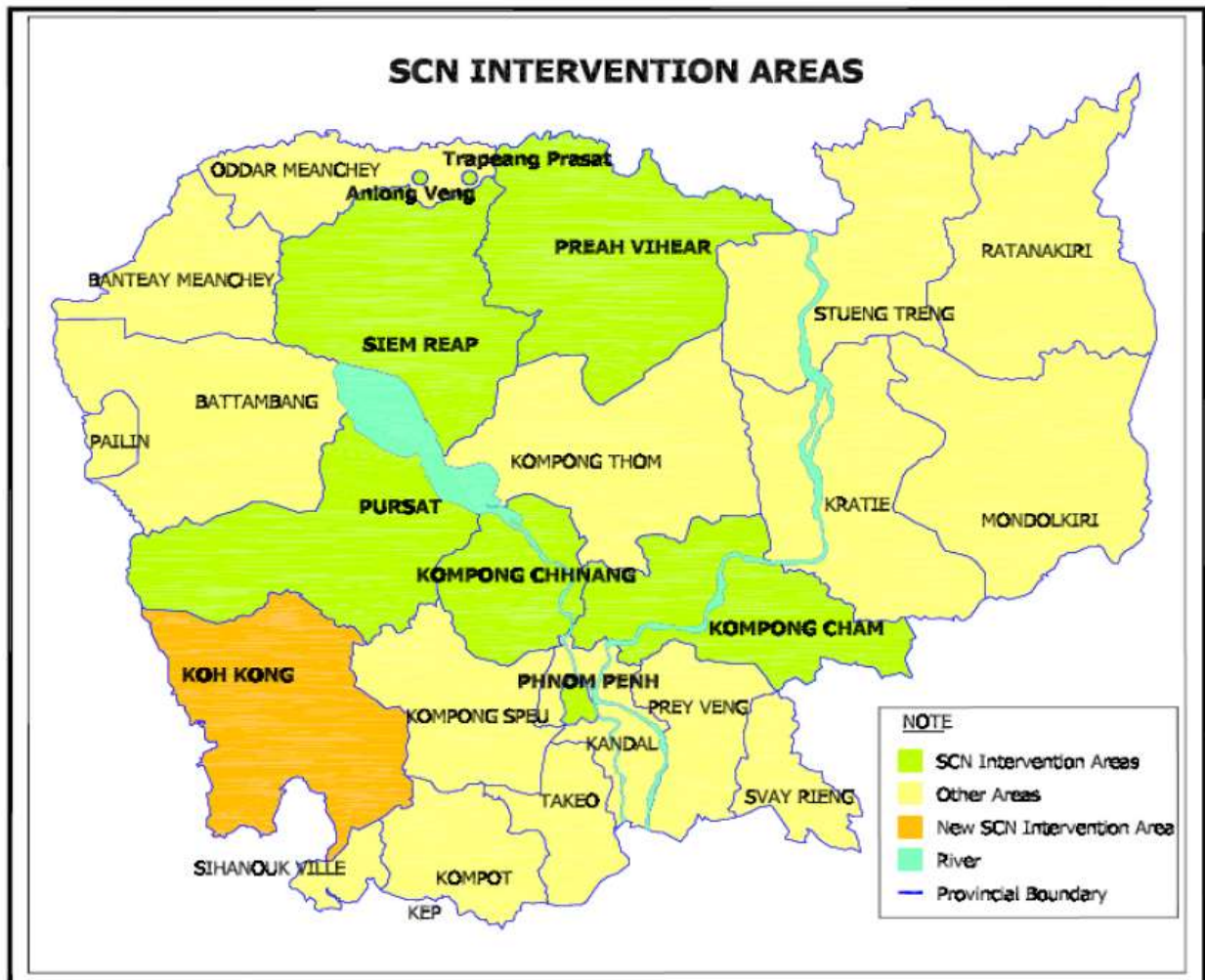


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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BE	Basic Education
BEP	Basic Education Plan
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CPS	Country Programme Strategy
CWD	Children With Disabilities
DTMT	District Training and Monitoring Teams
DEO	District Education Office
ECCD	Early Childhood Care & Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan 2006-10
ESSP	Education Sector Support Program 2006-10
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
HBECDD	Home-based Early Childhood, Care and Development
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
LNGO	Local Non Government Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth & Sport
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NGO	Non Government Organisation
OVC	Orphans & Vulnerable Children
PED	Primary Education Department (MoEYS)
PEO	Provincial Education Office
Prom.	Promotion rates
Rep.	Repetition rates
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SCA	Save the Children Australia
SCNiC	Save the Children Norway in Cambodia

SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TOT	Training of Trainers
TTC	Teacher Training College
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WE	World Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction: Save the Children Norway in Cambodia (SCNiC) recently commissioned an evaluation of the most recent phase of their Basic Education Programme (2006 to 2009), which has been supporting the development of early childhood and primary education in 6 provinces and Phnom Penh Municipality, and working with and through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) at all levels. The main purpose of this evaluation is to inform the design and development of the next phase of SCNiC's support for education (2010 – 2014) in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

The evaluation findings and recommendations outlined in this summary were developed from fieldwork conducted in 6 target provinces in May and June 2010. The evaluation process was led by an external consultant and involved a team of 16 PEOple, comprising Provincial and District Office of Education (PEO/DEO) staff, as well as SCNiC Education Programme staff.

The evaluation covered a total of 34 schools in 12 districts of 6 provinces, as well as district and provincial education offices and teacher training colleges, relevant MoEYS departments in Phnom Penh, and other Development Partners supporting basic education in Cambodia. In addition to gathering quantitative data, interviews were conducted with 882 stakeholders, including 319 children, 118 teachers, 82 Provincial and District Education Office staff and 208 mothers.

Preparation Process and Methodology: The methodology and tools used were developed initially by the consultants and then reviewed with the evaluation team during a three day preparation workshop. Key areas of focus for the evaluation were defined, key questions were developed, sources of information identified and then methodology and instruments finalised. Methods used included individual and focus group discussions, gathering of quantitative data, observation and case studies. The evaluation teams met at the end of each day of fieldwork to review, consolidate and begin analysing data. Following completion of the fieldwork, a two day data analysis workshop was held in Phnom Penh to reach conclusions regarding the findings in each of the key areas being evaluated.

Findings: The evaluation looked at *process* as well as *impact*, and identified strengths and weaknesses of the programme, as well as providing recommendations for the 2010-2014 programme phase. The evaluation findings are organized by first examining the overall implementation of the programme including programme management, in relation to the 2006-2009 education strategy and then in more detail at individual areas of intervention from the previous strategic phase. Each of the intervention areas are organised under one of the four 2010-2014 strategic choices from the SCNiC Country Programme Strategy (CPS) 2010-2014, which clearly illustrates the linkages between the previous and present programmes. The key summary findings are written below with more detailed findings in the appropriate section of the full report.

THE SCNiC EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2006-2009

Background

SCNiC has been working in Cambodia for over 20 years in the area of education. The primary focus of the education programme throughout this time has been on improving the quality of primary education and supporting increased access to schooling. The programme has evolved and developed over time as the situation within Cambodia has moved from a country in conflict to post conflict to most recently a country which is now in a phase of long term development.

Objectives of the 2006-2009 Education Strategy

The 2006-2009 programme in the CSP had 4 specific objectives¹:

- **Quality Access to Schooling**
- **Quality Access to Education**
- **Quality Access to Learning**
- **Quality Access to Achievement**

Programme Management and Implementation

Most of the findings with regard to management of the Education Programme from 2006 – 2009 are now ‘historical’, in that they were already identified in 2009 by the new senior management team and Education Programme staff, and actions have already been undertaken to address many of these issues. Nonetheless, the evaluation did review the management of the programme alongside actual programme implementation and alignment with SCNiC’s 2006-2009 country programme 4 year plan.

Strengths and Enabling Factors for Programme Implementation and Programme Management

- *There was a significant advantage in SCNiC staff being based at the PEO.* This has undoubtedly supported the implementation of the programme with all PEO staff members clearly stating that the benefits of having an NGO working directly within the PEO and within the system were significant and should not be underestimated.
- *SCNiC is seen as a major player in education in Cambodia.* Due to SCNiC’s long established presence in Cambodia, its in-depth knowledge of education within the country and understanding of the function of the MoEYS at all levels, SCNiC is seen to be a major player in education in the country by the MoEYS national, provincial and district staff interviewed.
- *There were high levels of motivation, skills, experience and flexibility among Education Programme staff.* The main factor contributing to the effective implementation of the programme and the impact of the intervention on children’s lives is undoubtedly the motivation, skills, experience and flexibility of SCNiC Education Programme staff.

¹ And within these overall objectives, there were an additional 9 more specific objectives.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors for Programme Implementation and Programme Management

- *The Programme lacked a clear overall education strategy document, had a poorly defined monitoring and evaluation system and no clear advocacy strategy:* The overall Education Programme document which provided the framework for the period being evaluated, had too many objectives which lacked clarity and measured progress largely in quantitative terms. This was compounded by the lack of an overall monitoring and evaluation framework for the Programme. Although the Programme successfully contributed to the adoption of the Child Friendly School model by MoEYS as well as promotion of ECCD, there was no clear advocacy strategy in place and Programme staff lacked a clear and consistent understanding of advocacy.
- *Management structure was unwieldy:* The lack of an overall Program Director position and the fact that all education staff reported to the Education Programme Manager, resulted in overload and impacted on the effectiveness of management. However, recent restructuring has already largely addressed this issue.
- *Placement of staff.* While placement of one staff member in PEOs in each target province has undoubtedly contributed to more effective programme implementation, technical support has been limited as SCNiC technical staff are based in Phnom Penh which has constrained the extent to which they can support implementation in the target provinces.
- *The Programme had 46 districts (excluding Phnom Penh Municipality) as target districts.* The large number of target districts results in serious issues with the impact of the Programme especially at district level and raises questions of the quality of activities conducted in this number of districts with limited members of SCNiC staff to provide the necessary support to the DEOs.
- *The Programme has a large number of intervention areas.* In addition to the high number of target districts which SCNiC focussed on during the 2006-2009 phase, the numbers of intervention areas/activities was very high with new initiatives/activities seemingly being introduced on a regular basis e.g. teacher self assessment, student self assessment, student credit scheme, barefoot teacher programme. The result is a large number of intervention areas sometimes occurring in a very small number of schools which cannot receive the adequate support from SCNiC or the PEO/DEO and thus results in limited impact.
- *2006-2009 Country programme 4 year work plan clearly states that girls, children with disabilities and ethnic minority children will be supported by the Programme.* Although there is a clear statement in the 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan that these children will be reached and supported by the Programme, there appeared to be little evidence of it in the fieldwork element of the evaluation. Actual understanding of what constituted an inclusive education environment did not appear high amongst respondents (or the team of evaluators).
- *2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan states that the Programme will provide opportunities for children's participation* The 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan states that opportunities for child participation would be provided through the various

interventions, however there was little evidence other than limited participation through student councils that the programme had had an impact on increasing children's participation.

External Factors supporting the Programme

- *The RGC has an overall education strategy in place.* The RGC's Education Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2010 provides the framework for Annual Operational Plans, both of which help to provide appropriate focus for interventions supported by Development Partners, including those of the SCNiC Education Programme.
- *CFS policy from MoEYS.* All of SCNiC's primary education programming is in line with the CFS policy. This synchronisation with, and support of Government policy from SCNiC results in greater sustainability of any intervention.
- *Improved coordination between MoEYS and Development Partners.* As part of the move towards a sector-wide approach (SWAp) in education, a number of mechanisms have been established which have enhanced communication and coordination of development work within the sector, both among Development Partners as well as with MoEYS. These include the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), the NGO Education Partnership (NEP), and the Joint Technical Working Group on Education (JTWG-Ed). SCNiC is an active participant in these bodies.
- *Donor attention still focussed on Cambodia.* Donors are still allocating significant funding to improving the quality of education in Cambodia including funding for SCNiC's education programme.

External Challenges to the Programme

- *Lack of budget for education.* Although the % allocation of budget to education from the RGC is significant – 18.1% in 2009² - the budget is still limited to enable the effective implementation of an effective education policy nationwide, with the RGC still heavily reliant on outside assistance from donors and other agencies. The limited budget results in :
 - Low teacher pay.
 - Lack of teachers' accommodation specifically in more rural and remote areas where teachers may be posted to.
 - Not all schools receiving textbooks or copies of the curriculum.
 - Incomplete implementation of CFS policy.
 - Limited numbers of lower secondary schools for students to progress to after completing primary school.
 - Limited ECE opportunities for the under 6 year olds.
- *Poor economic situation of many families in Cambodia.* Many families are struggling to make ends meet and to provide sufficient food for their children. This means that many children who may enrol at school either drop out or are constant repeaters of grades which may subsequently lead to dropping out.

² *Strategic Assessment of the General Education Sector in Cambodia, ADB, 2010*

Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

- *Working within the RGC's Education system supports sustainability of the action.* Having a member of SCNiC staff based in the PEO results in ownership and responsibility on the part of the PEO staff for the programme activities/intervention.
- *Construction of schools in remote areas encourages community support in the school and has a huge impact on increasing access to an education for these more marginalised children.* Construction of low cost schools in remote areas encourages community cohesiveness in supporting the school and education in general, and thus supports progress towards achieving universal education for all.
- *Teachers' credit scheme and student credit scheme increase motivation.* All respondents at the DEO/PEO and focus school level anecdotally stated that the credit schemes for teachers and students increased motivation of the teachers and promoted increased attendance by the children receiving the loan. A review of the credit schemes should be conducted to assess impact and an exit strategy should be developed.
- *Working in large numbers of districts and a limited number of focus schools DEOs not achieve the set objectives of the 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan for education.* Although levels of access have been undoubtedly improved due to the SCNiC programme, the actual quality of teaching and learning at primary school level remains low. A more systematic and comprehensive approach to addressing these issues needs to be considered for the 2010-2014 programme phase.
- *Development of innovative approaches and approval by MoEYS DEOs not ensure successful implementation and adoption.* SCNiC, not only in the most recent strategic phase but also in previous times, has developed various innovative approaches (approved by MoEYS) to promote access to an education for marginalised children, but it has been difficult to sustain these due to a lack of support on the ground. The result has often been innovations which have the potential to effectively support marginalised children in attending school not being sustained in the longer term.
- *Communication and coordination at all levels of MoEYS is essential if programmes are to be sustainable.* The focus of the SCNiC 2006-2009 programme was at the PEO level with a more limited focus at the DEO and National level. To support sustainability of any action, it is essential to conduct the necessary consultations with MoEYS so that initiatives at the PEO downwards are incorporated as national policy/standards where applicable.

Overall Recommendations

As was mentioned earlier, the Country Director, Programme Director and Programme Manager have already identified most of the above weaknesses relating to programme management that require attention and have started to address these. These recommendations provide additional suggestions to assist them in this process.

- *Programme document for the next phase (2010 – 2014) needs to be finalised.* A draft Education Programme plan for the period 2010 – 2014 (the BEP) was developed by a consultant in March 2009. While this document provides a clearer overall structure than the previous Education Programme

document, it is understood that the details are still under discussion and are yet to be finalised. Ideally, this document should be revised and finalised before annual or long term planning proceeds further.

- *The Education Programme would benefit from an overall monitoring and evaluation framework, as well as simple easy to use tools.* SCNiC will have its own monitoring requirements which are external to the PEO's data management systems. An overall monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be developed as well as simple, easy to use monitoring tools.
- *An overall education advocacy plan needs to be developed with the participation of all Education Programme staff.* There are already plans in place to address this in the second half of 2010. All Education Programme staff need to have a similar understanding of the concept of advocacy, as well as clear advocacy objectives to be addressed in the next phase. NEP stated that they would encourage the participation of SCNiC on their advocacy working group.
- *The Education Programme organisational structure needs some further adjustments to ensure adequate technical support on the ground.* Consideration needs to be given to establishing a new position of technical support officer in each of the target provinces, in addition to the current coordinator positions.
- *As suggested in SCNiC's draft 2010-2014 Basic Education Plan (BEP), there should be a reduction in the number of target districts and more focus on working with whole clusters of schools.* Reducing the numbers of target districts and recruiting an additional SCNiC staff member to work at the PEO level will undoubtedly promote increased impact of any intervention at the district level with SCNiC provincial staff being able to provide more targeted district support.
- *There needs to be a greater emphasis on child participation through promoting the student councils and child centered approach.* SCNiC champions children's rights, one of which is participation and this should be a focus, albeit a cross cutting one in the education programming.
- *Clearly identify the target groups of marginalised children to be reached by the 2010-2014 programme and develop/review appropriate strategies for these children.* Not all groups of marginalised children can be reached by SCNiC but it should be clear from the outset what groups will be targeted by the 2010-2014 programme and comprehensive strategies developed to support these children in accessing a quality education.

Strategic Choice 1: Early Childhood Care and Development (HBECCD)

SCNiC has been involved for some years in establishing home-based early childhood care and development (HBECCD) programmes in target provinces to increase the number of 0-5 year olds who have access to ECCD provision, and additionally has been working at the National level to support the development of the early childhood education (ECE) curriculum.



Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The Education Programme has made a significant contribution to ECE.* The SCNiC supported HBECCD programme has increased the percentage of children aged 0-5 years enrolling in ECE activities to 18.9% in the 6 SCNiC evaluated provinces. This is significantly above the national average of 11%³. Children who have attended ECE activities are perceived as performing better upon entering primary school than their non-ECE going peers, with parents, head teachers, school support committees all recognising the benefit of ECCD activities. HBECCD is seen by DEO and PEO staff as a suitable low cost alternative to more traditional pre-school facilities.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Post-training support is limited.* The expectation that pre-school teachers (where available), head teachers or primary teachers, and relevant DEO/PEO staff will provide ongoing mentoring and support to HBECCD within communities is unrealistic and is not occurring due to other work priorities, limited budget and a lack of available staff. Additionally the SCNiC produced HBECCD monitoring tools are regarded as too complex to be used regularly.
- *Information flow between SCNiC and ECE Department is not maximised.* The information flow between the ECE Department at MoEYS and SCNiC has not been maximised and enhanced coordination at this level is necessary to support sustainability of SCNiC-supported activities.

Recommendations

- *A separate evaluation of the HBECCD programme should be conducted.* A focus on the quality of the HBECCD intervention is paramount before any expansion of activities occurs and an evaluation of the programme should be the first step in this path.
- *The mentoring and support mechanism for HBECCD requires rethinking.* Consideration should be given to engaging with a LNGO to provide support that is more direct and frequent, or establishing quarterly meetings for core mothers at the DEO level to support quality implementation of the action.
- *Coordination between SCNiC and the ECE Department needs to be improved.* Coordination between SCNiC and MoEYS ECD Department over HBECCD should be maximised specifically regarding planning, implementation and long term sustainability and institutionalisation of the programme.

Strategic Choice 2 : Quality of Education

SCNiC has been working on quality improvement for many years and was a key contributor to development of the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) framework and materials. CFS has since become MoEYS policy and is a core element of the national Education Strategic Plan. Since then, SCNiC



³ Figure of 11% obtained from Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2010, Table 3B) for the year 2007.

has worked closely with PEOs in implementing CFS and supporting quality changes to education at primary school level.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The SCNiC Programme has made a significant contribution to quality improvement in schools.* The presence of displays in the majority of classrooms visited (with the notable exception of the newly established mini schools), children stating that they worked in groups, and teachers attempts to relate learning to everyday situations all indicate that the education system in Cambodia is heading in the right direction for supporting improvements in the quality of education. The financial support that SCNiC provides to District Training and Monitoring Teams has supported increased supervision visits to SCNiC focus schools.

"I now try to teach by using investigatory techniques; it makes school more interesting for the students." *Grade 5 teacher, Sre Khav Primary school, Angkor Chum, Siem Reap*
- *Student Councils and School Support Committees have been established in most target schools.* Student councils and school support committees are present in many schools (again with the notable exception of newly established mini schools), have been democratically elected and the majority have a clear structure as outlined in CFS guidelines. School support committees are active in maintaining the physical environment of the school and supporting the enrolment campaign at the beginning of the school year.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Limited application of child-centered teaching.* Teachers overall understanding of the curriculum and child centered approaches remains limited with little support or training provided by the programme. Mostly it is teachers from SCNiC focus schools who have attended formal training, and the limited number of teachers being trained and supported consequently affects the quality of children's learning. PEOs and DEOs stated that due to the 'one off' nature of trainings, they, and thus teachers, only gained a limited knowledge of the topic which again impacts upon the quality of learning. The frequent incidence of physical and emotional punishment of children in schools is also an indicator of limited application of child centered methodologies.

"Teachers beat, slap and threaten us. They do this when we answer something wrong or don't do our homework." **School children.**
- *Supervision and mentoring of teachers is limited.* Supervision of the teacher in the classroom either by the head teacher or DTMT rarely occurs due to limited numbers of staff and capacity in this area.
- *Student Councils generally lack meaningful child participation.* Although student councils had been established in many of the schools visited, there was no participation from children in school development planning and it was generally adults who decided what activities the student councils should do.

Recommendations

- *Improvements in teaching and learning need more support.* Providing training to the head teachers either through the monthly head teacher meetings or in dedicated workshops with DEO primary education section staff could be one way of supporting improvements in teaching and learning. An alternative is identifying teachers or head teachers within a cluster who could become trainers and mentors at the monthly cluster meetings.
- *The DTMT and head teachers need more support in supervising teachers in the classroom.* PEO, DEO and head teachers need targeted training in supervision techniques, use of monitoring tools and providing feedback to teachers for this to occur effectively.
- *The role of student councils and school support committees in school self assessment and school development planning should be strengthened.* To increase participation in assessment/planning processes at the school level, a pilot programme should initially be established, whereby a local NGO provides capacity building to student councils, school support committees, head teachers and teachers in short and long term planning which would involve strong elements of child participation. A cross cutting theme of child protection at school could also be incorporated.

Strategic Choice 3: Access

SCNiC has supported the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in endeavours to achieve the education MDG by supporting construction of concrete classrooms and mini schools in remote, isolated areas, promoting the household mapping activity (in part, to identify out of school children), and supporting annual enrolment campaigns.



Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The Programme has made a significant contribution to improving access.* The Programme has supported increases in enrolment of children at primary schools through various initiatives, including construction of schools, especially in more remote, isolated areas, introducing household mapping of every child in the school catchment zone, and school enrolment campaigns at the start of each school year.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *The Operation Rescue package introduced by SCNiC and endorsed by MoEYS for older students has not been implemented widely.* Many children who are overage – i.e. older than 11 years - who have never been to primary school or have dropped out at an earlier stage, are not accessing school.
- *Many schools who have nomadic populations are not implementing the flexible learning schedule introduced by SCNiC and now official MoEYS policy.* Many children who are living in the more remote areas frequently live a nomadic lifestyle, with their parents moving around for farming, fishing and construction work and the children from necessity accompanying their parents.

Unfortunately, many schools who have populations of children who move with their families are unaware of, or unable to implement the flexible learning schedule which would support these children to remain in school.

Recommendations

- *The specific group(s) of marginalised children who will be targeted by the 2010 -2014 need to be identified and appropriate activities to support these children developed.* The particular target group or groups of marginalised children (ethnic minorities, children with Khmer as a second language, over age students, disabled students, children in remote, isolated areas, children living a nomadic lifestyle) should be selected and comprehensive strategies developed to support these children in acquiring an education (possible activities are described in the following recommendations). SCNiC has already developed various initiatives to support more marginalised children but these do not appear to be effectively implemented at present, with these initiatives not becoming institutionalised at the provincial, district or school level.

Strategic Choice 4: Systems

All duty bearers are aware that for quality education to occur at school, there must be effective and efficient systems and processes in place from the National to the school level. In recent years, SCNiC has provided support to this area, particularly to the PEOs in database development, management and planning.



Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The Programme has contributed to strengthening the education system, particularly at provincial level.* The benefits of having an SCNiC staff member in the target PEOs cannot be overstated. SCNiC is seen as working within the system and for the system, with clear benefits seen in the data management, planning processes and financial systems of the PEO. Introducing household data collection at the school level has supported the PEOs and DEOs in improved planning based on real data.

Weaknesses and Constraining factors

- *District and school level management has received insufficient attention.* Although the positive impact of SCNiC's work is clear at the PEO level, it is less clear at the district level where there has been less direct support. There has been no or limited support to head teachers on school based management other than annual planning.
- *The capacity of provincial and district level education staff to analyse and utilise data is limited.* The capacity of DEOs and PEOs to analyse data is limited, with little or no training provided by the Programme specifically on this. As a result, different DEOs and PEOs are analysing data differently.

Recommendations

- *The strengthening of the management capacity of PEOs needs to be further developed and expanded to encompass DEOs and head teachers:* The gains already seen from the previous phase in working with the PEOs should be capitalised upon. The focus should remain on building the capacity in planning, with new support provided on leadership, data analysis and staff management with an expansion to encompass not only the PEOs but also DEOs and head teachers.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)

As part of the evaluation, interviews were conducted with the two departments within MoEYS that SCNiC works most closely with – the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education – in order to get their perspective of the SCNiC-supported Education Programme.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *SCNiC's contribution to development of the CFS framework and implementation of CFS policy has been significant.* The Department regards the SCNiC Education Programme as having played a major role in helping MoEYS to develop the CFS framework as well as tools for implementing CFS in primary schools.
- *SCNiC has supported areas where the education system is weak.* Where MoEYS has been unable to provide support due to a lack of budget or internal capacity, SCNiC has provided support - e.g. school construction in remote areas, production of ECE publications, support in developing the ECE policy and capacity building of staff. SCNiC support to more than one sub-sector (i.e. ECE and primary) has contributed to a more holistic and effective approach.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *SCNiC has not been supporting implementation of the CFS 'package' in a holistic way and focuses too narrowly on specific target schools.* Training to a limited number of PEO and DEO staff has tended to pick out aspects of CFS, rather than promote the development of CFS in a more comprehensive way. Additionally SCNiC has concentrated on working at the PEO and DEO level with only a small number of target schools benefitting, rather than using and strengthening the cluster system to support implementation of CFS.
- *Information flow between SCNiC and the Department of Early Childhood Education has not been maximized.* The ECE Department is not fully informed as to what SCNiC, the PEOs and DEOs are planning to do or what activities are already implemented in HBECCD.

Recommendations

- *More comprehensive implementation of CFS through the cluster system needs to be promoted by SCNiC.* The SCNiC Education Programme needs to ensure that CFS is being introduced to schools in a more systematic and holistic way, and should be focusing more on using the existing cluster system to support this.

- *Coordination and communication between SCNiC and the Department of ECE regarding which activities they are supporting in the provinces needs to be enhanced.* Coordination between SCN and MoEYS ECD Department over HBECCD should be maximised, specifically regarding planning, implementation and long term sustainability and institutionalisation of the programme.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The evaluation process involved meetings with several Development Partners, including NGOs and UNICEF, in order to get their perspectives on the SCNiC-supported Education Programme.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *SCNiC is regarded as a major player in supporting education development in Cambodia.* In particular, their contribution several years ago, together with UNICEF, KAPE, and others to develop the CFS framework and resource materials, was seen as significant, as is SCNiC's support and promotion of ECCD and recent introduction of 'round table' discussions involving all relevant organisations. SCNiC's work at all levels of the education system has supported the strengthening of systems related to training and information flow from schools to MoEYS. SCNiC's participation in the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) and, to a lesser extent, the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) also supports the RGC's commitment to moving towards a sector wide approach (SWAp) in education.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *SCNiC is perceived as an organisation that prefers to work largely independently of other organisations.* Particularly from 2006 until 2009, SCNiC was regarded by other aid and development organisations as preferring to work mainly with Government at all levels rather than also working closely with other Development Partners. The evaluation found little evidence of any significant cooperation with other Development Partners beyond participation in the NEP and ESWG meetings, and yearly or twice yearly coordination meetings in some provinces. Additionally, all Development Partners spoken to as part of this evaluation referred to the payment of stipends as one difficulty they face working in provinces where SCNiC is present. Discussions with PEO and SCNiC staff indicate that there have not yet been any discussions as to how these payments might be phased out in the longer term.
- *Limited documentation has been produced by the SCNiC programme.* While SCNiC's earlier involvement in producing CFS resource materials was highly regarded, Development Partners said they had seen few resource materials or documentation produced by the programme between 2006 – 2009.⁴ This was felt to be unfortunate, given SCNiC's close involvement at all levels in the education system and the opportunities that this presented for learning, documenting and sharing information.

⁴ In fact, the SCNiC Education Programme supported the publication of numerous resource materials through MoEYS, but there was little external awareness of these materials among development partners.

Recommendations

- *SCNiC needs to be more proactive in seeking opportunities for closer cooperation with other Development Partners at national and provincial level.* SCNiC is already actively engaged with other NGOs as well as donors through the regular NEP and ESWG meetings and these present opportunities for closer cooperation with other like-minded organisations. At the provincial level, SCNiC could encourage the PEO to organise regular coordination meetings, as well as annual joint planning meetings, to ensure that the resources available from different organisations – funding, technical support, etc. – are being maximised in order to achieve greater impact.
- *While payments of stipends to PEO staff cannot be stopped overnight, the issue needs to be discussed with PEO partners.* While stopping these payments suddenly could negatively impact on programme implementation, a dialogue regarding this issue needs to be initiated between SCNiC and PEOs regarding the best way of eventually phasing out this practice.
- *SCNiC's achievements need to be better documented and disseminated.* There is much in the education programme that SCNiC can justifiably be proud of, and which others could learn from – for example, the establishment of schools in remote areas, the HBECCD model, the Barefoot Teacher programme and other initiatives.

Conclusion: The SCNiC Education programme has undoubtedly made a valuable contribution to supporting quality change in primary and ECCD education in Cambodia, particularly in terms of enabling thousands of children, particularly in remote areas, to achieve their right to education. It has worked at multiple levels with a specific focus on the PEOs and institutional change at this level is clearly apparent.

However, there has been less of an impact on the actual quality of teaching and learning occurring in the classroom, as well as longer term sustainability of the HBECCD programme, and SCNiC should see this as a priority for the next 2010-2014 Programme phase. In terms of programme management, the SCNiC senior management appear very aware of what changes are necessary, and are taking the appropriate steps to implement these improvements.

1. INTRODUCTION

Save the Children Norway in Cambodia (SCNiC) recently commissioned an evaluation of the most recent phase of their Basic Education Programme (2006 to 2009), which has been supporting the development of early childhood and primary education in 6 provinces and Phnom Penh Municipality, and working with and through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) at all levels. The main purpose of this evaluation is to inform the design and development of the next phase of SCNiC's support for education (2010 – 2014) in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

The evaluation findings and recommendations outlined in this summary were developed from fieldwork conducted in all 6 target provinces⁵ in May and June 2010. The evaluation process was led by an external consultant and involved a team of 16 PEOple, comprising both Provincial and District Office of Education (PEO/DEO) staff, as well as SCNiC Education Programme staff.

The evaluation covered a total of 34 schools in 12 districts of 6 provinces, as well as district and provincial education offices and teacher training colleges. Information was also gathered through interviews with relevant MoEYS staff in Phnom Penh, as well as other Development Partners supporting basic education in Cambodia. In addition to gathering quantitative data, 882 PEOple were interviewed, including 319 children, 118 teachers, 82 Provincial and District Education Office staff and 208 mothers.⁶

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation looked at both *process* – how well the programme was implemented – as well as *impact* or evidence of change brought about by programme activities, and identified strengths and weaknesses of the programme, as well as contributing factors. In addition, the evaluation identified examples of good practice and innovative approaches. There were four overall objectives for the evaluation specified in the Terms of Reference:

1. Assess to what degree the programme has achieved its objectives in terms of its quality, relevance and results/outcomes on children's lives as planned and how effectively and efficiently the programme being implemented.
2. Document lessons learnt and good practices, as well as look for evidence of innovative approaches that have policy and practice implications. Also generate knowledge that will contribute to programme and policy development at strategic level.
3. Identify the most significant factors that have constrained or contributed to the achievements and effective use of resources.
4. Recommend concrete and realistic approaches and activity options, in relation to the new country strategy objectives and Save the Children Norway's global new strategy, for the next 5 years.

⁵ The Programme also included Phnom Penh Municipality, where the SCNiC Education Programme ceased support in mid-2009. This former target area was not included in the evaluation due to their decision not to participate.

⁶ Refer to *Appendix 3. Evaluation Respondents*.

3. PREPARATION PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

In addition to addressing the four objectives specified in the terms of reference, the evaluation was also seen as an opportunity to contribute to the capacity development of SCNiC Education Programme staff as well as PEO and DEO staff from target provinces, both in terms of assessment methodology as well as data analysis.

While the key areas of focus for the evaluation, were initially defined by the consultants, and draft key questions developed together with draft tools (question guides, secondary data forms, etc.), these were then reviewed and revised by the evaluation team in a three day preparation workshop held in Phnom Penh. As well as providing the overall theoretical framework for the evaluation, the workshop also covered practical guidelines for facilitating interviews and focus group discussions, and note-taking, as well as practice sessions in the form of role plays, with other participants observing and then providing feedback.

The main information areas were related to the overall strategy and objectives of the Programme and included areas related to ECCD, access, quality, children's and community participation and education management systems. Additional questions were also developed and were designed to obtain respondents suggestions for the next phase of the SCNiC Programme. Methods used included individual and group interviews/focus group discussions, gathering of quantitative data and observation. The tools included interview guides, secondary data forms, an observation form and quality indicators for children.⁷

In each province, the evaluation team separated into two smaller groups, with each taking responsibility for the evaluation in one of the two districts evaluated per target province. As well as interviewing relevant DEO staff, each team conducted interviews and focus group discussions with head teachers, teachers including pre-school teachers if present, school support committees, parents and children. Quantitative data related to enrolments, repetition and drop out rates was also gathered at province, district and school levels. The external consultants, assisted by an interpreter, conducted the interviews with relevant staff at PEO level, as well as with staff from the Teacher Training Colleges. Following each school visit, the evaluation team met to consolidate the data gathered, and carry out initial analysis. This consolidated data was recorded in a table format for later use in developing the findings and recommendations.

After all target provinces had been visited, the evaluation team met back in Phnom Penh for a two day data consolidation and analysis workshop, which focussed on bringing together the data from all provinces visited, identifying common findings as well as differences, and underlying factors. Possible recommendations for the next phase of the Education Programme were also discussed and recorded.

Following completion of a draft summary report which documented findings and recommendations, a half day meeting with provincial and central level stakeholders was held to present the draft findings

⁷ Quality indicators for children were used in small group discussions involving children from upper primary level grades in most schools visited, in order to get their perspective on changes in the classroom and the school that had come about as a result of Programme inputs.

and recommendations and to receive their feedback. Following that meeting, this evaluation report was finalised and submitted to SCNiC.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are organized by looking at the overall implementation of the programme in relation to the 2006-2009 education strategy and then in more detail at individual areas of intervention from the previous strategic phase. The individual areas of intervention should not be looked only individually, but a more holistic view should be taken as each intervention area is necessarily interlinked with the others. Each of the intervention areas are organised under one of the four 2010-2014 strategic choices from the SCNiC Country Programme Strategy (CPS) 2010-2014, which clearly illustrates the linkages between the previous and present programmes.

2010-2014 Strategic Choice	Area of intervention from the 2006-2009 programme
ECCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HBECCD
Quality of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum implementation • Child centered approach • Student councils • Child protection • School support committees • Teacher self reflection, student self assessment and school self assessment • Supervision • Teacher training colleges
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Enrolment Rate • Retention at primary school
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education management • School based management • Database development, collection and analysis • Child friendly schools

4.1. The SCNiC Education Programme 2006-2009

4.1.1 Background

SCNiC has been working in education in Cambodia for over 20 years. The primary focus of the education programme throughout this time has been on improving the quality of primary education and supporting increased access to schooling. The achievements of the SCNiC Education Programme need to be seen against the backdrop of Cambodia's recent history. Civil conflicts in the 1970s resulted in the complete destruction of the education system and while emergency relief and rehabilitation of educational services got underway in the 1980s and early 1990s, more systematic development of the education sector did not really begin until the late 1990s. Over the past decade, Cambodia has achieved remarkable expansion of educational services, and this is reflected in steadily increasing rates of

enrolment, particularly at primary school level, improved quality of teaching and learning, as well as in overall education management, particularly at Ministry and provincial levels. The SCNiC Education Programme has evolved over time in response to these changes.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) became a signatory to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1992, has signed up to the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education - all clearly signifying a strong commitment by the RGC to have education as a priority.

SCNiC has necessarily evolved from a more project based approach to a programmatic one over the years in support of MoEYS initiatives. All SCNiC interventions are now integrated into the MoEYS own systems, specifically at the provincial level, with a member of SCNiC staff working within the target PEOs. These staff members are multitasking by supporting both the technical and support aspects of Programme implementation, including finance, administration, planning, and technical support to ECE and primary education.

4.1.2 Objectives of the 2006-2009 Education Strategy

The 2006-2009 programme in the CSP had 4 specific objectives:

- ⇒ **Quality Access to Schooling**
- ⇒ **Quality Access to Education**
- ⇒ **Quality Access to Learning**
- ⇒ **Quality Access to Achievement**

These 4 specific objectives as stated in the 2006-2009 CSP, were defined to ensure that more children, especially girls, disadvantaged children and children living in rural and remote areas, minority and indigenous tribal children, and the disabled were able to access a quality education.

Unfortunately, there was no specific baseline study conducted for the 2006-2009 phase of the Education Programme which meant that measuring the impact of Programme interventions had to rely more on cross-checking information from different sources (i.e. triangulation of data). A total of 26 results were developed for the 2006-2009 phase of the Education Programme, which focussed on quantitative information, particularly numbers of children reached by the Programme, materials distributed and numbers of participants attending training.

4.1.3 Programme Management and Implementation

Most of the findings with regard to management of the Education Programme from 2006 – 2009 are now ‘historical’, in that they were already identified in 2009 by the new senior management team and Education Programme staff, and actions have already been undertaken to address many of these issues. Nonetheless, the evaluation did review the management of the programme from both internal and external perspectives – i.e. from SCNiC staff as well as Government and Development Partners perspectives.

Strengths and Enabling Factors for Programme Implementation and Programme Management

- *There was a significant advantage in SCNiC staff being based at the PEO.* This has undoubtedly supported the implementation of the programme with all PEO staff members clearly stating that the benefits of having a NGO working directly within the PEO and within the system was high and should not be underestimated.
- *SCNiC is seen as a major player in education in Cambodia.* Due to SCNiC's long established presence in Cambodia, its in-depth knowledge of education within the country and understanding of the function of the MoEYS at all levels, SCNiC is seen to be a major player in education in the country by the MoEYS national, provincial and district staff interviewed.
- *There were high levels of motivation, skills, experience and flexibility among Education Programme staff.* The main factor contributing to the effective implementation of the programme and the impact of the intervention on children's lives is undoubtedly the motivation, skills, experience and flexibility of Education Programme staff. This has been the most critical factor in the achievements made by the programme in areas related to improving access to education (at both early childhood and primary levels), the quality of classroom environments, improved education management at all levels, and development of capacity among DEO, PEO and relevant MoEYS staff.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors for Programme Implementation and Programme Management

- *The Programme lacked a clear overall document education strategy document.* The overall document which provided the framework for the period being evaluated had too many objectives (4 specific objectives and 9 other objectives), lacked clarity and was not fully understood by Education Programme staff and partners. Indicators for expected results tended to be quantitative and relied heavily on results related to distribution of resources, numbers of participants attending training, rather than detailing the impact on children or duty bearers of the distribution of these resources or attending training. This meant that reporting was more focused on achieving quantitative targets rather than looking at quality and impact or outcomes of activities.
- *The management structure was unwieldy.* There was no Programme Director in place and all Programme Managers reported directly to the Country Director. Within the Education Programme, all education staff reported to the Education Programme Manager. This resulted in overload and impacted on the effectiveness of management.
- *The monitoring and evaluation system was not clearly defined.* There was no overall monitoring and evaluation framework in place with a clear definition of monitoring roles and responsibilities of each SCNiC staff member. Monitoring tools were developed for use at primary school level as well as for home based early childhood, care and development (HBECCD), but these were complex with several respondents stating that the tools were difficult to apply.
- *The Education Programme lacked a clear overall advocacy strategy.* While the Programme has played a significant role in successfully advocating for the adoption of the Child Friendly School (CFS)

model by MoEYS (and several respondents commented very positively on this aspect), and promotion of Early Childhood Education (ECE), particularly through support for the HBECCD model, there was no clear advocacy strategy in place during this phase of the programme. Programme staff lacked (and still do in many instances) a clear and common understanding of what advocacy is, as well as the advocacy goals of the programme.

- *Technical support to the Programme was constrained due to workload of PEO-based staff and location of technical support staff in Phnom Penh.* The placement of one staff member in PEO offices in each target province has undoubtedly contributed to more effective programme implementation. However, much of their time was/is spent on administrative support and they have not been able to provide the level of technical support that was required to support implementation on the ground, particularly to the DEO in target districts and after training. Technical support was provided by a small number of Phnom Penh based staff, and while these staff are well qualified and experienced, the geographical scope of the programme was such that the amount of support they could provide specifically to each target province was limited (sometimes to 1 – 2 visits per year).
- *The Programme had 46 districts (excluding Phnom Penh Municipality) as target districts.* As mentioned above, the SCNiC provincial member of staff is primarily busy with administrative tasks and has insufficient time to support districts. However even if the SCNiC member of staff did have additional time, it is still unlikely that they could provide the necessary support to all the SCNiC target districts within their province. The sheer number of target districts results in serious issues with the impact of the Programme, especially at district level, and raises questions regarding the quality of activities conducted in this number of districts with limited members of staff to provide the necessary support.
- *The Programme has a large number of intervention areas.* In addition to the high number of target districts which SCNiC focussed on during the 2006-2009 phase, the numbers of intervention areas/activities were very high with new initiatives/activities seemingly being introduced on a regular basis - e.g. teacher self assessment, student self assessment, student credit scheme, barefoot teacher programme. Although SCNiC should be applauded for trying to support as many children as possible, there should be more of a focus on a smaller and more manageable number of interventions with concrete sub-strategies. The result is a high number of intervention areas sometimes occurring in a very small number of schools which cannot receive adequate support from SCNiC or the PEO/DEO, and thus results in limited impact.
- *The 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan clearly states that girls, children with disabilities and ethnic minority children will be supported by the Programme but there is little evidence of interventions targeting these groups.* Although there is a clear statement in the 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan that these children will be reached and supported by the Programme, there appeared to be little evidence of it in the fieldwork element of the evaluation. Although there appeared to be no significant differences in the numbers of boys and girls enrolled, there was no mention by any stakeholder or duty bearers of any activities which had specifically

targeted girls. Additionally the support that would be provided to ethnic minority children was not evident, with no direct programme intervention which was actually targeting these children - e.g. the Cham, the Vietnamese. Finally for children with disabilities, in some schools visited, there was evidence of improving accessibility to the school through building of ramps and wide verandas on the school (it was not clear if this was as a result of a SCNiC intervention or not) which would support children who have a physical disability related to walking. However there was no evidence of any other support for children with disabilities and teachers and head teachers seldom mentioned this group of children as a marginalised group, potentially indicating a lack of awareness of the issue. Actual understanding of what constituted an inclusive education environment did not appear high amongst respondents (or the team of evaluators).

- *The 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan states that the Programme will provide opportunities for children's participation* The 2006-2009 country programme 4 year work plan states that opportunities for child participation may be provided through awareness raising, student councils and classroom activities context, involving children in social/cultural events, children's clubs, peer learning and participation in school EFA activities. Although there was evidence that student councils were established in the majority of schools and that children did support younger children in the school in some instances, there was little other evidence to suggest that the programme had had an impact on increasing children's participation.

External Factors supporting the Programme

- *The RGC has an overall education strategy in place.* The Education Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2010 provides the framework for Annual Operational Plans, both of which help to provide appropriate focus for interventions supported by Development Partners, including those of the SCNiC Education Programme.
- *CFS policy from MoEYS.* All of SCNiC's primary education programming is in line with the CFS policy. This synchronisation and support of Government policy from SCNiC contributes to greater sustainability of any intervention.
- *Improved coordination between MoEYS and Development Partners.* As part of the move towards a sector-wide approach (SWAp) in education, a number of mechanisms have been established which have enhanced communication and coordination of development work within the sector, both among Development Partners as well as with MoEYS. These include the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), the NGO Education Partnership (NEP), and the Joint Technical Working Group on Education (JTWG-Ed). SCNiC is an active participant in these bodies.
- *Donor attention still focussed on Cambodia.* Donors are still allocating large funds to improving the quality of education in Cambodia, including funding for SCNiC's education programme.

External Challenges to the Programme

- *Lack of budget for education.* Although the % allocation of budget to education from the RGC is significant – 18.1% in 2009⁸ - the budget is still limited to implement an effective education policy nationwide with the RGC still heavily reliant on outside assistance from donors and other agencies. The limited budget results in :
 - Low teacher pay (which can affect motivation) and means that many teachers need second incomes to be able to survive.
 - Lack of teachers' accommodation specifically in more rural and remote areas where teachers may be posted to.
 - Not all schools receiving textbooks or copies of the curriculum and those schools which do receive textbooks receiving insufficient amounts for the number of students in the school.
 - Although CFS is official government policy, the budget is insufficient to implement the whole package effectively.
 - Limited numbers of lower secondary schools for students to progress to after completing primary school.
 - Although MoEYS now sees ECE as a priority for the nation's children, the actual % of the education budget allocated to ECE is severely restricted. This is further compounded by Cambodia committing to 9 years of basic education (primary and lower secondary) and thus the majority of the education budget is allocated to these 2 areas.
- *Poor economic situation of many families in Cambodia.* Many families are struggling to make ends meet and to provide sufficient food for their children. This results in children from an early age having to support their family, either by looking after younger siblings, working in the fields with their parents or being exploited for child labour. This means that many children who may enrol at school either drop out or are constant repeaters of grades which may subsequently lead to dropping out.

Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

- *Working within the RGC's Education system supports sustainability of the action.* Having a member of SCNiC staff based in the PEO results in ownership and responsibility on the part of the PEO staff for the programme activities/intervention. The support from SCNiC to provide input on how the systems and processes within the PEO can be further enhanced through discussion and actual examples (from SCNiC's own reporting, planning and finance system) results in greater sustainability than would be possible if SCNiC staff were not based in the PEO.
- *Construction of schools in remote areas encourages community support in the school and has a huge impact on increasing access to an education for these children.* Construction of low cost schools in

⁸ *Strategic Assessment of the General Education Sector in Cambodia*, ADB, 2010

remote areas encourages community cohesiveness in supporting the school and education in general and thus supports progress towards achieving universal education for all.

- *Teachers' credit scheme and student credit scheme increase motivation.* All respondents at the DEO/PEO and focus school level stated that the credit schemes for teachers and students increased motivation of the teachers and promoted increased attendance by the children receiving the loan. Although these schemes appear to be a success, they are limited due to SCNiC budget constraints and are not sustainable in the long term. An evaluation of the impact of the credit schemes on children and teachers who have received them should be considered for the future (see *Section 4.4.2 Retention at Primary School: Recommendations*).
- *Working in large numbers of districts and a limited number of focus schools DEOs not achieve the set objectives of the 2006-2009 CSP.* Although levels of access have been undoubtedly improved due to construction in many of the target provinces and districts due to the SCNiC programme, the actual quality of teaching and learning at school remains low in many instances with limited evidence of child centered approaches being used, limited child participation and high levels of violence against children. A more systematic and comprehensive approach to addressing these issues needs to be considered for the 2010-2014 programme phase.
- *Development of innovative approaches and approval by MoEYS DEOs not ensure successful implementation and adoption.* SCNiC, not only in the most recent strategic phase but in previous times, has developed various innovative approaches which have been officially incorporated into MoEYS policy - e.g. barefoot teacher programme, flexible learning schedule, Operation Rescue. Unfortunately the introduction of innovative approaches and/or incorporation into official MoEYS policy DEOs not guarantee implementation and these innovations were not visible in any of the schools visited or brought up by respondents in any interviews. The result has often been that innovations which have the potential to effectively support marginalised children in attending school, are not being sustained in the longer term.
- *Communication and coordination at all levels of MoEYS is essential if programmes are to be sustainable.* The focus of the SCNiC 2006-2009 programme was at the PEO level with a more limited focus at the DEO and National level. Obviously, it is difficult to work to the same degree at all levels of MoEYS; however, for sustainability of actions, it is essential that any introduction of tools, activities and mechanisms at the PEO/DEO level (and potentially school level) are also presented to the National level. These tools/activities/mechanisms can be reviewed and revised as necessary through consultation with the relevant department at MoEYS and incorporated as national policy/standards where applicable e.g. HBECCD monitoring tools. If these consultations do not occur, there is the danger that activities/innovations which are working well at the PEO/DEO and potentially school level but are unknown to the National level could be superseded by a less appropriate and effective activity/tool.

Overall Recommendations

As was mentioned earlier, the Country Director, Programme Director and Programme Manager have already identified most of the above weaknesses relating to programme management that require attention and have started to address these. These recommendations provide additional suggestions to assist them in this process.

- *The overall Programme document for the next phase needs to be finalised.* A draft Education Programme plan for the period 2010 – 2014 was developed by a consultant in March 2009. While this document provides a clearer overall structure than the previous Education Programme document – with 4 overall components consistent with basic education program design elsewhere – i.e. access, quality, management and governance and advocacy – it is understood that the details are still under discussion and are yet to be finalised. Ideally, this document should be revised and finalised before annual or long term planning proceeds further.
- *The Education Programme would benefit from an overall monitoring and evaluation framework, as well as simple, easy to use tools.* While EMIS and the school data management system⁹ at PEO level will provide useful information and should be utilised as much as possible, SCN will have its own monitoring requirements which are external to the PEO's data management systems. It is recommended that an overall monitoring and evaluation framework be developed as well as simple easy to use monitoring tools. Monitoring responsibilities of each relevant education staff person should also be clearly defined as part of the framework with support provided from the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. SCN in the Lao PDR is in the process of developing such a system, and this could provide a useful starting or reference point for further discussion.
- *An overall education advocacy plan needs to be developed with the participation of all education staff.* There are already plans in place to address this in the second half of 2010, possibly with assistance from Save the Children Denmark. This should help ensure that all Education Programme staff have a similar understanding of the concept of advocacy, as well as defining and agreeing on a maximum of two or three advocacy objectives to be addressed in the next phase. The overall advocacy strategy, potential partners, and a more detailed advocacy implementation plan can also be developed as part of this process. NEP stated that they would encourage the participation of SCNiC in their advocacy working group.
- *The Education Programme organisational structure needs some further adjustments to ensure adequate technical support on the ground.* The changes made to date to the organisational structure within the Education Programme have helped to address the problems in the previous Education Programme identified by senior management. In particular, the establishment of a Programme Director position and two Education Advisor positions have helped significantly in reducing the management 'pressure' on both the Country Director as well as the Education

⁹ In SCNiC target provinces, MOEYS EMIS data is collected from schools and the school data management system which collects household information on numbers of children in and out of school.

Programme Manager. However, the SCNiC staff member placed in the PEO is recognised as having too heavy a workload in that they are required to cover all administrative, financial and technical aspects. It is recommended that a review of the current responsibilities of the SCNiC provincial based staff is conducted and consideration be given to establishing a new position of technical support officer in each of the target provinces, in addition to the current coordinator positions. This will enable the programme to better address issues related to follow-up support following training, as well as contribute to capacity development of DEO staff. While there will undoubtedly be challenges in finding suitably qualified PEOPle who are willing to be province-based, this could be trialled first in one or two target provinces and then assessed after one year, before any decision is made as to whether or not to extend this to other target provinces.

- *As suggested in SCNiC's draft 2010-2014 Basic Education Plan (BEP), the number of target districts needs to be reduced and work undertaken with whole clusters of schools.* Reducing the numbers of target districts and recruiting an additional SCNiC staff member to work at the PEO level will undoubtedly promote increased impact of any intervention at the district level. A reduced number of districts per province will result in SCNiC provincial staff being able to provide more targeted support on a more regular basis in the areas of planning, primary education and ECE than was possible in the previous programme phase. Working within whole clusters of schools and supporting the functioning of the cluster system will also increase the impact of any intervention at the school level.
- *Greater emphasis needs to be placed on child participation through promoting the student councils and child centered approach.* SCNiC champions children's rights, one of which is participation, and this should be a focus, albeit a cross cutting one, in all education programming. The role of how child participation can be incorporated into other activities - e.g. child centered approach, school annual planning, etc. - should be explored and implemented.
- *The target groups of marginalised children to be reached by the 2010-2014 programme need to be clearly identified and appropriate strategies for these children developed.* Not all groups of marginalised children can be reached by the SCNiC Education Programme, but it should be clear from the outset what groups will be targeted by the 2010-2014 Programme and comprehensive strategies developed to support these children in accessing a quality education. Should the previous focus on children living in remote, isolated areas continue where there are issues of nomadicity, the existing approach of promoting a flexible learning schedule, the barefoot teacher and mobile school programmes, should all be reviewed and revised as necessary. If ethnic minority children are to become a focus, alternative strategies should be developed and the requisite budget allocated for these interventions.

The individual areas of intervention from the 2006-2009 Education Programme under the four 2010-2014 strategic choices are now examined in detail.

4.2 Strategic Choice 1 - Home Based Early Childhood, Care and Development (HBECCD)

Early Childhood Education (ECE) provision for under 6 year olds is now seen as a priority by MoEYS, as it is recognised that supporting a child's early development and learning is very important with children who participate in ECE activities adjusting and adapting more easily to primary school. Although MOEYS has considered ECE to be a priority, this has not been reflected in the overall budget allocation from the Government and MoEYS which is still low.

SCNiC has been involved for some years in ECE activities at all levels including the community and home level. This evaluation focussed on the provision of Home Based Early Childhood, Care and Development (HBECCD) by SCNiC as there was insufficient time to evaluate the other ECE activities which SCNiC supports. The central level work at the ECE Department of supporting policy development, implementation and the development of an ECE curriculum was also part of the evaluation.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The SCNiC Home Based Early Childhood Care and Development (HBECCD) programme has increased the percentage of children enrolling in ECCD activities in the 6 SCNiC evaluated provinces.* In SCNiC provinces, 18.9% of 0-5 year olds participate in ECCD related activities as opposed to a National average of 11%¹⁰. The low cost of the HBECCD initiative has significantly contributed to this increase in enrolment figures according to many respondents in the evaluation, and ECCD provision is now available in areas where previously there was none.
- *HBECCD is seen by the DEO and PEO staff as a suitable low cost alternative to more traditional pre-school facilities.* Most DEOs and PEOS recognised the budget constraints that Government ECE activities operate under and thus felt that HBECCD was a suitable activity due to its low cost in areas where pre-schools or community ECE facilities were not available for young children.
- *Provincial ECE staff have increased technical capacity.* The Provincial Education Offices (PEOs) ECE section have increased technical capacity in the area of childhood development as a result of an SCNiC emphasis on training at this level.
- *Effective support is being provided to HBECCD in Pursat Province.* In Pursat province, even though SCNiC withdrew in mid 2009, the PEO provide financial support to HBECCD in 3 districts for regular monitoring by PEO/DEO staff and one pre-school director from Pursat town. The pre-school director visits HBECCD sites/locations for an average of 7-9 days a month and her travel costs are covered by the PEO. The pre-school director can provide more regular support to HBECCD than was found in other provinces, as she has other senior staff and pre-school teachers at the pre-school, so her presence is not required on a full time basis.

¹⁰ Figure of 11% obtained from Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2010, Table 3B) for the year 2007.

- *Children who have attended ECE activities are perceived as performing better¹¹ upon entering primary school than their non ECE going peers.* ECCD going children are considered to be more confident, better communicators and more able to deal with the discipline and routines at primary school than non-ECCD going children.

Benefits of HBECCD (according to respondents)

- *Mothers are involved with the children's education from an early stage.*
- *The level of violence from mothers to children decreases.*
- *Children adapt better to primary school if they have attended HBECCD.*
- *Children are less likely to repeat Grade 1 if they attend HBECCD.*

- *Good cooperation between all duty bearers for the establishment of HBECCDs in villages is evident.* The training cascade model has supported this cooperation. Parents, school support committees and head teachers could all see the benefits that an ECCD programme brought to their children; e.g. children are beginning to learn at an early age with their parents being the educators, a reduction in violence¹² from mothers to children and thus all supported the ECCD programme in principle. Additionally parents are becoming more involved in their children's education as a result of HBECCD and want to support their children in their learning where possible.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Current support from pre-school teachers for HBECCD is weak in most target provinces.* The emphasis on the cascade system of training, where the PEO/DEO are trained in a TOT and cascade the training to core mothers, is an effective way of transferring knowledge and skills to a wide number of beneficiaries where budget, time and numbers of trainers are limited. However, as in all training activities, there must be provision for regular and targeted formal follow-up support to ensure quality of the HBECCD. The expectation that pre-school teachers (where available), head teachers or primary teachers will provide mentoring and support to the HBECCD is unrealistic and is not occurring effectively in most HBECCD sites visited. The pre-school teachers, primary teachers and head teachers have their own workload which DEOs not include provision for them to visit the HBECCD on a regular basis. Additionally a lack of budget to cover transport and per diems prevents regular visits.
- *DEO and PEO ECE staff are only able to provide very limited support.* Where there are no pre-school teachers, DEO/PEO based ECE staff are expected to provide the support and mentoring to the HBECCD. This occurs on an *ad hoc* basis and is impossible to conduct regularly due to limited budget, the limited number of ECCD staff members, and the relatively high number of HBECCD sites in a district e.g. in Boribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, there are 30 HBECCD groups and only one DEO staff member responsible for ECE. This limited support will necessarily impact upon the quality of the HBECCD programme with it being difficult for any person who has just returned from a

¹¹ This information was gathered from various stakeholders but no actual statistical information was available to identify if this was actually the situation or not.

¹² The reduction in violence as a result of HBECCD was cited by the majority of respondents; however there is no statistical information available to verify this claim.

training workshop to implement effectively without any follow up activity from the trainer/other experienced personnel.

- *Training provided is insufficient.* Trainings/workshops are seen as ‘one off’ activities with no review of the training materials for future workshops. The PEO, DEO, pre-school teachers and core mothers all stated that the training provided them with new skills and knowledge, but it was only scratching the surface and additional workshops covering the same material but in more depth, are necessary.
- *Written training materials are less effective in areas with low literacy rates among mothers.* The high illiteracy rate of mothers has an impact where written materials are provided during training. This was an issue identified mostly by DEO/PEO ECE members of staff who experienced difficulties at times in transferring knowledge to participants during training if some training materials were only available in the written form.
- *Lack of fixed schedule and incentives for mothers can impact negatively on HBECCD.* HBECCD activities do not have any fixed schedule in the villages with many factors having an influence on this including the season, and the farming calendar. This results in activities being irregularly run and in some cases stopping altogether either entirely or for a few months. Many of the core mothers and DEO/PEO officials interviewed cited the lack of incentive (whether financial, mentoring, follow up training or otherwise) for the core mothers contributed to the irregularity of activities in some localities. There appeared to be no clear pattern as to which localities ran activities regularly and which did not. Some localities with similar economic backgrounds, and being located within a few km of each other (for example, in Kong Meas District, Kampong Cham Province) had one HBECCD running on a monthly basis and another one not functioning at all.
- *Limited coordination and communication between SCNiC and the Department of ECE within MoEYS.* The limited coordination and communication between the MoEYS and SCNiC over the HBECCD Programme has resulted in MoEYS often being unaware of what SCNiC is achieving in this area¹³. At the National level, MoEYS ECE Department is aware that SCNiC is active in HBECCD in 6 provinces. However the ECE Department felt that there was insufficient coordination and communication with SCNiC regarding this support to HBECCD in the provinces, and that they would also like increased involvement in annual planning for the HBECCD programme. SCNiC, on the other hand, was concerned that the MoEYS ECE Department might dominate the process if they were involved in planning together with provincial ECE staff, and consequently have largely kept their support to these two groups of partners separate.
- *Dependency of PEO on SCNiC.* The HBECCD programme is perceived as being an SCNiC intervention which raises the organisation’s profile as a main player in ECE in Cambodia. However, the over-dependency of the PEO on SCNiC for financial support for ECE activities including training, transport and per diems for DEO/PEO staff to visit HBECCD, as well as maintenance of playground equipment, is of concern, particular with regard to longer term sustainability. The notable exception was Pursat

¹³ See section on evaluation findings below under 5. *Department Of Primary Education and Department of Early Childhood Education (MoEYS)* and 6. *Relationships with Development Partners*, for further information.

province where SCNiC withdrew all programme support in mid 2009, but where the PEO has remained committed to HBECCD and has allocated some budget to support monitoring and follow up visits to the HBECCD localities.

- *SCNiC HBECCD monitoring tools are regarded as too complex.* Some respondents stated that the SCNiC monitoring tools for HBECCD produced in 2007 were too detailed, and there were too many tools to be used on a regular basis.

Recommendations

- *A separate evaluation of the HBECCD programme should be conducted.* The HBECCD has been running for almost 10 years in some provinces. However, there has not been a separate evaluation of the programme in recent years to assess the quality of the intervention. This should be seen as a priority considering that SCNiC intends to expand its work in ECCD in 2010. The impact of the intervention on children's learning in Grade 1 should be assessed as should the claim that the levels of violence from mothers to children has decreased. The quality of the actual activities that are conducted during the meetings should be assessed, as well as the frequency of these meetings and the level and kind of external support required to sustain the activities. The ECCD programme, based on evidence from an evaluation, would then be able to target support more effectively where it is most needed. This HBECCD evaluation should be done before any expansion of activities occurs. The HBECCD intervention in Pursat Province and the support provided from the pre-school director should be part of any HBECCD evaluation to establish if in fact the quality of activities is higher than in other areas due to the more regular monitoring provided.
- *The mentoring and support mechanism for HBECCD requires rethinking.* At present the PEO/DEO ECE staff and pre-school teachers have this responsibility but unfortunately are not in a position to support the activities adequately due to lack of personnel, lack of time, and limited budget. As a result, the quality of the programme and activities is not maximised as the mothers receive limited or no support other than trainings. It is also not feasible for SCNiC staff to provide this support due to limited staff numbers with expertise in ECCD. Various alternatives could be considered each with advantages and disadvantages and these are as follows:
 - LNGOs with expertise in ECCD (if available) could be contracted to provide 'on the ground' support to the HBECCDs. This should be started as a pilot initiative in one province which could be scaled up to include other target provinces in the future. The disadvantage of this idea is that there is a sustainability issue for the future and that there may be insufficient numbers of LNGOs with the relevant expertise. There would be additional work for SCNiC technical and finance support staff in monitoring implementation by the LNGO.
 - Core mothers could be brought together on a quarterly basis to the DEO to exchange experiences of their individual HBECCD. This would have the advantage of the core mothers feeling part of a network of HBECCDs, would sustain motivation of the core mothers and the DEO ECE staff, and would necessitate the core mothers and DEO staff to reflect on accomplishments, challenges and to develop solutions to any issues raised. This would

provide a more comprehensive picture to SCNiC and the DEO ECE staff of what factors are supporting (or not supporting) the HBECCD and help focus activities for the future. Cross visits between HBECCDs could also be considered as a supporting mechanism to the quarterly meetings where not only the core mothers but other mothers could visit HBECCDs nearby to discuss issues affecting their young children etc. Initially, support would be provided by SCNiC to the DEO ECE staff on preparing for the meetings, developing agendas, facilitating the meeting, etc., but this support would reduce over time. Obviously there would be financial considerations for SCNiC in the form of transport allowances for the core mothers. This would need to be factored into any future programming. In addition, as SCNiC would not want to provide this allowance long term, an exit strategy should be developed from the outset which clearly demonstrates to MOEYS the benefit of HBECCD, so that advocacy by SCNiC for an increased budget is more likely to be successful. There would still be a necessity for DEO/PEO ECE staff and pre-school teachers (where available) to visit the HBECCD to observe what is actually happening on the ground, but the frequency of this would not be as great due to the quarterly meetings.

- An alternative to the above is to use the existing mechanism of DEO/PEO ECE staff and pre-school teachers providing the support and monitoring to the HBECCD, and for SCNiC to provide support in developing schedules for visits.

If any of the above ideas are to be considered by SCNiC as possible solutions, it is important for SCNiC to discuss the ideas with a representative sample of stakeholders - e.g. core mothers, mothers, DEO/PEO ECE staff – in order to obtain their input.

- *The SCNiC monitoring tools need to be reviewed and revised if necessary.* The SCNiC monitoring tools for HBECCD (produced in 2007) should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised with input from core mothers, DEO and PEO ECE staff. Discussions with the ECE Department at MoEYS should also be held to receive their input and to obtain approval for these tools to be the 'official' HBECCD tools for the whole country.
- *Coordination between MoEYS ECE Department and SCNiC¹⁴ needs to be improved.* MoEYS and SCNiC should discuss the HBECCD and establish where this will fit in the MoEYS overall structure for ECE provision in the new strategic phase, not only for SCNiC but also for MoEYS. MoEYS in its draft ESP 2009-2013 is placing an emphasis on expanding ECE opportunities to 5 year olds in areas with low rates of new admissions and high repetition rates. The MoEYS ESP has a specific mention of donors and NGOs providing additional support to ECE in commune based approaches and alternative parental home based approaches which target the lower age range. SCNiC should ensure that the ECE department in MoEYS are involved in the SCNiC HBECCD programme where appropriate, and consider solutions to the challenges identified in working at this level. Issues of sustainability in the long term could then begin to be addressed from the outset.

¹⁴ See Section 5. Department Of Primary Education and Department of Early Childhood Education (MoEYS) for further information.

4.3 Strategic Choice 2 - Quality of Education

Although in Cambodia, national net enrolment figures for primary school are over 90%, there are still concerns over the actual quality of education that is being delivered. The MoEYS has been aware of this for a number of years and has developed, with support from donors, agencies and NGOs (SCNiC were a major player), the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) policy to support improved quality of education in schools. The budget from the MoEYS for CFS is, however, limited and this impacts upon actual implementation at the school level. Additionally, a restricted budget for the District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMT) to provide mentoring and support to schools and cluster, and this lack of funding impacts negatively on attempts to improve the quality of education. The lack of textbooks and even the curriculum in some schools, together with the lack of qualified teachers, especially in more remote areas, all contributes to difficulties in supporting quality changes in education.

SCNiC has been supporting the implementation of the CFS policy in terms of access (Dimension 1), effective teaching and learning (Dimension 2), and the participation of children's families and communities in the running of their local school (Dimension 5). SCNiC's intervention has been primarily focused on the more rural and remote, isolated communities with the notable exception of the work conducted in the 2006-2009 strategic phase in Phnom Penh Municipality. Additionally, SCNiC has introduced some innovative approaches to deal with the issues of access for some marginalised groups of children (particularly over age children and children living a nomadic lifestyle), including the barefoot teacher programme, a flexible learning schedule and Operation Rescue - all innovations which have received support and inclusion in CFS policy from MoEYS.

4.3.1 Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation is related to two of the CFS dimensions - *Dimension 1: All children have access to schooling and Dimension 2: Effective teaching and learning*. The revised curriculum offers flexibility to teachers to relate topics to the local context and thus to show children that what is learnt in school can be applied outside of the school environment. SCNiC has supported the implementation of the primary school curriculum by providing training to PEO/DEO staff, who then cascade the training down to teachers and head teachers.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Increased familiarity of PEO and DEO with the National Curriculum.* PEO, DEO primary education section staff and head teachers are more familiar with the National Curriculum and how this can be applied in the local context after attending SCNiC workshops and meetings. Capacity to relate the curriculum to everyday situations has increased amongst the PEO primary education section staff members in particular.

I now try to teach by using investigatory techniques; it makes school more interesting for the students. *Grade 5 teacher, Sre Khav Primary school, Angkor Chum, Siem Reap*

- *Teachers are more aware of the importance of linking the curriculum to real life situations.* SCNiC has supported training to PEO and DEO primary education section staff on learning through investigation, and has encouraged participants to adapt this to their local situation. Relating learning to the context that the children are living in supports children in their education and enables children to recognise that what is learnt at school is not in isolation to what is occurring outside the school environment. Teachers have received support in this area either through direct training (through the SCNiC cascade training system) or in monthly cluster meetings.
- *Emphasis from SCNiC has been placed on supporting teachers to better support the slow learner¹⁵ through the cascade training system and the monthly cluster meetings.* This is an initiative that was originally developed by SCNiC and subsequently became part of *CFS Dimension 2: Effective teaching and learning*. The training aims to provide specific, targeted support to slow learners and monitors their achievements on a monthly basis, which will ultimately support a reduction in drop outs and repetition.
- *Schools can implement a flexible learning schedule.* Through advocacy by SCNiC in 1999 to the Department of Primary Education, MoEYS, the flexible learning schedule has become official policy through the CFS package. Schools are at liberty to implement a flexible learning schedule which is dependent upon the local living situation - e.g. some communities may be governed by the farming calendar and the dry/wet season. In these situations the regular MoEYS school calendar may not be the most appropriate one, as children may need to migrate with their families to find food, work on the farm, or other livelihood-related activities, which results in them missing out on 2-3 months of schooling and leads to increased repetition and dropout amongst these communities. The flexible learning schedule reduces these issues as schools themselves with support from the DEO/PEO can decide on the school year schedule.
- *SCNiC has supported overage students to continue their studies.* SCNiC initiated the Operation Rescue programme for overage students, a programme which has been endorsed by MoEYS. This is an accelerated learning programme where students can do two years of primary schooling in one year and this now covers most subjects. SCNiC recognises this as a short term programme, as over the coming years, with increased enrolment of 6 year olds and a decrease in repetition/dropout rates, there will be fewer overage students.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *SCNiC has not documented examples of how the National Curriculum can be linked to real life situations depending on the local context.* As a result there is no documentation to share with partners. However, it should be understood that SCNiC wants teachers in particular to be creative in their own locality, and no documentation could fulfil all local contexts or situations. However,

¹⁵ Slow learners are defined as students who face difficulties in reading, writing, doing exercises, calculating, answering questions etc. This may be due to children's absenteeism, children who are academically challenged, teachers/head teachers failing to recognize that a student may require additional support etc.

providing documentation in the initial stages could be an additional motivational measure for teachers and DEO/PEO staff.

- *Limited numbers of teachers have had the opportunity to attend training on the implementation of the curriculum - e.g. for slow learners, learning through investigation.* Only teachers from SCNiC focus schools have had direct training; other teachers receive support through the monthly cluster meetings. However the actual content of the cluster meetings is unknown, other than occasional reference by respondents to discussions regarding improvements to the school environment. The actual quality of the implementation of activities due to training or attending cluster meetings is unknown at present, as the DTMT have limited opportunities to monitor and provide support to teachers.¹⁶
- *Not all schools who should consider implementing a flexible learning calendar are doing so.* Many schools visited during the evaluation stated that there were significant parts of the school year (up to 3 months) when absenteeism was very high. This was due to families living a nomadic lifestyle with their livelihoods revolving around the farming or fishing calendars, and also times of the year when major construction projects were underway. The result is children dropping out of school or repeating grades.¹⁷ These schools were unaware of the flexible learning schedule introduced by SCNiC in 1999 and later endorsed by MOEYS, and are implementing the regular MoEYS school calendar.
- *The Operation Rescue programme is not known or implemented by many of the schools visited as part of the evaluation.* These schools were mostly in remote or rural areas. Many of the evaluated schools had statistics showing large numbers of overage children but no separate provision for them in their learning, even though the Operation Rescue programme introduced by SCNiC and endorsed by MoEYS has been in operation for some years now.

Recommendations

- *Ways in which schools can be made aware of the flexible learning schedule for areas where communities are living a nomadic lifestyle need to be explored.* SCNiC should explore with MoEYS at the National, Provincial and District levels, how schools who are affected by nomadic populations could implement a flexible learning schedule applicable to their situation. Guidelines (if not already available) in implementing a flexible learning schedule should be produced in conjunction with MoEYS and shared with the appropriate schools. Statistics should be examined to see the overall repetition and dropout rates for these communities and this should be tracked over coming years to establish if the introduction of flexible learning schedules DEOs impact on repetition and drop out rates.

¹⁶ Refer to Section 4.3.7 *Supervision* for further information.

¹⁷ Refer to Section 4.4.2 *Retention* for further information on drop outs and repetition

- *The overall quality of curriculum implementation needs improvement.* Consideration should be given to how the overall quality of curriculum implementation can be addressed. Teachers overall understanding of the curriculum requires upgrading and SCNiC could continue the existing focus on slow learners, numeracy and literacy at Grade 1 and 2, as well as learning through investigation. In addition to increasing supervision and mentoring from head teachers to teachers on curriculum implementation at the school level, the training mechanism for curriculum implementation and relating this to everyday life should be reviewed, as at present, many teachers are still struggling to implement this in an effective way which would actually support children in their learning. There are various options which could be considered on how to implement this and these are as follows:
 - SCNiC continues with the cascade training system of training PEO/DEO Primary Education Section officials but with an added emphasis on DEO Primary Education Section officials. The training content should not be ‘one off’ activities but a series of workshops which builds on knowledge and skills as these are developed throughout the workshops. The training package would focus on ways of implementing the curriculum specifically for slow learners, numeracy and literacy for lower grades, investigation through learning, the child centered approach (see section below on ‘child centered approach’), facilitation skills to support transfer of the information, and also supervision skills (e.g. for how the DEO/head teacher may monitor implementation). DEO primary education staff would cascade this training down to the head teachers in the regular monthly meetings, recognising that not all training material may be covered in one meeting. After the monthly meetings, the head teachers would return to their schools and during staff meetings disseminate the information to teachers. At the next monthly head teachers’ meeting, there could be discussions on how implementation of the curriculum by teachers is progressing and if feasible, quarterly reports by the DEO could be produced and submitted to PEO who could gather all information from all districts to support SCNiC in developing training content for the next scheduled workshop. The DTMT would still need to visit schools as an additional measure to monitor implementation of the curriculum. One benefit of this system is that there is no additional financial outlay for SCNiC other than the initial training of trainers’ activity for DEO/PEO staff as the cost of the head teachers monthly meetings are an existing SCNiC cost. Another benefit is that this method is employing existing mechanisms already in place e.g. the monthly head teachers’ meeting, the regular school meetings.
 - SCNiC should consider utilising the existing cluster system. Although the cluster system and regular monthly cluster meeting may not be practical in all areas due to remoteness, lack of infrastructure etc it must be recognised that one mechanism is not appropriate for all schools and that SCNiC cannot provide support for every single situation. SCNiC could provide a series of trainings as stated in the previous point, but as a training of trainers (TOT). Participants would include selected teachers/head teachers from each cluster (maximum of 3 PEOple per cluster, depending on the size of the cluster) as well as DEO/PEO primary education section staff. After the training of trainers’ event, these ‘cluster trainers’ would return to their clusters and during the monthly cluster meeting would conduct a series of mini workshops, recognising that not all material covered in the TOT may be

- covered in one cluster meeting. The meetings could be used as a forum to share areas of good practice, areas of concern etc. which cannot be resolved at the school level in terms of curriculum implementation. Follow up support through discussions at the monthly cluster meetings could occur as could support/mentoring visits from the 'cluster trainers' to their school and other schools within the cluster. Clusters could produce quarterly reports for the DEO detailing activities conducted and what challenges/benefits have occurred with the DEO, combining cluster reports to send to PEO and SCNiC so that the next TOT can focus on issues arising from the reports. The benefit of this system is that it is using an existing MoEYS mechanism - the cluster system and meetings. The main disadvantage is that there will be additional costs for SCNiC in the initial TOT workshops, as there will be more participants (PEOPLE from the cluster). It is also not known how well the monthly cluster meetings are running in general, although teachers and head teachers in many schools, as well as DEO and PEO officials, mentioned the cluster meetings as the forum for providing professional development opportunities to teachers. An additional disadvantage may be that the cluster trainers may request an incentive for becoming a trainer or resource person within their cluster and may already have an existing heavy teaching load which would make it difficult for them to provide the additional support following training. Consideration would have to be given to the need for transportation costs to be covered for these support/mentoring visits.
- Head teachers are the 'permanent' supervisors in schools according to MoEYS, meaning that it is the head teacher who is providing the supervision to teachers within the classroom on a regular basis. SCNiC could provide training directly to all head teachers within target districts as well as including DEO/PEO primary education section staff. The training would cover the topics already presented in the first suggestion for more effective curriculum implementation. Head teachers would return to their schools and provide mini workshops to the teachers on the topics covered in the workshop and would provide support and supervision to the teachers in implementation of the ideas within the classroom. The regular monthly head teacher meetings at the District level would be the forum for sharing experiences of how well implementation is occurring at the school level. The advantage of this third suggestion is that the head teachers themselves are directly receiving the training rather than there being a dilution of the workshop contents through the cascade training system. The disadvantage is that there would be an increase in costs for the training workshops as all head teachers would be involved, although SCNiC may consider only inviting head teachers from focus schools although this would have more of a limited impact in the overall district.
 - *SCNiC should decide if overage children at primary schools are a focus for the next strategic phase or not.* Overage students in primary schools is a real issue for many of the schools evaluated which were in the more rural and/or remote, isolated areas. The Operation Rescue programme initiated by SCNiC has received support from MoEYS but there was no mention of its implementation by any of the schools in the evaluation, although the majority of schools had significant numbers of overage students. If SCNiC decides that the issue of overage children will be a priority target area in the next

strategic phase, there needs to be an emphasis by SCNiC on raising awareness of the programme to schools and DEOs and supporting the implementation of the programme through appropriate allocation of resources. Initially research should be conducted on these overage students to establish if they are more likely to drop out or repeat classes than children of the appropriate age for the class, at what age do these overage children stop attending school due to feeling 'too old' to sit with younger children, etc. SCNiC can then target its intervention appropriately - e.g. children who are 10 years upwards and are in grade 1 may need to be treated differently to children who are 8-9 years old and in grade 1.

4.3.2 Child Centered Teaching and Learning

Child centered teaching and learning is part of MoEYS *CFS Dimension 2 : Effective teaching and learning: child centered approach*, with the objective that teachers through using this approach will improve the quality of students' learning. SCNiC has supported child centered teaching and learning through training to predominantly PEO and DEO officials on various topics including numeracy and literacy at the lower grades, learning through investigation, provision of the *Mob and Mam* magazine to selected schools, and supporting monthly meetings between the DEO and head teachers.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Classroom environments attractive in most target schools.* In the majority of schools visited (with the notable exception of the newly established mini-schools), the classrooms were a welcoming place for students with extensive teacher displays to support children's learning and some children's displays. This directly links to *CFS Dimension 2: Effective teaching and learning: Attractive classroom environment* where the classroom environment should be attractive and appropriate for primary school students.
- *Children working in groups.* Children in all schools visited stated that they occasionally or regularly worked in a group setting,¹⁸ which indicates that teachers are changing their way of teaching to a more child centered one.
- *Training provided by the Education Programme has supported introduction of child centered teaching.* Training has been provided by SCNiC using the cascade approach on various topics including:
 - Slow learners
 - Numeracy and literacy for Grades 1 and 2
 - Learning through investigation for Grades 4, 5 and 6 on social studies and applied science.



Children's display, Beng Primary School, Angkor Chum, Siem Reap

¹⁸ This statement should be read with caution and explored further as to whether children are actually working in a group environment or only sitting in groups but working as individuals.

These trainings have all focussed on activities which can be used with children to assist them in their development, creative thinking, ability to draw conclusions based on evidence, etc.

- *Students are regularly using the Mob and Mam magazine inside and outside the classroom where available.* Children were frequently seen during the evaluation visits to be borrowing books and the *Mob and Mam* SCNiC magazine¹⁹ to read as individuals, to look at the pictures or for older students to read to younger students. In some schools, the *Mob and Mam* magazine was the only reading material available other than textbooks with children choosing the magazine over the textbooks. Although some of the *Mob and Mam* magazines seemed to be very old editions, they were still being used by the students in many of the schools visited.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Displays are mostly teacher displays which are not regularly changed.* Student displays are limited, other than the presence in some schools of children's folders displayed on the wall where children can store their work. It should be questioned whether a filing system for children's work is a display or not. The perception that displays should be using shop bought materials is high with little use of local resources seen in the classroom.
- *There was a lack of teaching and learning resources visible, whether local or provided by MoEYS or NGOs.* Children learn more effectively if they can learn by doing, but this was not readily obvious in any classes visited with most children learning by rote - e.g. pointing at the board and repeating numbers or words. Although the programme has not provided resources to schools, there is a huge potential for SCNiC to be promoting the use of local resources to support teaching and learning specifically focussing on topics that SCNiC has provided training in - e.g. numeracy and literacy, investigation by learning, supporting slow learners.
- *Poor literacy levels in the lower grades.* Although training to DEO/PEO staff has occurred in numeracy and literacy for the lower grades, many children in Grade 1 and 2 in the schools visited had considerable difficulty in reading simple words to the evaluators,²⁰ even though the school year was approaching its end. This reflects that the training is having little impact in many instances in terms of reaching the children.
- *Traditional seating arrangements are still being used in most schools.* 31 schools out of the 34 schools visited had seating arranged in traditional rows. Although it is understood that in many instances the chairs and tables are heavy and difficult to move, there appeared to be limited understanding amongst the respondents and evaluators that these could be moved permanently



Chamroeun Primary school,
Sangkum Tmeay, Preah
Vihear

¹⁹ The *Mob and Mam* magazine has been discontinued since early 2010.

²⁰ This was an observation by the evaluators. There was no formal testing of literacy levels conducted for the evaluation.

into group seating arrangements. It is recognised, however, that in some instances the class sizes are so large (i.e. 50 plus students) that it is difficult for children to sit in groups.

- *Training provided on child centered teaching has been limited.* Limited training and/or support has been provided to teachers on child centered teaching and learning other than for teachers in focus schools. As a result, the majority of teaching is teacher centered and children are not provided the opportunity to express their opinions or to draw conclusions.
- *SCNiC monitoring tools are too detailed and time-consuming to use.* The majority of DEO and PEO staff members interviewed stated that the SCNiC tools produced to monitor teacher's learning were too detailed and too time consuming, and that they used the MoEYS CFS tools more regularly than the SCNiC tools. In Kampong Chhnang province, the PEO staff stated that they had developed a 3rd set of tools which were a combination of the MoEYS CFS tools and the SCNiC tools.²¹
- *Trainings provided by the Programme tend to be 'one off'.* All respondents stated that trainings were 'one off' incidences with no follow up trainings or support. As a result, actual implementation was limited as respondents felt they had limited opportunity to discuss challenges encountered, to review and expand upon material introduced in training and to actually practice what they had learnt in the training. The overall result is that children are receiving an education which remains teacher centered and one which prevents children from applying knowledge to the situation around them.

Recommendations

- *SCNiC should place more emphasis on increasing the quality of teaching and learning within the classroom.* As in the previous section on curriculum implementation, there are various alternatives which could be considered to support increased quality of teaching and learning within the classroom. These alternatives have been described in detail in the above section on curriculum implementation. SCNiC should incorporate active teaching and learning methodologies within the training for improved curriculum implementation. This would automatically support the integration of a child centered approach in implementing the curriculum rather than separating the two. There should be a focus on the use of local resources as teaching and learning aids, with practical examples related to areas of the curriculum provided to participants. Should there be an emphasis by SCNiC on improving numeracy and literacy at the lower grades as well as ways to support slow learners, the use of local resources should be directly related to this. Additionally, there should be support provided in the initial training on the function, use and development of displays and in particular children's displays, again recognising that local materials can be used.
- *Provide appropriate training on supervision of teaching and learning and child centered teaching methodologies.* The head teacher as the permanent supervisor of teachers, should receive training with their DEO/PEO counterparts in supervision of teaching and learning in addition to training on child centered teaching methodologies.

²¹ See Section 4.3.7: *Supervision* for more information.

- *SCNiC should identify specific areas of teaching and learning that they would like to focus on for a set period of time and a whole training/support package should be produced.* This would address the issue detailed above that trainings are ‘one off’ incidences. For example, there could be an emphasis on numeracy and literacy at Grade 1, 2 and 3 (MoEYS has a specific focus on this for early grades at present). This could be accompanied by a series of workshops on the topic for the trainers, depending on which if any of the possible training alternatives presented above is chosen. This could include teaching methodologies, use of local resources, setting appropriate tests for children in these grades which are representative of child centered teaching approaches, support in specific localities for children whose first language is not Khmer, etc. This would then create a solid foundation for children in future grades, would support a decrease in repetition at these lower grades and help reduce dropout later on. A focus on the lower primary grades would also be consistent with SCNiC’s focus on expanding provision and quality of ECCD.
- *Explore with other NGOs/Agencies if SCNiC could provide support on developing a regular publication for children.* Although SCNiC has made the decision to no longer publish the *Mob and Mam* magazine, it has not rejected the idea in general of supporting a children’s publication for schools, recognising that there is a place for such a magazine. SCNiC could explore with other NGOs/agencies if there is any possibility of producing a joint publication with financial support, editorial support, etc. provided by SCNiC. There may be some merit in SCNiC contacting CARE International in Timor Leste to discuss the LAFAEK magazine that the NGO has been producing since 2000 for every single primary school child in the country on a quarterly basis, and how ownership and responsibility of the magazine is slowly being transferred to the Ministry of Education in Timor Leste.

4.3.3 Student Councils

The student council is part of MoEYS *CFS Dimension 5 : The participation of children, families and communities in the running of their local school.* Student councils have been established to mobilize the participation of children at their schools, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender and status. SCNiC has been supporting the establishment of student councils in its target provinces through training for PEO, DEO, head teachers, teachers and children.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Significant progress has been made in establishing student councils in accordance with CFS guidelines.* Considering that student councils are a new initiative which are present in the CFS framework, there has been significant progress in the area - head teachers, teachers and many older students were aware of the student council structure and the election procedure and had made admirable attempts to ensure that the student council followed the CFS guidelines for *Dimension 5: Participation by children, families and communities: student councils.*

“We help build fences, plant trees, carry water to the water containers and toilets, clean the classrooms and school compound, keep things in order, support disadvantaged friends through saving box and assist slow learners”. *Children from SrevKhav school, Angkor Chum District, Siem Reap province.*

- *Student council structure in place in most schools.* All schools, with the notable exception of newly established mini schools, had the structure of the student council in place. In many classrooms the structure of the student council was displayed on the wall. All schools with a student council stated that the children were elected as representatives by their peers – this was true whether it was at the executive student council level or at the branch or sub-branch level.
- *Student councils are active in undertaking a number of activities within their schools.* Student councils were conducting a number of daily activities focusing on developing and maintaining a good school environment. Some children stated that the student council also supported slow learners by older students sitting with younger students and helping them with reading, and several respondents stated that the student council also supported the enrolment campaign and identifying children who were not attending school.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Students understanding of the nature and roles of the student councils remains low.* In a significant proportion of schools visited, many children had limited knowledge of what the student council was, the structure of the council and what its function was; there appeared to be more understanding of the tasks that students were required to do in and around the school on a daily basis - e.g. clean up the school yard, fetch water for the toilets and other tasks which were assigned by the teacher. Although one of the roles of the student council is for the sub-branch at the class level to maintain a clean environment, this should be decided upon through discussions of the students as to how it will occur, rather than through directives from teachers.
- *Student council representatives do not appear to be sharing information more widely in their schools.* Children who were aware of the student council stated that meetings of the student council members occurred, but the results from the meetings were never shared with the class members who were not branch or executive committee members. This seems to be precipitating an environment where members of the student council have their own agenda which is not discussed prior to or after the meeting. This can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and understanding of participatory processes amongst adults and children.
- *Written records of student council meetings seldom kept.* In only one school visited were there any copies of student council minutes available. Minutes of meetings are essential for the members of the student council to record what was discussed and action points so that it can be seen whether this has been achieved at the next meeting or not.
- *The level and quality of children's participation, including in school planning, is low.* The emphasis of the student council appears to be one of carrying out the teachers/ head teacher's request to keep the school environment clean and tidy with little evidence of children actively participating in discussions about what they would like. The limited training and focus by the MoEYS/SCNiC on student councils has contributed greatly to this lack of meaningful participation. In none of the schools visited, did the students, teachers or head teacher state that the student council were

involved in the development of the annual or long term plan of the school. Participation in aspects affecting the school is an integral part of the student council role (as defined by MoEYS) but DEOs not seem to be occurring in any of the schools visited.

- *Incomplete schools do not have student councils.* None of the incomplete mini-schools (13 mini schools out of 34 school visited) had a student council, although it could be argued that these schools initially only cater for the lower grades and thus the establishment of a full student council could be difficult. It must be remembered that all children whatever their age have a right to participation and that these mini schools usually cater for older students who would be fully capable of conducting activities in accordance with the roles and responsibilities of the student council.

Recommendations

- *Identify and work with LNGO(s) to support student councils in pilot localities focusing on child participation and school development plans.* SCNiC is an organisation which champions children's rights, of which child participation is one. At present student councils are not functioning effectively due to limited support by MoEYS, NGOs and donors. However, student councils are established in a majority of schools, the council members are elected democratically and there are activities carried out by the student council, something which has not been achieved in other developing countries. Furthermore, the role of the student councils in promoting child rights and children's participation and expression of their views is clearly stated in the CFS document produced by MoEYS, but this aspect is still not fully achieved. SCNiC should consider selecting a LNGO who could support the function of student councils in a limited number of localities as a model, and focus on the participation and school development plan aspects. There should be a focus on children themselves expressing their thoughts and views on how they would like to improve their school and how this could be incorporated into the school's annual and long term plans. Work should also be done with other stakeholders, school support committees, teachers and head teachers so that they are aware of what child participation is and how they may support the student council in the best possible way. These selected localities could become models for other student councils to come and visit. This work could be directly linked to the suggested support for school support committees²² in planning and this would then support a more holistic view, rather than individual activities with limited linkages to one another.

4.3.4 Child Protection

Child protection, and in particular violence against children, has been recognised by MoEYS as an issue which needs to be addressed in schools. It has thus been incorporated into *CFS Dimension 3: Health, safety and protection of children* as a specific area which schools, DEOs and PEOs should focus upon. SCNiC is an organisation which fights for children's rights, one of which is the right to protection, a right which is not being achieved by many children who are attending school in Cambodia at present. SCNiC in the previous programme strategy did not have an emphasis on violence within schools as one of its

²² See Section 4.3.5 *School Support Committees* for further information.

areas of intervention. There were elements of child protection which were incorporated into some other areas of intervention, although the majority of work appears to have been on child safety - e.g. a safe school physical environment.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Education duty bearers are aware that physical and emotional punishment of children is wrong.* PEO, DEO, head teachers and teachers all stated that they supported children who had done wrong by advising/counselling them, asking them to fetch water, water plants, etc. Teachers and head teachers stated in all instances that there was no physical or emotional punishment occurring in their schools, although PEO and DEO staff said that there was still punishment occurring, albeit on a reduced scale. All respondents stated that the elimination or reduction in the use of physical and emotional punishment was as a result of guidelines/regulations from MoEYS on the abolishment of punishment in schools.

"We do not allow corporal punishment in this school." **Head teacher, Kang Taneung school, Kang Meas, Kampong Cham**

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Physical and emotional punishment of children is still prevalent in schools.* Children from 15 out of 20 schools (75%) where this question was asked, said that there was still physical and emotional punishment occurring from teachers to students. The reasons for teachers hitting students ranged from getting the answer wrong to not doing homework. In addition to children being hit directly by the teacher, children stated that they had their ears twisted, were slapped on the face, or hit with a stick.
- *Child safety and child protection terms are used interchangeably.* Many respondents confused the issue of child safety with that of child protection - e.g. the necessity for a school fence, buildings to be in suitable condition, adequate provision provided for children in floating communities so that they don't drown, etc. This may be attributed to there being an emphasis from the HBECCD on child safety and that the same Khmer word is used for safety and protection.
- *The SCNiC Programme has not adequately addressed child protection issues at school level.* There has been little or no activity from SCNiC on the area of child protection in schools and nothing on positive discipline strategies as an alternative to physically or emotionally abusing children. MoEYS has distributed regulations/guidelines to all schools on the issue of violence within schools but has not provided any training on child protection. The issue of child protection is one that should not be ignored considering that it is a prevalent issue in nearly all schools visited and is found in *CFS dimension 3 : Health, safety and protection of children*, as well as being one of the four main child rights.

"Teachers beat, slap and threaten us. They do this when we answer something wrong or don't do our homework." **School children.**

Recommendations

- *Activities on how to reduce the level and incidence of physical and emotional punishment at school need to be a focus.* The SCNiC education programme should immediately start developing and implementing activities for all stakeholders on child protection issues in school and those issues specifically related to physical and emotional punishment. As MoEYS has already produced guidelines for schools and the CFS booklet (*Dimension 3) Health, safety and protection of children*, activities should support these documents. Initially activities should focus on awareness raising of the issue and why violence against children is wrong, with participants exploring their own experiences of violence in schools. Where possible any activities related to child protection should be integrated with other trainings - e.g. on implementation of curriculum and child centered teaching with specific sessions on classroom management related to positive discipline. In many instances teachers feel that with a more child centered approach, they are losing control of the class as children become more active and engaged with their learning (and more talkative!) and teachers need concrete strategies to manage this. Activities with children should be conducted so that they are aware of their rights and also what they would consider as suitable disciplinary measures; something which usually changes as children become more familiar with issues of child protection. These children activities could be linked to the student council activities²³ on participation which could be supported by an LNGO.
- *Link different child development stages to training on child protection.* SCNiC should relate the issues of child development and different stages of child development into any child protection activities so that stakeholders are aware of the developmental stages of children and how these can be effectively handled without resorting to physical or emotional punishment.

4.3.5 School Support Committees

MoEYS has stated that to support the Education for All (EFA) campaign in Cambodia, there should be EFA committees established at the national, provincial, district, commune, village and school level. The committees should be made up of various Government, and community representatives, as well as local dignitaries, with the aim of achieving education for all. At the school level there are school support committees.

SCNiC has provided limited direct support in the last strategic phase to school support committees. However SCNiC has been supporting the development of school annual plans through providing training to DEO officials who then support schools in developing the plans. School support committees should be involved in the development of the plans.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Community support for schools seems strong.* School support committees were established in all schools visited and even though the formal structure was not present in the newly established mini

²³ See Section 4.3.3 *Student Councils – Recommendations for further information.*

schools, there was still evidence of community support to the school. Support in these mini schools usually involved clearing land for the construction of the school, support on construction, establishing an acceptable external school environment e.g. school signs displaying proverbs and slogans, planting of trees. Additionally, support from the community to teachers moving into the area is also strong, with either the provision of housing or living with a family plus support with providing food. This is remarkable considering the difficult circumstances that most PEOple are living under.

- *School support committees have helped in addressing access issues and improving the school environment.* The school support committees were mostly active in supporting the household mapping and education campaigns at the start of the school year as well as encouraging absent students to return to school. The committees also had a focus on improving the school environment - e.g. planting trees, building school fences etc as well as small scale repairs/regular maintenance to the school buildings. Most schools visited had a welcoming school environment and most buildings were in a satisfactory condition. Again this is something which is not seen in other developing countries where many school committees request a financial contribution to support the school.
- *Communities are generally aware of the role of the school committee.* 90% of communities were aware of the school support committee and could clearly state what activities the school support committee had been involved in over recent months.
- *School support committees do appear to be meeting regularly.* Meetings of the school support committee mostly occurred three times a year (at the beginning, middle and end of the school year) although 2 schools stated that there were twice monthly meetings of the committee.
- *Some school support committees (1/3) are involved in annual planning.* 33% of school support committees were involved in the development and implementation of school annual plans.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *The majority of school support committees are not involved in school annual planning.* 67% of school support committees in the schools visited were not involved in developing the school annual plans. This is an integral part of the work of the school support committee and promotes transparency and ownership for all stakeholders. Additionally children (student councils) never support the development of the school plans, and this means that the planning and thus implementation is left to the head teacher and perhaps teachers.
- *Community awareness of membership in school support committees is sometimes low.* Community members were frequently not clear as to who was a member of the school support committee indicating that the community may not be actively involved in meetings or activities organised by the school or committee.

Recommendations

- *Support should be provided to school support committees in developing, implementing and monitoring school development plans.* SCNiC has begun to support the area of school planning by providing training to DEO/PEO officials who cascade the training down to head teachers. These initial steps should now be capitalised on as the area of planning (*CFS Dimension 5: The participation of children, families and communities in the running of their local school*) is one area that head teachers, DEO and PEOs recognised as requiring additional support to ensure that this dimension is met. School support committees should be actively involved in developing school annual plans and budgets and supporting the implementation and monitoring of these plans. Consideration should be given to utilising the cluster system as the mechanism for providing training and support to the school support committees in pilot clusters. Trainers with potential or competency in the area of planning in pilot clusters could be identified and trained alongside the DEO/PEO officials, and then these trainers could cascade down to other school support committees in the cluster. Follow up support in the finalisation of the plan and budget and implementation of the plan should all be considered. Alternatively, an LNGO with competency in planning and working with communities and children could be engaged to work with pilot school support committees and student councils²⁴ on developing participatory plans.

4.3.6 Teacher, Student and School Self Assessment

The MoEYS, through CFS, is trying to promote the benefits of teacher self reflection and school self assessment as a means to identify issues affecting the quality of education in the school and to develop solutions. There has been limited support from MoEYS other than the production of materials (*CFS: Dimension 6: Programme Support from the Education System: School self assessment*) in this area. SCNiC has been piloting teacher self assessment and school self assessment in Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham province. Although SCNiC has produced tools for teacher self assessment, student self assessment and school assessment, none of the schools visited were using these SCNiC tools as none of the schools visited had been targeted for this intervention. The schools were all using the CFS checklist as a means of self assessment for the school and teachers. The information below is based on the MoEYS produced materials, observations by members of the evaluation team who have knowledge and experience of the SCNiC produced tools.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Teacher self assessment is occurring in some schools.* Teachers in 9 (26%) schools visited were conducting self assessments at least once a year with some schools conducting monthly assessments. The teacher's self assessment was conducted using the CFS checklist. The teachers stated that the results of the self assessment were used to identify areas for improvement within the classroom, specifically those concerned with classroom administration. Teachers cited

²⁴ See *Strategic Choice 2: Quality of education: Student Councils* for further information.

improvements specifically in the development of more regular lesson plans as a result of self assessment.

- *Some training has been provided in teacher self assessment.* Teachers from 2 schools had received training/orientation from the PEO/DEO on how to conduct self assessment using the CFS tools. The teachers had not tried the tools as yet.
- *Some schools are conducting whole school assessments.* Eight of the schools visited were conducting whole school assessments. These were conducted by the head teacher and the results were used to support development of the school annual plan. 20% (7/34) of the schools visited were conducting self assessments on an annual basis, whereas one school stated that this was a twice yearly assessment. The school assessment was using the same CFS tool as the teacher self assessment which is the CFS checklist used by PEO and DEO officials to conduct supervision at school level.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Teacher self-assessment appears to have had little impact so far.* Teachers in the 9 schools where self assessments were being conducted only mentioned changes in the regularity of developing lesson plans as a result of doing self assessment. There was no mention of the teacher recognising areas for improvement within their teaching or making changes to their teaching methodology as a result of the self assessment.
- *There is little if any teacher reflection on their own teaching practice.* In *CFS Dimension 2: Effective teaching and learning* there is a section on teacher reflection where teachers should reflect on their teaching and identify why some students may not be reaching their true potential. None of the teachers interviewed mentioned this reflection, with the self assessment focusing wholly on the CFS checklist. This indicates that there has been a lack of training or awareness raising of the CFS booklet material.
- *Some schools do not retain the results of their assessments.* In the schools which were conducting teacher self assessments or school assessments, there were a number of occasions when schools no longer had the results of the assessment, as the only copies had been sent to the DEO. This is counterproductive and means that the schools have no way of checking in the future if there have been any improvements or not in the quality of education provided.
- *SCNiC assessment tools regarded as too complex.* Members of the evaluation team had some experience and knowledge of the SCNiC produced assessment tools with the general opinion being that the tools were too complex and detailed for regular use by schools, teachers and students.

Recommendations

- *School assessment activities need to be linked to the development of the school development plan.* SCNiC has provided training to the PEO/DEO level to support schools in developing annual plans. A

school assessment of its weaknesses and strengths should be an integral part of this planning process and this should be incorporated into any future activities for schools. School self assessment should be linked to the student council and school support committees who should have a role in supporting the assessment to assist in developing the long term and annual school plans.

- *SCNiC should assess whether it should focus on teacher and student self assessment at this point or whether there are other areas in the field of CFS dimension 2 - Effective teaching and learning - which should be prioritised.* Although SCNiC is trying to look at the whole picture of teaching and learning and this should be applauded, due to the lack of capacity in numbers of SCNiC staff and also technical capacity of PEO/DEO staff to take various initiatives forward, the actual impact at the school level is fragmentary. Thus, SCNiC should consider removing this as one of their activities for the 2010-2014 strategic phase and focus on other areas of CFS Dimension 2 - e.g. child centered approach.

4.3.7 Supervision

MoEYS has established the District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMT) at the district level²⁵ () to support the implementation of CFS in schools. In each district there are 2 teams, one responsible for administration and management at the school level and the second team being responsible for the technical aspects of the school.

In the previous programme phase, SCNiC supported the PEO/DEOs financially to be able to conduct visits to schools and this has focused on SCNiC focus schools. Tools for supervision (not only within the classroom but including school administration, finances, planning, student councils, etc.) have been produced by the programme and are found in all target provinces.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *DTMTs established and functioning in all target districts visited.* The District Monitoring and Training Teams (DTMT) are established and functioning in all districts and provinces visited, although there may be more of an emphasis on the monitoring than training due to limited budget. The DTMTs were all visiting schools on a regular basis ranging from 2-3 days per month to 8-9 days, and this was attributed by respondents to the provision of transport costs and per diem by SCNiC to the PEO/DEO staff to visit schools.
- *SCNiC Programme funded monthly meetings between DEO and head teachers had made a major contribution to improved communication, coordination and capacity development.* The regular monthly meetings between the DEO and head teachers which are financed by SCNiC are occurring and these are seen as a professional development opportunity by all concerned. The DEO sees these meetings as an ideal forum to share information and ideas, not only on new MoEYS directives but also to support head teachers in their role.

²⁵ The DTMT also often includes provincial members of staff

- *The DTMT are using tools either from MoEYS or SCNiC to conduct supervision at schools.* The DTMT plan in advance what particular dimension of CFS will be inspected/supervised over the forthcoming month. This means that on one visit, supervision in school administration may occur and on a different visit, effective teaching and learning may be assessed. In some instances at the provincial level, provincial staff could directly attribute this forward planning as an additional impact from the work which SCNiC has been doing with the PEO on work plans for implementation of the SCNiC focussed activities.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Two sets of supervision tools (SCNiC and CFS) cause confusion.* The existence of SCNiC supervision tools and CFS supervision tools which are similar in content but different in the amount of detail, is confusing to PEO and DEO staff members who conduct the supervision. The DEO and PEO used whichever tool they were more comfortable with, but stated that if the MoEYS produced one was used, this could be used for teacher evaluation which could be sent to the MoEYS for upgrading of a teacher's salary. Some PEO/DEO officials favoured the simpler CFS tools and some favoured the more detailed SCNiC one with other DEOs/PEOs alternating between the 2 tools and one PEO actually developing a 3rd set of tools. The existence of different tools for the same purpose ultimately means that it is difficult to standardise or draw conclusions between districts or provinces.
- *PEO and DEO capacity to monitor teaching and learning is limited.* PEO/DEO staff all stated that they felt their capacity to supervise schools effectively was limited, specifically in *CFS Dimension 2 – Effective teaching and learning*. They felt that at present, their overall knowledge of the curriculum and teaching and learning methods was satisfactory, but that actual ways on how to conduct supervision and provide feedback was limited. This area has received no or little support from SCNiC in the previous phase.
- *The SCNiC Programme non-focus schools get less support from DTMT.* SCNiC focus schools in general received more visits from the DTMT which includes provincial members of staff. The DTMTs attributed this to SCNiC providing a budget for transport and per diems for education officials to visit these schools. The DEO/PEO specifically mentioned that they did not have the opportunity to visit as many other schools as they would wish due to limited budget, limited numbers of staff and other competing work priorities. In some districts, there are only 1-2 focus schools which results in the majority of support through supervision being provided to these schools and the impact to other schools in the district being minimal.
- *Head teachers seldom observe teachers and provide feedback.* Head teachers who have been identified by the MoEYS as the 'permanent' supervisor for teachers conducted classroom observation/supervision either rarely or not at all according to teachers. Some head teachers (newly appointed) were unaware of what they should do to supervise teachers. In most schools visited, teachers stated that the head teacher had never watched them teach a lesson. This area of head teachers supervising the teachers has not been an area for support from the previous

programme phase. However, it was identified by DEO/PEO as a huge potential area for future support.

- *Understanding of supervision limited.* The understanding of what constitutes supervision by teachers was limited, with most understanding it to involve the supervision of teachers rather than looking at the 6 dimensions of CFS.

Recommendations

- *Support for supervision should be a focus of the 2010-2014 SCNiC BEP.* This should be a major focus of SCNiC's 2010-2014 plan of activities, as it is through the support from DTMTs that impact of activities and the challenges experienced can be clearly seen on the standard of education provided to teachers. It also means that SCNiC would not need to have separate monitoring tools for this aspect, as the PEO/DEO and head teachers would be monitoring this aspect for SCNiC. Obviously the quality of the monitoring needs to be ensured by providing training for the DTMT as detailed below.
- *Existing monitoring tools need to be reviewed and agreement reached on one standardised set.* SCNiC should work together with MoEYS to conduct a review of the existing tools used for monitoring/supervising schools and from this develop one set of tools. These tools would thus have endorsement from MoEYS and be the tools used nationally.
- *DTMT capacity and understanding of supervision needs to be developed.* Intensive training should be provided to the DTMT (including PEO staff) on ways to conduct supervision on all 6 dimensions of CFS but with an emphasis on *Dimension 2 – Effective teaching and learning*, as this is the primary focus of the SCNiC intervention for the next programmatic phase. This training should include sessions on the provision of feedback to teachers and head teachers. Head teachers should be involved in the training for *Dimension 2- Effective teaching and learning* considering that they are the 'permanent' supervisors of teachers according to MoEYS. The training should include aspects of planning supervision visits, writing of reports as a result of a visit as well as the technical aspects of conducting supervision. During the regular monthly meetings with head teachers, there could be time allocated for discussions on how supervision within the classroom is progressing with the results of these meetings being collated into a quarterly report for the PEO/SCNiC so that future SCNiC activities can be appropriately targeted in this area.
- *DTMT should be encouraged to use monthly cluster meetings to provide training.* Considering that the number of staff on the DTMT is limited and it is impossible for them to visit schools regularly, the monthly cluster meetings could be used as a forum for the DTMT to provide training on various topics. Support for follow up on these activities could be provided either by the head teachers or by cluster trainers should SCNiC decide to focus activities on the cluster level.²⁶

²⁶ See Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 Recommendations on curriculum implementation and child centered approach.

4.3.8 Teacher Training Colleges

MoEYS has identified a teacher shortage which is most evident in the remote areas as PEOple do not want to move to these areas. As a result, MoEYS is encouraging recruitment of student teachers for the TTC from these more remote areas so that upon completion of the 2 year training for a primary school teacher, they may return to their homes to teach. SCNiC has been providing twice yearly training to selected trainers from the TTC on child centered teaching and learning.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- SCNiC is working in the area of pre-service teacher training and the training provided by SCNiC supports the teacher training curriculum developed by MoEYS.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *No clear Programme strategy for working with TTCs exists.* There appears to be no clear strategy of what SCNiC support at the TTC is trying to achieve. Twice yearly trainings focus on different topics each time rather than revisiting and reviewing previous topics for selected trainers from the TTC. It is not clear after the initial TOT who the target group is – these appear to be various and depends on the individual TTC - e.g. some TTCs will cascade the training down to other trainers in the TTC and the student teachers, others will train the teachers in the model/application schools which are used by student teachers in teaching practice.
- *Limited or no follow up after SCNiC training at TTCs.* All TTCs mentioned the lack of follow up after the training, apart from meetings with the SCNiC Education Provincial Officer. The TTCs stated that 'one off' trainings/workshops on one particular topic were insufficient as the first training would only provide the introduction. Trainers considered that follow up workshops revisiting the topic in more depth were essential. The limited numbers of trainers attending the TOTs was identified as a weakness, with TTCs feeling that only 1-2 PEOple attending resulted in difficulties in the cascade training afterwards.
- *Requests for additional stationery for use by students inappropriate for future teaching situations.* All TTCs requested additional stationery materials for use by the students in developing resources. Although it is recognised that some degree of commercially bought resources are necessary, there should not be an over emphasis on this considering that many of these student teachers will be recruited to schools where there is limited budget for such items.
- *Limited communication and coordination among Development Partners supporting TTCs.* There are other NGOs/donors working in the TTCs but there appears to be limited knowledge on the part of SCNiC as to what these other NGOs/donors are doing.²⁷ This can result in a disconnect between all parties to the detriment of the TTC.

²⁷ See Section 6: Relationships with Development Partners for more information

Recommendations

- *If SCNiC is going to continue to engage with TTCs, adequate resources should be allocated.* If SCNiC seriously wants to work in the area of pre-service teacher training, there should be sufficient budget and staff allocation to the area so that maximum impact can be achieved, working with pre-service institutions could be a separate programme and thus requires the necessary resources.
- *SCNiC needs a focussed strategy for engaging with TTCs.* Should it be decided to continue to work in pre-service delivery, SCNiC should identify specific areas with the TTCs of the MoEYS pre service teacher training curriculum where SCNiC could have an impact and focus on these - e.g. teaching methodologies for Grades 1, 2 and 3. These areas should ideally directly link to the areas identified for in-service support.
- *SCNiC needs to encourage and support TTCs to improve coordination among supporting Development Partners.*²⁸ Improved coordination and communication between the different NGOs/donors who are working in the TTCs has the potential to bring several benefits. This could be done through supporting the TTCs or the Department of Teacher Training to host regular meetings of all Development Partners involved in supporting TTCs.

4.4 Strategic Choice 3 - Access

Access to a quality education is every child's right and SCNiC has been working in this area of improving access to schooling for thousands of children in Cambodia for many years. SCNiC support has been wide ranging, from supporting the development and implementation of the CFS policy to supporting construction of mini schools specifically in rural and remote areas.

4.4.1 Enrolment

Over the last 5-6 years, there has been a drive from MoEYS to increase the numbers of children enrolling at primary school to support achievement of EFA and the MDG goals. One dimension of CFS is dedicated to the issue of improved access for all children to primary school and SCNiC has supported MoEYS greatly on this initiative. This support has included the construction of schools, enrolment campaigns and household mapping. The gains are apparent with now over 90% of children enrolled at primary school nationwide.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Target provinces show significant increases in primary level NER.* The net enrolment rate (NER) for 5 of the 6 SCNiC provinces²⁹ has increased significantly in most cases, since 2005/2006. The table below shows the NER for the individual provinces and the increase in NER since 2005.

²⁸ See Section 6: *Relationships with Development Partners* for more information

²⁹ NER data for Siem Riep prior to 2009/2010 unavailable.

	Net Enrolment Rates for SCNiC target provinces									
	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008		2008/2009		2009/2010	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
Kampong Cham ³⁰	87,3	83,6	89,9	88,6	94,0	94,6	94,4	95,0	98,69 ³¹	99,15
Kampong Chhnang	95,04	94,6	93,39	92,47	96,29	97,4	93,00	93,13	95,94	95,15
Pursat	70,20	74,3	95,9	90,40	96,10	94,0	96,0	95,1	95,1	92,3
Preah Vihear	88,20	N/A	89,10	N/A	93,50	N/A	96,20	N/A	96,43	96,61
Siem Reap	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	90,29	90,37
Koh Kong	85.35	N/A	85.57	N/A	84.72	N/A	90.75	N/A	92.15	N/A

- *The SCNiC Education programme has made a significant contribution in this area.* Although the growth in NER for SCNiC target provinces cannot be wholly attributed to SCNiC activities due to the drive from MoEYS in this area and the introduction of CFS policy in 2006, there are some contributing factors which have supported increases in NER and these are as follows:

- *Construction of concrete classrooms and mini schools.*³² This has usually occurred in more remote, isolated areas where children have difficulties accessing the nearest primary school due to distance, difficult terrain, etc.

“I dropped out of primary school a few years ago as the school was too far away but now it is close to my home and I can learn again. I am very happy that I can go to school and learn how to read and write”. **Child from Trapaing Prey Mini School, Sangkum Tmey District, Preah Vihear Province.**

All respondents (children, parents, school support committees, teachers, head teachers, DEO and PEO officials) stated that having a physical building for children to learn in, albeit in some instances with a dirt floor and bamboo walls, has had a huge impact on

increasing access to school for children in remote areas (see the case study of impact below).

- *Introduction of school mapping at the school level.* Each school in the SCNiC target provinces (not only focus/direct schools) are conducting annual school mapping which records the location of all houses and other buildings of note in the village. The houses are all coded accordingly on the map to represent houses where there are children living, children with disabilities, houses which do not send their children to school, etc.³³ The numbers of children are recorded according to age (up to 16 or 18 years old depending on the village), as are the numbers of vulnerable children. The data collection involves the village based school network which comprises the head teacher, teachers, school support committee and children council members. Annual data collection involving the village based school network occurred in every school visited, with the notable exception of the incomplete mini schools



School map, Beng Primary School, Angkor Chum, Siem Reap

³⁰ These NER figures are for the SCN supported districts

³¹ The 2009/2010 NER figures are from the Education Baseline Study December 2009 – February 2010

³² Mini schools may be wholly supported by SCN and usually consist of 2-3 classrooms built of wood by an external contractor or SCN may have supported the purchase of some building materials with the target community providing labour and additional building materials.

³³ For more information on school mapping, see *CFS Dimension 1 Handbook on Household Mapping*.

although this information is commonly displayed in tables on blackboards in the staff room rather than on the maps. Schools and the village based school networks actively used this data to encourage parents of non-attending children to enrol at school. This initiative began as a SCNiC activity and has now been incorporated into *CFS Dimension 1 – All children have access to schooling: Household Mapping*.

- *School enrolment campaigns*. These campaigns occur approximately 2 weeks before the new school year begins, with the format varying slightly between schools. All schools, DEOs and PEOs, stated that the school enrolment campaigns have had a positive impact on increasing the numbers of children enrolling at primary school. The campaigns consist of a procession through the village displaying banners and posters which encourage parents to send their children to school. The school, school support committee, local leaders, and monks all support the campaign. This initiative, which began as a SCNiC activity, is now incorporated into *CFS Dimension 1: All children have access to schooling: School Enrolment Campaign*.³⁴

Case Study: Trapaing Prey ‘Mini’ School, Sangkum Thmey District, Preah Vihear Province

This mini school is located approximately 2-3 km from the main road and about 10km from the Sangkum Thmey District town. The area is mainly scrubland and used for farming with small settlements scattered around the area. Approximately 50 families have moved into the area since 2000. It is a harsh existence, with families cutting down trees, planting rice and hunting animals as a means to survival. There are plans for a ‘new’ village to be established in the near future with more PEOle moving in from other areas.



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There is no easily accessible primary school in the area, with the closest one (another mini school) being approximately 5-6km away and situated along the main road towards the district town. As a result of the community’s commitment to education and the need for educational provision to achieve the MDG and EFA goals, SCNiC provided funds to purchase zinc roofing material on the proviso that the community provided the other building materials and labour. The mini school, which consists of one room with a dirt floor, zinc roof and local materials for the walls, was constructed in readiness for the start of the school year in 2009/2010. The MoEYS provides textbooks and a contract teacher, who is under the overall administration of Chamroeun Primary School located about 13 km away.



The students

At present there are 29 students) enrolled (15 girls and 14 boys) ranging in age from 6 years old to 16 years old. The majority of the students are 10 years or over. The children report approximately 70% (20/29 students) attending school on a daily basis, saying that they only miss school if they have to go to

³⁴ For more information on school enrolment campaigns, see *CFS Dimension 1 Handbook on School Enrolment Campaign*.

the market with their parents or to support their parents in the fields. The school caters for Grade 1 students only. Some of the students stated that they were drop outs from other primary schools with the primary factor for drop out being the distance to travel to school previously. All children interviewed (8 children) expressed their satisfaction at being able to access schooling closer to their homes.

The children come to school bringing their MoEYS provided textbooks, and their willingness to show off what they knew was apparent, with the children being able to answer simple questions and read letters appropriate to Grade 1. The teacher proudly announced that he expected a 100% pass rate.

Unfortunately some of the children said that they still had some friends who were not attending school, the reasons being that they had gone to become a monk or were following the monks.

The teacher

The teacher was previously a soldier, but due resigned from the military and returned to his hour's cycle ride from the mini school. It was community that he become a contract position which he accepted. Although the of 1,200,000 riels only once a year from the from his village to teach the 29 students in his care. He not only cycles but brings all his teaching materials with him on his bike as he has no cupboard to store anything in at the school and the school is insecure with no door.



to personal reasons, he village which is about one suggested by the surrounding teacher for the mini school, a teacher will receive his salary Ministry, every day he cycles

Support from the Education authorities

The teacher has had no formal training from either the MoEYS at any level or from NGO partners but DEOs attend meetings on a 1-2 monthly basis at the DEO on technical issues. This Grade 9 graduate is enthusiastic and has made a real effort with the students to try to make this one room building a school which the students can be proud of. There are numerous signs with slogans/proverbs around the school grounds encouraging parents and students to appreciate the importance of education, and the DEO has provided support on how to make the school environment more welcoming.

The Ministry of Education recognises that these schools play an important part in achieving the MDG of universal primary education and provides a sufficient number of textbooks for the school.

The teacher requested support from the DEO on teaching methodology, the use of local resources and information on how he could become a formal teacher as opposed to a contract teacher.

Community participation in the school

The teacher continues to encourage community participation in the school and the environment, not wanting the parents to feel that their responsibility has ended with the construction of the school. These meetings which occur on a 1-2 monthly basis and are attended by up to 20 community members (including women), discuss issues relating to the school environment and the importance of an education.

What can these children expect after they finish Grade 1?

The question is what will happen to these 29 students when they graduate from Grade 1 in July 2010? Will they continue with their education in the mini school 4-5km away which goes up to Grade 4 or will they stop their schooling just as they become excited about the opportunities that education can bring to them? Both students and teacher said that they wanted to continue their schooling at Trapaing Prey so that they have a school close to their homes. Whether this will be possible or not will depend on lobbying by the teacher, community and SCNiC to the provincial education department of the importance of such schools.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

Although there have been large increases in the numbers of children enrolled at primary school with all target provinces, the following issues remain:

- *The Operation Rescue package for older students has not been implemented widely.* Many children who are overage – i.e. older than 11 years - who have never been to primary school or have dropped out at an earlier stage, are not accessing school. Reasons for this include the fact that these older children do not want, or do not feel comfortable to study with younger children, and that the schools are often unaware of, or unable to implement the Operation Rescue package (which was initiated by SCNiC and then became official MoEYS policy) which has been designed to support these students through accelerated learning. Another reason cited by DEO officials in Angkor Chum district, Siem Reap province was that parents do not want their older female children to walk long distances in remote areas to school due to the risk of sexual abuse.
- *Many schools who have nomadic populations are not implementing the flexible learning schedule introduced by SCNiC and now official MoEYS policy.* Many children who are living in the more remote areas frequently live a nomadic lifestyle, with their parents moving around for farming, fishing and construction work and the children accompanying their parents. Children miss considerable amounts of schooling (3-4 months) as a result, and thus need to repeat the grade and/or drop out of school. Unfortunately, many schools who have populations of children who move with their families are unaware of, or unable to implement the flexible learning schedule which would support these children in remaining in school.
- *School/community maps have not been updated regularly.* The actual school maps, although present in most schools, were usually 3-4 years old and had not been updated with the most recent student data. However in most instances, if the school map had not been updated, schools were displaying the updated statistical information on blackboards in the staffroom. It thus needs to be identified if these maps actually have a use after the initial collection of data or if they are seen as a display feature with teachers and staff referring to the updated statistical information on the blackboards when necessary, rather than the maps. The issue of the accuracy of the data and

timeliness of the data was an issue according to PEO staff due to limited capacity and understanding of data collectors.

- *Provision of teachers for remote schools often lacks a full understanding of the situation on the ground and clear agreement with communities.* After the provision of a mini school, the recruitment of a teacher is paramount. In some instances, it would appear that some teachers in these remote schools are not attending regularly due to their own personal circumstances or the support/commitment from the communities to the teachers being clearly established from the start.

In one locality visited, a 2 room wooden mini school had been constructed by SCN in 2008 and the DEO provided a formal teacher. The community had limited involvement from the outset in the school, were not prepared to build a fence around the school unless materials were provided by “The organisation” (SCNiC) and the teacher had not been teaching at the school for the past 5 months. The community were in a Khmer Rouge reconciliation area and were made up of ex Khmer Rouge, the teacher was from 50km away and all these factors combined had resulted in a dysfunctional environment.
- *SCNiC, PEO and DEO do not have a clear strategy for addressing the issue of children who do not have Khmer as their first language.* In certain geographical areas, there are children who are not accessing school primarily due to their ethnicity or Khmer as a second language. SCNiC, the PEO and DEOs are aware of the issues but at present, no strategies have been developed on how to support these children.

Recommendations

- *Group(s) of marginalised children will be targeted by the 2010 -2014 Programme need to be clearly identified and appropriate activities developed to support these children.* The particular target group or groups of marginalised children (ethnic minorities, children with Khmer as a second language, over age students, disabled students, children in remote, isolated areas, and children living a nomadic lifestyle) should be selected and comprehensive strategies developed to support these children in acquiring an education (possible activities are described in the following recommendations). SCNiC has already developed various initiatives to support more marginalised children, but these do not appear to be effectively implemented at present, and have not become institutionalised at the provincial, district or school level. The initiatives should be reviewed to ensure appropriateness for the appropriate target group and if ways to institutionalise the approach should be developed. It is not possible for this report to discuss the various activity options available considering that the target group of marginalised children have not been identified for the 2010-2014 programme phase. Initiatives could include construction of schools and the requisite follow up support in establishing a school, reviewing the barefoot teacher programme, supporting flexible learning calendars, developing packages for second language users of Khmer, supporting children with disabilities in accessing and attending school, advocating at all levels for adequate provision from MoEYS for these children, supporting improvements in teaching and learning, and other initiatives. Some approaches are listed below but, as stated above, these are not exhaustive and only focus on the existing initiatives that were used by SCNiC in the previous programme phase.

- *Consider alternative learning packages for older students who cannot study with younger children - e.g. accelerated learning packages.* None of the schools who participated in the evaluation mentioned any specific provision (such as the Operation Rescue programme) for these children, although the DEOs did occasionally mention the provision of accelerated learning packages for older students. If SCNiC should decide to target these older children in the 2010-2014 education strategy, there needs to be a review and revision of the package. This review should focus on the awareness of the accelerated learning packages amongst all stakeholders, how schools can implement the package and the implications for schools in terms of staffing time and budgets. The need for these packages over the years should decrease as the enrolment and retention figures for primary age children continue to improve.
- *Conduct studies into the numbers of children who are affected by their parents/families who live a nomadic lifestyle.* If the numbers are sufficient, advocate to MoEYS for adequate education provision for children who live a nomadic lifestyle and ensure that PEO/DEOs and schools know of the various possibilities available; possibilities could include:
 - Teachers who move with the affected communities. Research conducted in other countries which have nomadic populations for periods of the year could be examined.
 - Promotion of the mobile teacher programme (*CFS Dimension 6: Programme support from the education system: Mobile Teacher Programme*) – see Case study “The Barefoot Teacher Programme” below. The mobile teacher programme caters for children from remote areas who have never attended school because it is too far from where they live, or children who are not able to attend school regularly because they have to migrate with their parents. The volunteer teacher will teach children in 2 places; each place for 3 days with the teacher providing the children with schoolwork to complete in the 3 days when he/she is not available. The initiative was begun by SCNiC and has now been incorporated into the MoEYS CFS package, but it has not been widely supported by either SCNiC or MoEYS in its implementation.
 - Changing the school calendar to fit in with the local conditions should be considered. The benefits are numerous in that the children will be able to attend school regularly and should not miss any school, as their families will only be moving in times of school holidays. If the children are in school on a regular basis, this should reduce the numbers of repetitions and also dropouts in the school. There are many schools which were visited where

*The school calendar is different to the regular MoEYS approved calendar. The school year begins in October, continues until the end of February, and then starts in June and finishes in September. The school calendar is flexible to allow the families and children to go fishing on the lake. If we followed the regular MoEYS calendar, lots of children would miss school for 3-4 months. **Head Teacher at Anlong Rang Primary School. Krakor District, Pursat province.***

teachers and others stated that high repetition and drop out rates were due to children's absenteeism when they had to move with their parents.

The Barefoot Teacher Programme (or Mobile Teacher Programme)

This SCNiC initiative was piloted in Veal Veng district, Pursat Province with MoEYS recognising the need for a different strategy to regular schooling for children living in remote areas. In these remote areas, access to school is limited due to distance, and there is no possibility of MoEYS constructing a school due to the small number of students and students who migrate for periods of the year.



Benefits of the Barefoot Teacher Programme

- Children who previously had no access to an education can now receive one.
- The teachers are local to the area and known by the community.

Challenges of the Barefoot Teacher Programme

- The teachers employed are voluntary teachers who receive no financial support from MoEYS.
- The voluntary teachers have a limited education background – sometimes not having completed primary school.
- The voluntary teachers receive little or no training/support from the DEO and/or PEO, one major factor being the extreme remoteness of these communities. As a result, the teachers have little knowledge of teaching methodology, classroom management, etc.
- Education provision is usually only provided for Grades 1 and 2.

The programme was trialled in Veal Veng district, Pursat province and is thus no longer a target area of SCNiC's 2010-2014 programme. Prior to the SCNiC programme closing in Pursat province, there was no evaluation conducted by SCNiC of the barefoot teacher programme.

Recommendations

- SCNiC is an organisation which supports the most vulnerable and marginalised children who are usually the ones most difficult to reach to provide the required services. SCNiC, in its 2010-2014 education strategy, has chosen access as one area which requires additional support in Cambodia. It is recognised by MoEYS and other Development Partners, including SCNiC, that it is the children in these remote isolated areas who are still missing out on the opportunity to access schools, either due to distance, language issues (Laos-Cambodian border, Cambodia-Thai border) or ethnicity (Cham and Vietnamese communities), or living a nomadic lifestyle. SCNiC should identify what target groups of children it will focus upon in this strategic phase and either develop new programmes to improve access for these children or review and, if necessary, revise existing programmes - e.g. the barefoot teacher programme.

- *More professional development opportunities to volunteer/contract teachers at the mini schools need to be provided.* These teachers have limited understanding of teaching methodologies and limited subject knowledge and thus require additional support. If feasible, teachers and head teachers from the main school could provide mentoring to these teachers. Where possible, they should attend the regular cluster meetings. If these options are not possible, intensive training from SCNiC via the DEO Primary Education Section could be considered.

4.4.2 Retention at Primary School

Retention at primary school for many developing countries becomes an issue when limited budget is available for education, parental awareness of the importance of education is low, and the economic situation of many families DEOs not support keeping children at school. However, to achieve the MDG by 2015 of all children completing primary education, action needs to be taken by Governments with support from donors, agencies and NGOs to achieve this goal. SCNiC has been supporting implementation of the CFS policy and has been developing innovative approaches (Barefoot teacher programme, flexible learning schedule, Operation Rescue) to support retention at primary school. External factors, specifically the economic situation of many families in Cambodia particularly in the more rural and remote areas, however DEOs not support retention at schools and improving economic opportunities for families is not an area that SCNiC is presently working in.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The SCNiC programme has helped raise awareness of the issue of high repetition and drop out rates.* All levels of the education system (MoEYS, PEO, DEO and schools) are aware that enrolment at school is only the first battle to ensure that all children receive the Government mandated 9 years of education, and that actually keeping children in school can be more difficult than getting them enrolled. This recognition by the duty bearers, that dropout and repetition rates are still high in most provinces, is a considerable strength and enabling factor to tackle the issue of retention.
- *The SCNiC Programme may have contributed to reduced drop out and repetition rates.*³⁵ The percentage of drop outs since 2005 has dropped slightly in all SCNiC provinces except for Preah Vihear, where it has halved. Repetition rates show no clear pattern from 2005 other than they have decreased slightly in all provinces, except for Kampong Cham where there has been a decrease from 15,4% to 9%, and in Preah Vihear where there has actually been an increase from 14% to 16,6%.³⁶

³⁵ However, the evaluation could not prove a definite link due to the lack of reliable quantitative data.

³⁶ Because of problems related to the accuracy of data within EMIS, these figures may not be reliable. Nonetheless, they do indicate patterns and trends which have some validity.

	Drop out and Repetition Rates for Primary School							
	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008		2008/2009	
	Dropout	Repetition	Dropout	Repetition	Dropout	Repetition	Dropout	Repetition
Kampong Cham	13,60	15,40	12,20	13,00	12,80	10,50	11,80	9,00
Kampong Chhnang	2,14	12,45	1,90	12,63	1,59	12,34	1,08	12,10
Pursat	10,9	16,4	13,6	9,1	14,7	9,5	11,5	9,9
Preah Vihear	17,3	14,00	12,3	17,7	8,1	16,6	8,1	16,6
Siem Reap	6,43	16,29	5,68	13,96	6,44	15,04	4,26	10,73
Koh Kong	9,20	9,60	8,85	13,57	8,67	10,34	6,33	8,57

- The Programme has had significant impact in raising awareness of the issue of slow learners. Training to PEO and DEO staff on how to support slow learners (CFS Dimension 2: Effective teaching and learning: Helping slow learners) has been successful at raising the issue that many children are failing at school as they are not getting specific directed support. The PEO and DEO trained staff have subsequently gone on to provide support to teachers and head teachers in this area through training and through the monthly head teacher meetings. The monthly monitoring of these slow learners to show progress and to identify areas of difficulty also supports the retention of children at school.*
 - School support committees and children councils supported by the Programme have played an important role in addressing the issue of out of school children. The school support committees in many instances stated that they had a role of not only supporting the physical nature of the school and school mapping activities, but also encouraging parents and children who have been absent to return to school. Children, teachers and head teachers stated that the student council also played a role in identifying children who were long term absenters and encouraging them to return to school.*
- Common reasons for dropout and repetition**

 - Extended absenteeism due to nomadic lifestyle in many areas.
 - Children needing to work to support the family.
 - Boring and didactic teaching methods.
 - Over aged children who find it difficult to adapt to working with younger students.
- Initiatives supported by the Programme to support poorer students have helped significantly. Student councils additionally play a role in identifying economically disadvantaged children from the household mapping exercise and encouraging fellow students or community members to donate clothes or writing materials to these students. The savings box scheme, which was present in the majority of schools visited, was another means to support disadvantaged children. Children who are recognised by teachers and other students as being economically disadvantaged are entitled to apply for the credit scheme funded by SCNiC. This scheme is available in SCNiC focus schools. Students who receive the funds have in the majority of cases used it to purchase pigs. All respondents stated that these activities supported the retention of children at school and helped reduce repetition.*
 - Programme emphasis on the school environment has made schools attractive places for children. The emphasis on improving the school environment both inside and outside the classroom, was*

identified as another factor which supported retention of children at school. These are areas which are found in *CFS Dimension 2: Effective Teaching and Learning: Attractive Class Environment and Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Protection of Children: School Environment*. It was obvious in all schools visited, which included many of the incomplete mini schools, that this aspect of CFS is one which has been readily implemented by schools, as it is relatively easy to achieve and the results are visible to everyone. All schools had clean school grounds with many having flowerbeds, seating areas and trees (albeit newly planted in some cases), there were Cambodian proverbs and slogans located all around the school grounds, and classrooms at the very least had some posters on display, if not actual teacher displays, and on occasion, children's displays. All of these factors contributed to providing an attractive place for children to come and learn.

- *School construction and renovation also helps keep children in school.* School construction not only plays a role in encouraging children to enrol at school but also supports keeping them at school. The provision of adequate facilities and resources were mentioned as factors by the teachers, head teacher and PEO as factors influencing retention.
- *Standardised testing introduced by the Programme has helped assess student progress.* Testing has been carried out in some SCNiC schools in a limited capacity, specifically at the Grade 1 and 3 level. All duty bearers concerned can see the benefit that this can bring in assessing children's progress and identifying where areas of concern may be so that appropriate support can be provided to those children.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Insufficient follow up to training in working with slow learners and older learners.* Although SCNiC has initiated the slow learner programme and provided some training to PEO/DEO officials, there has been limited follow up support provided to either the PEO/DEO or teachers. The training was a 'one off' activity which had no provision for additional activities to support implementation. Additionally, SCNiC introduced the 'Operation Rescue' programme which is to support predominantly older learners in completing primary school through an accelerated learning programme. Again SCNiC has initiated a programme but has not been able to sustain its progress through time.
- *Scope of standardised testing and strategy development has been limited.* The testing programme has been conducted in a limited number of schools and teachers have had limited opportunities to develop strategies on how to deal with the test findings.
- *Limited follow-up support for the Mobile Teacher Programme.* SCNiC's innovative barefoot teacher programme (or Mobile Teacher Programme) has received limited support by the programme after its inception. This programme, designed to address migratory students as well as students who have no school nearby, could have a significant impact upon repetition and drop out rates if implemented effectively.

Recommendations

- *The effectiveness of SCNiC's interventions in reducing repetition and drop out rates needs to be assessed.* The innovative programmes that SCNiC has initiated (helping slow learners, mobile teacher programme, operation rescue programme) should be appropriately assessed for their effectiveness in reducing repetition and dropout rates. As mentioned previously for the mobile teacher programme³⁷ in Section 4.4.1 *Enrolment*, the programme should be reviewed with its strengths and weaknesses identified and revision made if necessary or alternative strategies developed to reach these most marginalised children.
- *A separate evaluation of the student credit scheme should be conducted to assess its impact on supporting children in remaining at school.* At present the programme is relying on anecdotal evidence that the credit scheme supports disadvantaged children to remain in school. It must also be considered that SCNiC cannot support credit schemes for students (or teachers) indefinitely and that an exit strategy should be identified at some time. SCNiC could consider coordinating with other NGOs in target provinces who are working in the area of livelihoods to identify if the NGO could provide support on improving the economic situation of families whilst SCNiC focuses on supporting education.

4.5 Strategic Choice 4 - Systems

All duty bearers are aware that for quality education to occur at school, there must be effective and efficient systems and processes in place from the National to the school level. In recent years, SCNiC has provided support to this area, in the first instance by placing a member of SCNiC staff in the Provincial Office for Education in 6 target provinces and 1 municipality to support implementation of activities. While SCNiC has provided direct support to the PEOs in database development, management and planning, there has been less direct support at the DEO and school level in this area.

4.5.1 Education Management

Quality and appropriate management systems and processes are essential components in any organisation and the education system is no exception. Throughout the last strategic phase, SCNiC has directly supported the target PEOs in developing annual plans for implementation of SCNiC activities and provided indirect support in improving coordination and communication between the different sections within the PEO through examples of good practice.

Benefits in Education Management

- Regular meetings are now held in the PEOs/DEOs.
- Enhanced understanding of how to manage information flow within the PEO.
- Understanding of how the PEO Planning Section can support other sections within the PEO.
- Improved documentation and reporting mechanisms at the PEO/DEO.

³⁷ SCN uses the name 'Barefoot teacher' programme for the mobile teacher programme

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The presence of an SCNiC staff member in the PEO in each target province is seen as a considerable strength by the PEO and DEO staff members.* SCNiC is working within the system rather than creating parallel systems, which is what many other NGOs/donors are perceived to be doing by various members of PEO staff. PEO staff stated that they felt that their own financial and planning processes had benefitted as a result of needing to be compliant to SCNiC's financial and planning systems. The benefit of having a SCNiC staff in the PEO has supported enhanced communication and coordination at this level.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Limited Programme focus on strengthening overall management and administrative systems at PEO level.* There has been an emphasis from SCNiC on increasing technical capacity at the PEO level of individual members of staff (Primary Education, ECE and Planning Sections primarily). This focus was probably the right one at the time but consideration should be given to the overall management and administrative systems within the PEO. Improving the overall running of the PEO will have considerable knock on effects at the district and school level.
- *Limited support for PEO planning.* The planning workshops and meetings held were focussed on developing SCNiC annual and long term plans. Although PEOs stated that the SCNiC process of developing a plan had supported them in producing the MoEYS annual plan, support from the initial stages on assisting the PEO in developing their own plans would also have been beneficial.
- *Limited Programme focus on DEO.* Although the positive impact of SCNiC's work is clear at the PEO level, it is less clear at the district level where there has been less direct support. The hierarchical nature of the DEO seemed more dominant than at the PEO level, with DEO staff members feeling less confident at speaking in front of the DEO director in comparison to the PEO staff. While PEO staff could identify improvements in education management that had come about as a result of the SCNiC Programme, DEO staff found it more difficult to identify improvements at their level.

Recommendations

- *There needs to be continued support to the PEOs in building staff capacity.* The SCNiC focus at the PEO level should continue as the PEOs have made considerable progress in some areas as a result of SCNiC being directly placed in the provincial office. There should be an emphasis on building capacity in areas of staff management and leadership for senior members of the PEOs as ensuring that staff members work effectively and efficiently as members of teams will support the overall running of the office. Additionally, supporting the PEO in tasks which are not directly technically-based would be a good use of resources - e.g. long term planning which directly links to the MoEYS ESP for 2009-2014, monitoring of implementation of plans, presentation skills, and the writing of reports - are all areas where support has been requested by the PEOs and could be provided by

SCNiC. This support could range from traditional workshops/trainings to regular meetings/discussions on particular issues to on the job training and mentoring.

- *Capacity building support to DEOs should be expanded.* Additional support at the DEO level is essential as it is this level which has the most contact with schools on a regular basis and is the conduit from the National and Provincial level for the dissemination of information to schools. The 2006-2009 SCNiC education programme number of target districts (46, excluding Phnom Penh Municipality) is far too great a number for effective levels of support to be provided by the existing mechanism of an SCNiC staff member placed in the PEO. The suggested decrease in the numbers of target districts to 18 in the 2010-2014 SCNiC draft BEP appears to be a more appropriate one, and before SCNiC starts working more directly at the DEO level, a needs assessment of the DEOs should be conducted so that the programme activities can fulfil the needs identified which should be aligned with the PEO priorities. The appointment of an additional SCNiC member at the provincial level and the reduced numbers of districts would enable the SCNiC provincial staff members to provide more intensive support to the target districts in the areas of planning, ECE and primary education.

An alternative suggestion which was raised in the 2010-2014 draft BEP, would be to appoint district facilitators with a staggered implementation beginning in a limited number of target districts first and then expanding to other target districts. This would ensure that lessons learnt from the approach could be assessed before expansion occurred. Due to the large budget involved in recruiting 18 district facilitators and the difficulty in finding suitable candidates for such positions, it would be advisable for one district facilitator to cover approximately 3-4 districts which would allow for approximately one day per week to be spent in each DEO and one day for the district facilitator to do preparation and report writing, etc.

4.5.2 School Based Management

At the school level, head teachers and, if available, deputy head teachers or senior teachers, are responsible for the every day and long term running of the school, which involves administration, planning, reporting, staff management, leadership and finances. Many head teachers or other senior staff members have received no or little training on school based management with some head teachers having only 2-3 years teaching experience before being appointed to a senior position. School based management is one aspect of CFS and is monitored by the DTMTs. SCNiC has provided some support to focus schools in annual planning through the cascade training system where DEO officials have been trained initially.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Some Programme initiated management support at PEO level has been cascaded down to school level.* The PEOs received training from SCNiC in planning which has been cascaded down to head teachers in focus schools. The head teachers, DEOs and PEOs all recognised the benefit of having

accurate data from the household mapping exercise in developing appropriate plans, which demonstrates that linkages are being made between individual activities.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *The Programme had no specific focus on school-based management.* The 2006-2009 education programme did not have a specific focus on school based management other than support to focus schools in developing annual plans. There has been no support to head teachers in school based management (leadership, administration, finances etc). As is apparent in any organisation, if the person at the top is strong, so will the PEOple beneath the leader be and this is also true for schools and the head teacher. Many of the head teachers have received no support or training since they became the head of the school. In some cases teachers who are 2-3 years out of the TTC become a head teacher with little knowledge or understanding of what constitutes an effective and efficient leader. This is a serious gap in the programme which should be addressed should SCNiC want to see some quality change at the school level.

Recommendations

- *Provide support to head teachers in management, supervision and planning.* There was a request from all PEOs/DEOs for there to be an emphasis on supporting head teachers in the next phase in the overall management, supervision and planning of school activities. This should be seen as a priority by SCNiC so that there is a connection between the PEO, DEO and school level. Some of the leadership/management activities could be combined with the proposed DEO level of training and support, although it may be harder for them to attend such training together with PEO staff due to reasons related to hierarchy. In Section 4.3.5: *School Support Committees*, there is a recommendation that SCNiC engages with an LNGO on an initial pilot basis to support schools (head teachers, children, school support committees and teachers) to develop annual plans. SCNiC should also explore the materials which have been produced by other NGOs on school based management e.g. KAPE and UNICEF rather than developing new materials.

4.5.3 Database Development, Collection and Analysis

Any qualitative and quantitative data which is collected should be stored appropriately, be readily available and be analysed according to what information is required. SCNiC has worked extensively in this area at the school, DEO and PEO level in the area of household mapping which is part of *CFS Dimension 1 – All children have access to schooling*. SCNiC, up until 2005, provided training to PEO/DEOs on how to collect qualitative data on numbers of children in a school catchment ranging in age from 0-18 years in many instances. This data collection included gathering information on marginalised and economically disadvantaged children so that schools, DEOs and PEOs could have comprehensive data on the numbers and situations of children in their areas. At the school level, only paper data collection is conducted which is then sent to the DEOs where the data may be inputted into an Excel database (if computer and electricity is available) or to the PEOs where it will be inputted into either an Excel or Microsoft Access database depending on the province. The data is used by schools,

DEO/PEO to support annual planning, to see emerging patterns of enrolment, ages of children enrolled, numbers of marginalized children enrolled, and other aspects.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *The 2006-2009 Programme has made a significant impact on the collection of household data at the school level and compiling this data into a database at either the district or provincial level.* The DEOs/PEOs in target areas all have comprehensive data on the numbers of children present in each school catchment areas. This data is used by the PEOs/DEOs to support planning specifically on enrolment at primary schools and clearly shows what children if any are not accessing schools. The data also illustrates the accessibility to schools for children from marginalised groups - e.g. ethnicity, second language learners, and disability. SCNiC supported training on data collection for PEO, DEO and schools in the previous programme phase of 2002-2005.³⁸
- *Annual data collection promoted by the Programme has resulted in better availability of data.* Yearly collection of data at the household level means that DEOs/PEOs always have updated, detailed data available to aid in reviewing short and long term plans.
- *While there are 2 data systems (SCNiC and MoEYS), they complement each other.* The MoEYS EMIS system and SCNiC data collection system are complementary, with most PEOs/DEOs saying that data only needed to be collected once. The SCNiC data collection at the household level was seen by at all levels from the PEO to school/community as being of more benefit to the schools than to the EMIS data. Schools, DEOs and the PEO all considered that the EMIS data was for use at the MoEYS level only whereas the SCNiC data could be used at all levels.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Changes in PEO staff previously trained impacts on the quality of data collection.* PEO/DEO and school staff are continuously changing, and as a result, many staff members who attended data collection training prior to 2005 are no longer in the same positions. This means that untrained PEOs are being asked to collect and process data with the result that there are increased inaccuracies in the data, lesser understanding of the reasons behind the data collection, and overall reduced ownership for the process. PEO staff in particular felt that this was an issue at the school level, where schools themselves may not see the true benefit of the data and head teachers would seldom check the accuracy of data before sending it to the DEO.
- *No support has been provided by SCNiC on the analysis of data.* As a result, individual DEO/PEO Planning Sections are analysing the data in different ways and for different purposes. In addition the overall technical capacity of the DEO staff in particular and the PEO staff in using Excel or Microsoft Access is low and this further hinders the analysis of data.

³⁸ With the exception of Koh Kong who only became a SCN targeted province in late 2008. Koh Kong received some training on data collection in 2008/2009.

Recommendations

- *Schools, DEOs and PEOs need more support on the analysis of data.* The household data collection has been a huge success in supporting increased enrolment and identifying out of school children. Attention should be given to the small number of districts who seem to be collecting data twice – once for EMIS and once for the household mapping, and the schedule for the data should be harmonised so that the schools are not asked for data twice in the same year. The issue now is to support schools, DEOs and PEOs (specifically the Planning Sections) in effectively analysing the data to support them in their planning. Refresher trainings on data collection should be held if necessary with subsequent trainings or sessions on analysis. Discussions should be held with all stakeholders at the different levels concerned as to what analysis is required recognising that analysis at the PEO level may be different to that required at the school level. Additionally the PEOs and DEOs should all be using the same software package for inputting and analysis of data and the relevant training should be provided.
- *IT training needs to be provided to DEO and PEO Planning Section staff.* Some PEO planning sections are spending considerable amounts of time inputting data, as the DEOs either do not have the staff capacity or the facilities to do this. At the PEO level, there may only be one or two staff members responsible for data inputting and this can result in huge backlogs of data if the PEO only receive paper copies of data from the DEOs. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency for the next phase and suitable IT training should be provided where needed. There are a small number of districts who either do not have functioning computers, electricity or both. If these districts are to remain SCNiC focus districts, consideration should be given as to whether SCNiC will be able to fund this. Information should be provided to the DEOs/PEOs on appropriate storage and care for computer/electronic equipment as in some instances, equipment was no longer functioning due to poor storage conditions. Attention also needs to be given to ensuring that computers have up to date anti-virus software, to prevent the corruption of data and damage to computer hard drives.

4.5.4 Child Friendly Schools

SCNiC was one of the leading players in the CFS initiative and supported the integration of CFS into government policy in 2006. Since that time, SCNiC, through its education programming, has been supporting implementation of various aspects of the CFS framework. The limited CFS budget from MoEYS, as mentioned previously in the report, has had an impact on the actual implementation of the policy.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *All schools were implementing CFS to various degrees.* Implementation had an emphasis on *Dimension 1: All children have access to schooling, Dimension 2: Effective teaching and learning and Dimension 3: Health, safety and protection of children* with a particular focus on the school and class environment, life skills gardens plus the school enrolment and household mapping. All these

activities appear to be ones which are visual and relatively easy to implement and do not require continuous daily inputs.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *Limited understanding of CFS at school and, in some cases, DEO level.* Head teachers and teachers all found it difficult to actually state what a Child Friendly School was, other than it was a place where children should be happy and there was quality teaching and learning occurring. There was no mention by any respondent at any level of *Dimension 4: Gender responsiveness*, which could point to a lack of understanding or awareness of the issue. Many schools have received some CFS resources/booklets, but in many instances there has been no awareness raising/training to accompany the distribution of the booklets.
- *Fragmentary implementation of CFS.* Implementation of CFS appears to be fragmentary by the MoEYS and also by NGOs/Donors, including SCNiC. The SCNiC focus is on a relatively high number of interventions within the individual dimensions, and this has resulted in very few features of CFS actually becoming institutionalised within the schools.

Recommendations

- *Areas of focus for SCNiC within CFS should be identified for the next strategic phase, with the understanding that it cannot address all, or even the majority of themes under each dimension.* SCNiC should develop suitable, comprehensive individual strategies to address each of these so that maximum impact can be achieved. For example, SCNiC could focus on *Dimension 2 : Effective Teaching and Learning* and within that, focus upon the child centered approach and support to slow learners plus continue the existing work on *Dimension 1: All children have access to schooling* and *Dimension 6: Education system*, with a focus on school head teacher training in leadership and school development planning.

5. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS (MoEYS)

As part of the evaluation, interviews were conducted with the two departments within MoEYS that SCNiC works most closely with – the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education – in order to get their perspective of the SCNiC-supported Education Programme. Accordingly, this sections reflects more the views of MoEYS senior staff who have worked with SCNiC in the past. As the areas of focus and findings within each department were different, strengths, weaknesses and recommendations are covered separately below.

5.1 Department of Primary Education

SCNiC has had a close relationship with the Department of Primary Education (DPE) for a number of years and has had a specific emphasis on supporting the development and implementation of CFS policy. In addition to providing technical and funding support to the Department, SCNiC has also played an important role in raising awareness within the DPE of issues at the provincial, district and school level.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *SCNiC's contribution to development of CFS framework and implementation of CFS policy has been significant.* The Department regards SCNiC as having played a major role, (together with UNICEF and KAPE) in helping MoEYS to develop the CFS framework as well as the CFS booklets for implementing CFS in primary schools. Handbooks on aspects of CFS initially produced by SCNiC have now been further developed and adopted as part of the MoEYS CFS 'package'. SCNiC was also involved earlier in piloting aspects of the CFS framework together with KAPE and UNICEF, particularly in Kampong Cham Province.
- *SCNiC has contributed to building capacity of Dept. Staff.* The Department has valued SCNiC's contribution to developing the capacity of their staff, particularly through involvement in action research. They also regard SCNiC as having played an important role in technical capacity development of PEO and DEO staff in target provinces.
- *SCNiC has addressed areas where the education system is weak.* SCNiC has been able to address areas in the education system that MoEYS has been unable to, especially issues of access in more remote areas through school construction. Without SCNiC support, MoEYS would have been unable to provide access to education in many of these areas.
- *SCNiC has focused on more than 1 sub-sector.* Rather than just focusing on one sub-sector within education, SCNiC has focused on several linked sub-sectors – specifically ECE, primary schools and, to a lesser extent, pre-service teacher training within teacher training colleges. For example, through promoting HBECCD, SCNiC has supported children in being better prepared to enter primary school.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *SCNiC has not been supporting implementation of the CFS 'package' in a holistic way.* Training has tended to focus on very specific aspects of CFS, rather than promote the development of CFS in a more comprehensive way - i.e. selecting some aspects to focus on for training, such as school environment, but not promoting these in the overall context of CFS. This is perhaps reflected in the evaluation finding of a limited understanding of CFS, particularly at school level (refer to Section 4.5.4 on Child Friendly Schools).
- *SCNiC has not given enough attention to strengthening the cluster system and the DTMTs.* Activities supported by SCNiC have tended to focus on specific target schools, rather than activities aimed at strengthening the school clusters. The cluster system is official MoEYS policy and there are monthly cluster meetings. Also, the DTMTs need more capacity development in order to more effectively support schools and clusters. SCNiC is missing an opportunity to strengthen the quality of education in a larger number of schools through not working within the cluster system and having more focus on building the capacity of DTMTs.
- *Main focus of SCNiC has been on PEO and DEO at expense of school level.* SCNiC has tended to focus direct support on PEO and DEO, rather than directly providing technical support for school level

where it is perceived as being most needed. As a result the actual impact at the school level of SCNiC's intervention is not readily apparent although it could also be argued that for sustainable change to occur especially when this change needs to cascade down a number of levels (from PEO to DEO to school), that the change will take some years before it is prevalent at the school level.

Recommendations

- *SCNiC should promote more comprehensive implementation of CFS through ensuring that recipients of training have a good overall understanding of the concept.* The SCNiC Education Programme needs to ensure that CFS is being introduced to schools in a more systematic and holistic way. While the focus in training will be on specific aspects of CFS (refer to Section 4.3.1 Curriculum Implementation and Section 4.3.2 Child Centered Approach), the SCNiC supported training also needs to ensure that participants have an overall understanding of CFS and can relate the specific topics in which they are being trained to that framework.
- *SCNiC needs to have more focus on strengthening clusters and DTMTs.* The SCNiC Education Programme needs to support activities specifically focussed on strengthening school clusters (See Section 4.3.1 Curriculum Implementation and Section 4.3.2 Child Centered Approach), particularly through building the capacity of DTMTs and identifying core trainers at the cluster level. Areas of focus for capacity development for DTMTs recommended by the Department of Primary Education include training and facilitation skills and child-centred teaching and learning.³⁹

5.2 Department of Early Childhood Education

The focus of this evaluation due to limited time was on HBECCD and the relationship of SCNiC with the ECE department at MoEYS.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *Support for production of ECE publications has been much appreciated.* The Department of Early Childhood Education has produced a number of publications supported by SCNiC, which have been distributed throughout the country, including the overall ECE policy booklet produced by MoEYS. SCNiC support has included both funding and technical support.
- *SCNiC have contributed to ECE policy development.* In part due to the inputs from SCNiC, HBECCD has now been included as part of official ECE policy.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *The SCNiC approach to ECE is to focus more on province and district level.* This puts pressure on PEO and DEO ECE staff who have several other responsibilities besides HBECCD.

³⁹ Refer to Section 4.3.2 – Child Centered Teaching and Learning

- *Information flow between SCNiC and the Department of Early Childhood Education is not maximized.* As the HBECCD is community based and requires support from the DEO and PEO, the emphasis from SCNiC has been at this level. As a result, the Department is not fully informed as to what SCNiC, the PEO and DEOs are planning to do or what activities are already implemented in HBECCD. Maybe as a consequence of the less than ideal information flow between SCNiC and the Department, the draft MoEYS ESP (2009-2014), although broadening its approach to more community based and child centered approaches to ECCD (recognizing these as being lower cost than pre-school provision), still regards HBECCD as being the domain of donor/NGOs.

Recommendations

- *SCNiC should consult and inform the Department of ECE regarding what activities they are supporting in the provinces.* The Department would like to be better informed of what SCNiC is planning in each of the target provinces, as well as receiving reports on activities implemented. They feel that the annual budget for provinces should also be provided together with annual operational plans. Improving this information flow should support the institutionalizing of HBECCD into the mainstream ECE programmes rather than them being seen as donor/NGO driven initiatives.

6. RELATIONSHIPS WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The evaluation process involved meetings with several Development Partners, including NGOs and UNICEF, in order to get their perspectives on the SCNiC-supported Education Programme. In particular, Development Partners were asked to comment on what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of the SCNiC Education programme, and on coordination at both central and provincial levels. They were also asked for suggestions regarding the next phase of the programme.

Strengths and Enabling Factors

- *SCNiC is regarded as a major player in supporting education development in Cambodia.* All Development Partners spoken to as part of the evaluation regarded SCNiC as one of the major supporters of education development in Cambodia. In particular, their contribution several years ago, together with UNICEF, KAPE, and others to developing the Child Friendly Schools framework and resource materials was seen as significant. An emphasis on Child Friendly Schools has now become part of MoEYS policy and the model for development of primary education throughout the country. SCNiC's support for, and promotion of ECCD is also regarded as important and has put early childhood education firmly on the national agenda.
- *SCNiC have been active participants in the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) and, to a lesser extent, the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG).* Moves over the last 5-6 years to improve coordination among donors and organisations supporting education development in Cambodia has seen the establishment of a number of mechanisms under the move towards a sector wide approach (SWAp). This includes the NEP, which now comprises over 70 local and international NGOs working in education. In addition, SCNiC is one of seven NGOs participating in the ESWG, which also has representatives of all major education donors (and which in turn is linked into the Joint Technical

Working Group on Education, the JTWG–Ed) comprised of ESWG representatives and relevant Government of Cambodia personnel. Staff from the SCNiC Education programme regularly attend the two-monthly NEP meetings but attendance at the ESWG meetings is less frequent, perhaps due to other work pressures.

- *SCNiC works at all levels within the education system.* While SCNiC is more focussed on working at PEO level, they are also working at Ministry level as well as district level. This has provided SCNiC with several opportunities to support MoEYS in strengthening systems related to training and information flows (particularly bringing information and issues from the grassroots level to the attention of MoEYS). This multi-level approach has much more potential which has not yet been fully utilised, particularly with regard to advocacy.
- *The recent introduction of Round Table Meetings by SCNiC is seen as very positive.* While coming after the time period of the evaluation (i.e. 2006-2009), the first Round Table Meeting focussed on the findings of the baseline survey was seen by all Development Partners interviewed as a very positive step in bringing together all relevant organisations, including MoEYS, to discuss issues of importance to education development in Cambodia.

Weaknesses and Constraining Factors

- *SCNiC is perceived as an organisation that prefers to work largely independently of other organisations.* In particular from 2006 until this year, SCNiC has been regarded by other aid and development organisations as preferring to work more with Government, rather than also working closely with other Development Partners. The evaluation found little evidence of any significant cooperation with other Development Partners beyond participation in the NEP and ESWG meetings. At provincial level, there appeared to be limited cooperation with other Development Partners other than yearly or twice yearly donor/NGO meetings organized by the PEO in some target provinces.
- *Coordination and cooperation among Development Partners within target provinces is weak.* The evaluation did not find any examples of significant cooperation between SCNiC and other development organisations within target provinces, despite the fact that in each province there are more than 2 or 3 organisations supporting education. Rather, there has been a division of districts among the organisations, at least in Kampong Cham and Koh Kong. While working in cooperation with other organisations who may have different approaches can be challenging, this would appear to be a missed opportunity. Cooperating with others has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of implementation on the ground. For example, some organisations have technical advisors based in the province, whereas currently SCNiC has not. Working together could enable better follow up support after training activities, through technical staff from other organisations working with DEO staff to provide more effective support on the ground. This would address one of the weaker areas of follow up support after training of the SCNiC programme which has been identified elsewhere in this report.

- *Payment of stipends to PEO staff is perceived as making it more difficult for those organisations who do not provide them.* While this practice has, for understandable reasons, been quite widespread in Cambodia in the past, it can make it more difficult for those organisations who do not pay stipends to get effective cooperation from the PEO staff who receive stipends. All Development Partners spoken to as part of this evaluation referred to the payment of stipends as one difficulty they face working in provinces where SCNiC is present. Discussions with PEO and SCNiC staff indicate that there have not yet been any discussions as to how these payments might be phased out in the longer term.
- *Limited documentation has been produced by the SCNiC programme.* While SCNiC's earlier involvement in producing CFS resource materials was highly regarded, Development Partners said they had seen little if any resource materials or documentation produced by the programme between 2006 – 2009. This was felt to be unfortunate, given SCNiC's involvement at all levels in the education system and the opportunities that this presented for learning, documenting and sharing information throughout the system.

Recommendations

- *SCNiC needs to be more proactive in seeking opportunities for closer cooperation with other Development Partners at national level.* SCNiC is already actively engaged with other NGOs as well as donors through the regular NEP and ESWG meetings and these present opportunities for closer cooperation with other like-minded organisations. For example, NEP's attempts to form sub-sector working groups could be supported by SCNiC, particularly in relation to ECE and primary school levels.
- *SCNiC could support PEO more to lead in coordinating Development Partners within target provinces.* While it is not the role of SCNiC nor other Development Partners to organise coordination meetings, SCNiC could encourage the PEO to organise regular coordination meetings, as well as annual joint planning meetings, to ensure that the resources available from different organisations – funding, technical support, etc. – are being maximised in order to achieve greater impact. Organisation of these meetings would require some funding support, but participating Development Partners could share this cost among them.
- *While payment of stipends to PEO staff cannot be stopped overnight, the issue needs to be discussed with PEO partners.* While stopping these payments suddenly could negatively impact on programme implementation, a dialogue regarding this issue needs to be started between SCNiC and PEO regarding the best way of eventually phasing out this practice. The fact that the Government of Cambodia is also concerned about this issue probably means that eventually the practice will no longer be allowed anyway, which highlights the importance of preparing the way beforehand.
- *SCNiC needs to better document and disseminate its achievements.* There is much in the education programme that SCNiC can justifiably be proud of, and which others could learn a lot from – for example, the establishment of schools in remote areas, the HBECCD model, the Barefoot Teacher programme and others. While there are already plans to document some of the more significant

achievements of the programme in 2010, SCNiC Education programme staff need to continue to identify aspects of the programme which have the potential to contribute to achieving greater impact beyond target areas, and then document and disseminate these materials to Government and Development Partners. Ideally, this should be included in each annual plan. Materials produced can also be used as a means to achieve advocacy goals.

7. CONCLUSION

The SCNiC Education programme has undoubtedly made a valuable contribution to supporting quality change in primary and ECCD education in Cambodia. It has worked at multiple levels with a specific focus on the PEOs and institutional change at this level is clearly apparent. SCNiC has supported improving access to education for thousands of children, especially those living in remote, isolated areas, through the construction of schools, the introduction of household mapping and school enrolment campaigns.

However, there has been less of an impact on the actual quality of teaching and learning occurring in the classroom, and SCNiC should see this as a priority for the next 2010-2014 Programme phase. From the National to school level, there were requests for more support in supervision (capacity of DTMTs and head teachers), as well as more training in child centered approaches, and priority should be given to these through strengthening the existing cluster systems. Additionally, the impact that SCNiC has had on increasing access to ECCD provision for many children is significant, and this should now be supported to ensure quality of the activities as well as longer term sustainability. In order to more effectively support many of these interventions, SCNiC should work closely with other Development Partners and the relevant Departments at MoEYS to ensure a coordinated approach which will benefit the children of Cambodia.

In terms of programme management, the SCNiC senior management appear very aware of many of the changes that are necessary, and are taking the appropriate steps to implement them. A focus should be on ensuring that the draft BEP is finalized in the near future which includes working in a reduced number of districts, strengthening the cluster system, having a tighter focus of activities, improving coordination and communication with NGOs/Agencies and Donors at the National and Provincial level and ensuring that all initiatives are supported by MoEYS at the national level. After finalisation of SCNiC's BEP the accompanying work plans, monitoring and evaluation framework and advocacy strategies can be developed.

Terms of Reference
Evaluation of the Education Programme
December 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

Save the Children is a leading independent organisation striving to create lasting change in the lives of children in need around the world. Recognised for our commitment to accountability, innovation and collaboration, our work takes us into the heart of communities, where we help children and families to help themselves.

Save the Children Norway has been operating in Cambodia since 1988. The overall goal of the organisation is to bring long lasting change in the lives of children particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable ones. Save the Children Norway is working in partnership with civil society and government organisations to strengthen local capacity and ensure sustainability.

Save the Children Norway in Cambodia (SCNiC) currently operates in Phnom Penh - the capital city and eight provinces (Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear, Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang and Koh Kong). The four main thematic areas of SCNiC are (1) Education, (2) Child Protection, (3) Child Right Governance, and (4) HIV and AIDS. In some provinces all themes are covered and in others only one or two themes are being implemented. Child Rights Governance is overarching of our work which is implemented mostly at national level.

SCNiC has established partnerships and influential links with key stakeholders like local and international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and various government ministries, particularly Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). We have been working with partners, including other Save the Children members and networks to ensure a broad partnership approach that allows for reaching more children and bringing long lasting positive changes in children's lives.

2. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE OF SCNiC

2.1 Current Strategy (2006 - 2009)

SCNiC current strategic objectives and organisational priority objectives for the 4 year (2006-09) are:

- Fulfill children's rights to education
- Fulfill the right of children to be protected against violence and sexual abuse, and exploitation
- Strengthen implementation and monitoring of children's rights
- Fulfill the rights of Children With Disabilities to social security

2.1.1 Strategic objective: "Fulfil Children's Right to Education"

Justification for selection of the strategic objective: the following justification had been considered when making a strategic choice for working on the rights of children to education:

Relevance related to the situation of children: The MoEYS has shown commitment to achieve the Cambodia education development goal⁴⁰ by gradually increasing in resources to education to ensure that 100% of children have access to schooling by 2010⁴¹ and 100% can complete basic education by 2015, as per CMDG target. A great deal of work needs to be done including establishing a strong and systems-pervasive to commitment to translate the plans into actions. The accessibility to formal pre-school education is limited to children from rich or wealthy families in urban areas. The majority of children from disadvantaged families and marginalized population in remote areas have no access to such pre-schools before entering primary school. In addition, children in rural areas are generally smaller and their intellectual developments are slower due to pervasive malnutrition and/or by post conflict trauma. These children are often enrolled late at 9-10 years or even 13-14 years. The percentage of dropout before completing the primary education cycle is still high.

According to MoEYS, although there are as yet scant research data, it is assumed that children who have difficulties in passing grade 1 or 2 are the children who never had access to preschool. The challenges for MoEYS to expand pre-school activities are mainly due to hindrance caused by limited experience, lack of updated pedagogical approaches and trained pre-school teachers, limited production of teaching materials and a limited budget. Furthermore, the understanding of the importance of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is not yet firm among parents/care-givers up to policymaking levels. SCNIC, the MoEYS and PEO will expand its almost no cost, culture specific HB ECCD program, in order to overcome the current challenges in 2006 - 2009 by providing ECCD interventions where the thousands of marginalized, disadvantaged children lives in their homes, through their life events.

Primary and Lower Secondary Education: Despite the increased enrolment rate in primary education, there are still significant late enrolments and persistent dropout and repetition. Average drop out is 11%-12% and repetition rates have stagnated around 7%-8%. Variations exist across grades with repetition rates in grades 1 and 2 at 19% and 12%⁴². The vacation time remedial programs and school operation budgets are insufficient to improve progression and reduce dropout. The MoEYS unofficial survey report in 2004 indicated that, in the city (Phnom Penh), around 75-80% of primary school children are retained throughout primary education cycle. The situation in some sub-urban and rural areas is alarming, the levels of retention varying from 65% to below 40%. Other key constraints are the continued existence of incomplete primary schools, e.g offering less than the full 6 primary grades. Incomplete schools are often found in small and remote villages, especially in border and ethnic minority areas⁴³.

⁴⁰Detail please refer to SCNIC CSSA: January 2005: P12

⁴¹ Due to certain circumstance the MoEYS have decided to move from 100% enrollment by 2008 to 2010.

⁴² Education Sector Performance Report, 2004

⁴³ Detail, please refer to SCNIC CSSA: January 2005: P15

The gender gap in education, especially in primary education has increased with level of schooling. Boys' and girls' net enrolments are slightly different, 89.45⁴⁴ percent of girls for every 100 boys. However, gender disparities in education remain greater in the poor and rural areas. The enrolment rate in lower secondary education is disappointing. The overall national average enrolment is about 21%, while in certain provinces only 10%⁴⁵. The figures indicate that Cambodia is still far below its MDG to be achieved by 2015. The quality of education at this stage is low compared to countries in the region in term of education investment per capita, learning and teaching proficiency, management and supervision. The quality support and assurance do not respond to the needs of education system.

Relevance Related to National Plans and Priorities: The RGC is committed to increase its education budget from year to year in order to implement the education plans and overcome the challenges. The MoEYS have developed several policies, strategies, guidelines, including National Life Skills Policy for PEO's, DEO's to be followed at local levels. Donors, financial institutes and NGOs are committed to assist the RGC and MoEYS in policy development and partly finance the implementation plan⁴⁶.

Relevance Related to Recommendation from UNCRC: The UN Committee to monitor the implementation of CRC in Cambodia has urged the RGC, especially the MoEYS to expand both formal and informal pre-school provision to an adequate level in urban and rural areas. RGC/MoEYS is also requested to strengthen teacher qualifications in conformity with Child Friendly Learning (CFL) methods, ensure minority and indigenous children obtaining an adequate and quality education, raise public awareness among local communities on the importance of education and enrol their children in school. The committee also recommend the state party to allocate sufficient national budget for improving quality of education and to guarantee free and compulsory primary education for all children and ensure that all disadvantaged children benefit from the reformed education policies and strategies.

2.1.2 Specific Objectives

The country specific objectives are determined through attention given to the MoEYS national policies, the RGC policies and strategies defined for EFA as well as CMDGs. SCNIC country specific objectives are defined to ensure that more children, especially girls, disadvantaged children and children living in that rural and remote areas, minority and indigenous tribal children, and the disabled benefit from: **Quality Access to Schooling , Quality Access to Education, Quality Access to Learning and Quality Access to Achievement**

2.1.3 Implementation strategy according to the principles and approaches of Child Rights programming

The strategic objective selected will be achieved through working as equal partners with stakeholders, and children's opinions and views will be included. The key work components for this strategic objective will be focused on (1) Public awareness raising, (2) Deepening capacity building and strengthening core competency of partners and SCNIC staff, (3) Strengthening partners' staff capacity in IMS, interpreting

⁴⁴ MoEYS: 2004-05 education statistic

⁴⁵ Detail, please refer to SCNiC CSSA: January 2005: P18

⁴⁶ Detail, please refer to SCNiC CSSA: January 2005: P12-19; Section related " Opportunities"

and implementing government and ministry policies, monitoring, supervision, and management, (4) Policy development and consultation (5) Developing model or support pilot projects (6) Documentation of lessons learned.

The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, 5 Provincial Education Offices (PEO) and Phnom Penh Municipality Department of Education are the main partners for implementing this strategic objective. The MoEYS is the strategic partner for long term cooperation in order to overcome any obstacles and ensuring sustainability. Phasing out collaboration will be based on assessment of progress and level of sustainability of individual partners (see section 1.4).

Elimination of violations of child rights as well as children's participation and strengthening of the implementation of CRC will be enriched through awareness raising, children practicing and exercising their rights within the extension of children's councils and classroom activities context. Involving children in social/cultural events, children's clubs, peer learning and participation in school EFA activities are the techniques that will open opportunities for children learn to participate and gradually enhance their capacity to communicate with adults, make decisions and promote a sense of mutual support and caring for others.

The Key Intervention Areas of the Education Programme are:

- Early childhood care and development - promoting and supporting formal and home based ECCD
- School construction - especially in the remote areas and where there are no school facilities in order to create access to primary education
- Enrolment campaigns / activities
- Learning-teaching pedagogies / activities in order to improve quality
- Teacher training at teacher training college in order to improve quality and promote child centered learning
- Community participation / school community EFA network
- School management, leadership and administration
- Children council / child participation

2.2 Target Groups

- Children age 0-5 for ECCD, Children age 6-11 for lower primary education, Children age 12-18 for higher primary education
- Parents, especially core mothers
- Head Teachers, Assistance Head Teachers, and Teachers
- MOEYS, PEOs, DEOs staff
- Education For All committee

2.3 Geographic location:

The basic education programme has continued in the previous provinces and extended the coverage to the whole province or additional districts. The decision to continue the work in the provinces and Phnom Penh municipality is based on the previous strategic cycle, when resources were limited within SCNiC and partners which prevented the possible expansion of knowledge and experience gained, and

shared to other areas of the provinces. Save the Children Norway in Cambodia currently operates in Phnom Penh - the capital city and eight provinces (Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear, Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang and Koh Kong) ⁴⁷. SCNiC also work with MoEYS at national level. *(Refer to annex 2 for details)*

3. Objectives of the Evaluation

The main objectives of this evaluation are to:

1. Assess to what degree the programme has achieved its set results and objectives in terms of its quality, relevance and results/outcomes on children's lives as planned and how effectively and efficiently the programme being implemented.
2. Document lessons learnt and good practices, as well as look for evidence of innovative approaches that have policy and practice implications. Also generate knowledge that will contribute to programme and policy development at strategic level.
3. Identify the most significant factors that have constrained or contributed to the achievements and effective use of resources
4. Recommend a concrete and realistic approaches and activity options, in relation to the new country strategy objectives and Save the Children Norway's global new strategy, for the next 5 years that includes a broader approach to working with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to ensure that the best interest of children is central in the work and quality of education to all children in Cambodia

These objectives have to be attained and spelled out clearly and effectively so that the outcome can be used as an input for a publication on the experience, lessons learnt good practices, innovations, challenges and recommendations of SCNiC education intervention programme.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will cover (not limited) the following key issues⁴⁸:

- Compare the implementation of the programme with the country 4 year plan and identify whether the necessary adjustments have been made during implementation. If not why and what should have been made.
- The quality and achievements of the programme in terms of its outcome on children's education in general and children's learning in particular.
- Identify good practices and approaches in achieving the objectives.
- Identify main challenges and obstructions to achieve objectives, and how these are dealt with.
- Assess to what degree projects/programme led to innovation.
- The quality of the responses in the programme in relation to promoting child rights, child development, child participation and non-discrimination.
- The relevance and quality of the country office's support to the implementation of programme.
- Assess the quality of support from the Head office in Oslo.

⁴⁷ List of Geographical locations are in annex 2.

⁴⁸ Suggested questions to go along with this are in annex 1.

- The influence of the programme on policies and practices relating to children issues in relation to education.
- Assess the participation of stakeholders (including children) in project planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Assess the contribution of the organisation to strengthen local structures and mechanisms in the country.
- Assess cooperation and co-ordination with different child right organisations, Community Based Organizations and authorities. Specifically analyse the relationship, strength and weakness and challenges.
- Identify what added values the organisation has brought to the partners in addition to funding and what added value the partners bring to the work of SCNiC
- Identify together with stakeholders, including children, new and innovative ways of organising quality response to the issue of children education.
- Identify other critical issues that could be considered for the next strategy long term plan. The analysis and recommendations shall be clear and practical, and having identified innovative approaches and activities to suggest for the future strategic long term plan.

5. Evaluation Methodology

The following methods could be used, but not limited to.

- Document review
- Focus group discussion with different groups
- Key informant interview
- Field observation
- Workshop with key stakeholders

6. Expected results

- A clear identification of opportunities created by the current programme and areas to be strengthened and way forward.
- A workshop with key actors in Cambodia exploring a strategy of taking forward the current work and looking at opportunities which need to be explored as well as areas which were not explored and need to be developed (based on the draft report).
- A final summary report not more than 15 pages detailing a strategy to take forward work with providing quality education for all children in addition to a detailed final evaluation report. The paper will include suggestions on the key stakeholders to be involved.
- A separate short evaluation report of the education programme in Phnom Penh and Pursat which will inform the management and relevant government bodies to look in to the previous management decision to phase out from the two districts.
- All reports must be submitted in soft and hard copies.

7. Publication

This evaluation outcome will by in large influence the next step that SCNiC is planning which is a publication on the lessons learnt, good practices, challenges and changes that our work has experienced, as well as evidences of innovative approaches that have policy and practice implications. Thus this has to be in consideration while carrying out the evaluation.

8. Duration of the Evaluation

50 consultant days comprising 10 days desk review and discussion with staff, 24 days for field work plus 5 days for preparation, 5 days draft report, 1 day for workshops and input from stakeholders and 5 days final report.

9. Payment Schedule

The external consultant will be the only team member receiving a consultant fee as the other members are SC employees. The review budget will, however, cover travel and pr. diem costs at SCNiC rates for all team members.

Payment to the consultant shall be done in accordance with normal procedures of SCNiC. In principal however, consultant fees will be paid upon the satisfactory report of performance from the Supervisors as prescribed in procurement manual and agreed upon in the contract. Consultants are expected to pay all relevant government taxes for which they are responsible. Where applicable, SCNiC shall deduct all applicable government taxes and submit them to Cambodia Revenue Authority.

Annex 1: Suggested Questions

1. Has SCNiC played a major role in creating access to quality education for children in Cambodia?
2. Has SCNiC played a major role in promoting and creating access to Early Childhood Care and Development to children?
3. What are the major root causes for drop out and repetition for children. Are they different for boys and girls? If so, what are the differences?
4. How successful has the programme been in addressing some of the root causes of education in general and quality education in particulate, in addition to working on the symptoms? Are there considerations that we looked/overlooked (e.g. Disability, ethnicity, religion, health condition etc.)?
5. What are our achievements and lessons learnt from the programme? Example of teaching life skills like rice production?
6. How successfully did the programme promote child participation and community participation in finding solutions to tackle some of the challenges stated above?
7. What are the key external and internal impediments to the achievements of our objectives? Were we creative and flexible to review programme and plans as per external challenges and internal capacities?
8. How successful (or otherwise) have we been in building local capacity through the programme - staff, NGOs, government, communities, and children?

9. How relevant and quality is the country office's support to the implementation of programme and how effective is the support from the head office in Oslo (if any)?
10. How successful (or otherwise) have we been in advocacy for education? What are the major changes that we made due to our advocacy work?
11. How successful were we in developing strategic partnerships with government and non-government partners? What have been the main achievements and lessons learnt from our partnerships?
12. How can we build on the experiences of this programme to scale up our programme in the next strategy period? What parts of the programme can now be taken up for scaling up?
13. Are there other stakeholders that we should think of adding/including in the programme, to help us achieve our objectives?
14. How can we lobby and motivate the government in improving quality of education in the country?

Annex 2: Target Geographical Areas and Justification

Province & Municipal	District Name	Justification
Kompong Chhnang	KP Chhnang Boribo; Tukphos; Kompong Leng, Chul Kiri, Samaki Meanchey Kompong Tralach, Relea Pair	The province located in the northwest of Cambodia consists of 8 districts and has 501,455 ⁴⁹ inhabitants. During the last strategic period from 2002 until 2004, the project could only cover 4 districts due to limited resources and security problems. Since security has improved and remote areas are accessible, the project will extend its coverage areas to 4 new districts in 2005, in addition to the 4 old districts, a total of 8 districts.
Pursat	Bakan, Kra Ko, Sompao Meas, Kravanh, Veal Veng and Kandieng	Pursat province is located in North western part of Cambodia and borders KP Chhannang. It has a population of 421,528. SCNIC assistance started from Sep 2003, limited to 03 districts. The project managed to cover all six districts from early 2005. Veal Veng district remained as the last Khmer Rouge stronghold until early 1998, and part of some districts remained war zones until very late 1990s. The people living there still continue to be seriously affected

⁴⁹ First Revision Population projection for Cambodia 1998-2020; June 2004: UNFPA, National Institute of Statistic, RUPP

		from geographical isolation, social exclusion, lack of schools and mines and UXOs threaten their lives/daily.
Siem Reap	Trapaing Prasat, Anlong Veng, Angkor Chum, Varin, Sauthnikum,	Unlike other provinces, Siem Reap is growing very fast because of its potential tourist industry. The growth mostly benefits the people in the central town and powerful persons. Economic disparity is huge and have negative results on many vulnerable children and women. Children and youth in the rural and remote areas become economic slaves because of the lack of education.
Siem Reap	Svay Leu, Srei Snam, Prasat Bakong, Angkor Thum, Banteay Srei, Puok	Social morality and the sense of mutual support are at disaster levels. Lack of school facilities and teachers in the remote rural areas are significant. At least two districts have reintegrated to the central government 1998-99 after almost three decades of isolation. Similar to other provinces under SCNIC support, Siem Reap is still facing many challenges in relation to education development, especially in rural and remote areas. Total population is 841,268.
Preah Vihear	Chaom Khsant, Chhaeb, Kulean, Chey Saen, Rovieng, Sangkom Tmei, Tnaeng Meanchey	Preah Vihear province is located in the north of Cambodia and is in the plateau and mountain region. The province consists of seven (07) districts. Total population is 148,407, and 85% are farmers. The province was known as the poorest province in Cambodia in term of socio-economic indicators and literacy rates. Preah Vihear province is seriously affected by geographical isolation; insecurity is still a major threat in those remote mountainous districts. Children enrolled in primary education is 72%, lower secondary is 12-15%, pupil teacher ratio 40.6. Children overage enrolment in primary education was 29.2 %, lower secondary 69.2% and 45.5% at high school ⁵⁰ .
Kompong Cham	Kompong Cham, Kang Meas, Kompong	Kompong Cham is the highest population density province of Cambodia, located in along the Mekong delta. The population is 1.83 million. There are 16 districts. Over 80% are farmers. Since the population is huge, landlessness is becoming a major problem. The poverty rate is significant, many children cannot

⁵⁰ Education Statistic & Indicators 2003/04: EMIS Cener, Department of Planning, Phnom Penh, May 2004

	Siem, Chamkar Leu, Stung Trang, Memot	enrol or remain in school throughout the school year because the school is far away and their families are too poor. Education facilities are available only in crowded population areas. Children living in the rural and remote areas are left isolated and neglected. Women in some villages have been illiterate for generations. It is the 21 st century, and children living in those areas are still falling into the same trap. The program will cover 6 districts which consist of 644,165 adults and children population.
Phnom Penh (PP)	Pram Pi Makara, Daun Penh, Chamkar Morn, Meanchey , Toul Kok, Russey Keo, Dankor	<p>Phnom Penh is the capital of Cambodia, and consists of 7 districts and 1.3 million population. The population has grown from less than one million in 1998. The economic growth in PP is the main factor that has attracted people from provinces to seek economic opportunities. Despite growth and rich resources compared to provinces, PP doesn't prepare itself to absorb the growth. Consequently, there are increased of numbers vulnerable boys, girls and women. Ensuring vulnerable children have access to schooling and quality education has reached a critical stage.</p> <p>SCNIC assistance will contribute to the PPMEO in handling the demand. Furthermore, since PP is located in the central government, the experience, methodologies, pilot projects or model developed by SCNIC and PPMEO, and the documentation of lessons learned will have significant and quick impact on MoEYS policy development, interpretation and changes.</p>
MoEYS - at national level		The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport is the government body with mandated to ensure the implementation of government education policy, develop effective resources and strategies, ensuring and enabling education opportunities for all Cambodians. Thus, the cooperation between SCNIC and MoEYS will be opportunities for SCNIC to extend its work impact to other geographical areas.

Appendix 2. Provinces, Districts and Schools Evaluated

Province name	District name	School name	Status of school			
			Core cluster	Satellite	Annex	# of grades
Kampong Cham	Kampong Siem	Lopeak		Satellite		G1-6
		Prey Chakrey	Core cluster			G1-6
		Dambang Dek	Core cluster			G1-6
	Kang Meas	Kang Taneung	Core cluster			G1-6
		Peam Chikang	Core cluster			G1-6
		Andaung Dai		Satellite		G1-6
Preah Vihear	Sangkum Thmey	Chamrouen	Core cluster			G1-6
		Trapaing Prey			Mini school	G1
		Ro'ang	Core cluster			G1-6
	Choam Khsant	Choam Khsant	Core cluster			G1-6
		Antil			Mini school	G1-6
Siem Reap	Srey Snam	Klang Hay		Satellite		G1-6
		Dangkor		Satellite		G1-6
		Cha			Mini school	G1-2
	Angkor Chum	Sre Khvav	Core cluster			G1-6
		Beng		Satellite		G1-6
		Daun Em			Mini school	G1-6
Pursat	Veal Veng	Char Muoy			Barefoot teacher	G1-2
		Trapaing Pong			Mini school	G1-2
		Tumpor			Mini school	G1-6
	Krakor	Anlong Reab			Mini/floating school	G1,3,4&6
		Ach Kok			Mini school	G1-6
		Phnom Bamnak		Satellite		G1-6
Kampong Chhnang	Boribo	Dambol Kraham			Mini school	G1
		Kampong Or		Satellite		G1-6
		Srae Kach		Satellite		G1-6
	Tuek Phos	Boueng Steng		Mini school		G1-6
		Romeas			Mini school	G1-3
		Koh Kthom		Satellite		G1-3
Koh Kong	Kok Kong	Koh Kong Knong			Mini school	G1-2
		Wat Trapaing ROUNG		Satellite		G1-6
		Koh Kapi		Satellite		G1-6
	Thmar Baing	Phumi Koh			Mini school	G1-2
		Chiphat	Core cluster			G1-6

There are three types of schools:

1. Core school or cluster school
2. Satellite schools (member of school cluster)
3. Annex schools (mini school or school under the administration of core or satellite school)

Appendix 3. Evaluation Respondents

Total Number of respondents in evaluation			
	Total	Male	Female
Department of Primary Education staff, MoEYS	2	2	
Department of Early Childhood Education, MoEYS	2		2
UNICEF	2	1	1
Save the Children Australia	1	1	
World Education	2		2
VSO	1	1	
NEP	1	1	
POE	31	24	7
DOE	51	40	11
Head teachers	27	23	4
Teachers	118	76	42
ECCD teachers	12	0	12
School support committee	105	94	11
Mothers	208	14	194
Children	319	161	158
TOTAL	882	438	444

Total number of respondents per province

	Kampong Cham								
	Kampong Siem			Kang Meas			TOTAL for province		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	Male	Female
POE			0				1	1	0
DOE	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0
Head teachers	4	4	0	3	2	1	7	6	1
Teachers	23	13	10	19	13	6	42	26	16
ECCD teachers	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
EFA	11	11	0	20	16	4	31	27	4
Mothers	56	0	56	15	0	15	71	0	71
Children	36	18	18	32	16	16	68	34	34
Total	131	47	84	93	48	45	225	96	129

	PREAH VIHEAR								
	CHAOM KHSANT			SANGKOM TMEI			TOTAL for province		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	Male	Female
POE							7	6	1
DOE	3	2	1	2	1	1	5	3	2

Head teachers	2	0	2	2	2	0	4	2	2
Teachers	14	4	10	14	7	7	28	11	17
ECCD teachers	4	0	4	2	0	2	6	0	6
EFA	4	4	0	11	11	0	15	15	0
Mothers	10	1	9	14	1	13	24	2	22
Children	24	12	12	30	15	15	54	27	27
TOTAL	61	23	38	75	37	38	143	66	77
	SIEM REAP								
	SREY SNAM			ANGKOR CHUM			TOTAL for province		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	Male	Female
POE							9	7	2
DOE	10	9	1	4	3	1	14	12	2
Head teachers	2	2	0	3	3	0	5	5	0
Teachers	10	7	3	8	7	1	18	14	4
ECCD teachers	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2
EFA	11	11	0	8	7	1	19	18	1
Mothers	0	0	0	9	3	6	9	3	6
Children	20	10	10	24	11	13	44	21	23
TOTAL	53	39	14	58	34	24	120	80	40

	PURSAT								
	VEAL VENG			KRA KO			TOTAL for province		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	Male	Female
POE							4	4	0
DOE	3	2	1	4	1	3	7	3	4
Head teachers	1	1	0	3	2	1	4	3	1
Teachers	1	1	0	8	7	1	9	8	1
ECCD teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EFA	5	5	0	3	3	0	8	8	0
Mothers	22	5	17	31	0	31	53	5	48
Children	33	18	15	27	13	14	60	31	29
TOTAL	65	32	33	76	26	50	145	62	83

	KAMPONG CHHNANG								
	BORIBO			TUKPHOS			TOTAL for province		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	Male	Female
POE							6	3	3
DOE	7	4	3	11	11	0	18	15	3
Head teachers	2	2	0	2	2	0	4	4	0
Teachers	7	6	1	4	4	0	11	10	1
ECCD teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

EFA	9	8	1	9	8	1	18	16	2
Mothers	27	4	23	8	0	8	35	4	31
Children	24	12	12	20	10	10	44	22	22
TOTAL	76	36	40	54	35	19	136	74	62

	KOH KONG								
	KOK KONG			THMOR BANG			TOTAL for province		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	Male	Female
POE							4	3	1
DOE	3	3		2	2	0	5	5	0
Head teachers	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	3	0
Teachers	6	4	2	4	3	1	10	7	3
ECCD teachers	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
EFA	11	7	4	3	3	0	14	10	4
Mothers	8	0	8	8	0	8	16	0	16
Children	37	18	19	12	8	4	49	26	23
TOTAL	68	34	34	30	17	13	102	54	48