

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
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Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Policy
On
Education for Children with Disabilities

March 2008

Preface



The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Royal Government of Cambodia has developed the National Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities to ensure the equal rights of all children with disabilities to an equal education with non-disabled children.

This policy supports Child Friendly Schools policy and implementation guidelines that the Ministry in order to achieve basic education initiatives, and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP), as well as Education For All (EFA) goals, by the year 2015.

This policy delineates the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, particularly educational institutions, in developing the potential of children with disabilities and providing appropriate interventions to increase the participation of children with disabilities as active members of their communities and nation now and in the future.

The Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities contains the rationale for the policy, provides a conceptual framework and describes strategies and main implementation plan that are specific to the various stakeholders involved.

This policy identifies and uses existing structures currently viable within Cambodia for successful and sustainable implementation, and also makes recommendations for strengthening structures that would further benefit children with disabilities.

The MoEYS strongly hopes that the Policy for Education for Children with Disabilities will give students with disabilities the opportunity to obtain an education, both formal and non-formal, with their regular peers in public schools to enable them to become successful and productive members of society.

Finally, the MoEYS would like to thank all of the other relevant ministries, institutions and development partners that have provided and continue to provide services and contribute to improve the quality of education particularly for children with disabilities.

Phnom Penh, *28 March*.....2008

For the Senior Minister,
Ministry of Education Youth and Sport
Secretary of State



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1. Background

After nearly three decades of civil war, political stability has just returned to Cambodia. During the war, many Cambodian people died of starvation and great hardship. Many others became disabled from war injuries or lack of nutrition and shelter, and still others have been traumatized and have become chronic patients. The educational system was destroyed.

Currently, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) has started to maintain statistics on children with disabilities through the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). The 2004 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES) found that vision and hearing disabilities as well as mobility-related disabilities together account for 68% of all reported disabilities and that 2.6% of girls and 2.9% of boys between the ages of 5 to 17 years did not attend school due to disabilities.

To face the issues of disabilities, several international and national initiatives, which the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) supports, provide the rationale and context for the education of children with disabilities:

- The Royal Government of Cambodia is a signatory to all key, legally binding UN human rights treaties. It supports the 1994 Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education, the 2003 Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the 2006 Bangkok Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities. These international initiatives support as a priority the child's right to access education through inclusive education.
- The Royal Government of Cambodia recognizes and respects the fundamental human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Article 74 of its constitution affirms,
"The State shall assist the disabled and the families of combatants who sacrificed their lives for the nation."
- The Education Law, chapter 7, Articles 38 and 39 addresses special education specifically regarding the rights of the learners with disabilities to learn with the non-disabled children and provide a special education service for learners with disabilities.

- The policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport is to ensure to all children and youth, access to basic education, formal or non-formal, regardless of the children's standard of living, gender, geographic location, physical appearance and ethnicity. To achieve its goals of providing Education For All (EFA), the Ministry has developed an Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and Education Sector Support Program (ESSP), to ensure that all Cambodian children will receive a nine-year basic education by 2015.
- On 31st January 2000, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport set up the Special Education office in the Primary Education Department, with the responsibility for the educational development of children with disabilities, ethnic minority children, poor children, girls and other disadvantaged children.
- With the collaboration of the Disability Action Council (DAC) and funded by UNICEF, in 2000-2001, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport implemented the inclusive education (IE) pilot project for children with disabilities in one cluster school in Svay Rieng province. This has expanded to 15 provinces, 15 districts, 14 cluster schools and 80 schools, with training to 824 teachers (341 females). In addition, there are 42 integrated classes in 12 provinces for deaf and for blind children.
- Other development partners have provided educational services to children with disabilities. For example, Krousar Thmey (KT) has established special schools for deaf and blind children, and has trained government teachers in Sign Language and Braille to teach in integrated classes in public schools.
- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has set up Provincial Implementation Teams (PITs) to manage, coordinate and monitor the Inclusive Education (IE) project for children with disabilities in the schools. However, due to a lack of time and technical expertise for working with children with disabilities, PIT members were unable to provide the necessary support to teachers who teach children with disabilities. As a result, the IE project implementation has not been as effective as the Ministry had hoped.
- The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport has implemented the CFS program since 21st November 2005. Education for children

with disabilities is included in the CFS framework; the 6 dimensions being: (1) All children have access to schooling (Schools are inclusive), (2) Effective Teaching and Learning, (3) Health, Safety and Protection of Children, (4) Gender Responsiveness, (5) the participation of children, families and communities in the running of their local school and (6) The National Education System supports and encourages schools to become more child friendly.

The above context provides the rationale for a policy, which guarantees an education for children with disabilities that will enable them to be as successful and contribute to their society as non-disabled children in Cambodia.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to:

- Increase awareness and acceptance of disabilities among communities, relevant institutions and stakeholders.
- Provide early identification and intervention through rehabilitation services, such as physiotherapy, and health services, e.g. immunization, to all children with disabilities from birth to five.
- Provide quality education, life skills or vocational training to children and youth with disabilities equitably and effectively.
- Increase enrollment, promotion and survival rates in the schools.

3. Conceptual Framework

The Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities is designed to serve those children who have difficulty with daily life activities that may interfere with their development like non-disabled children.

Dimension 1: **All children have access to schooling (Schools are inclusive)**

Objective: To identify and enroll all children with disabilities in all communities in Cambodia.

Dimension 2: **Effective Teaching and Learning**

Objective: To provide children with disabilities educational

services appropriate to their needs, such as health, community rehabilitation and modifications of educational services from pre-school to lower secondary school.

Dimension 3: Health, Safety and Protection of Children

Objective: To ensure all children with disabilities the same guarantees of health and safety in their lives at schools, in families and communities.

Dimension 4: Gender Responsiveness

Objective: To ensure all children, especially girls with disabilities, access to schools and their participation in all school and social activities similar to non-disabled children.

Dimension 5: The Participation of Children, Families and Communities in the Running of Their Local School

Objective: To increase awareness and acceptance of disability, and the needs of children with disabilities, within communities and among stakeholders to provide the education of children with disabilities.

Dimension 6: Program Support from the Education System

Objective: To ensure support for the education of children with disabilities effectively from all levels of the education system.

4. Strategies and Main Implementation Plan

To effectively and successfully support the policy implementation for the education of children with disabilities, the following strategies will be followed:

Strategy 1: Identify and enroll children with disabilities.

Implementation Guidelines:

- ❖ Distribute, and raise awareness, of the policy on education for children with disabilities.
- ❖ Develop tool for identification of children with disabilities.
- ❖ Train school support committees, school principals and village health workers to identify children with disabilities using a simple identification checklist or a screening toolkit in order to collect statistics.
- ❖ Conduct community mapping to identify children with disabilities in each family.
- ❖ Use school enrollment register and EMIS data in order to identify learning needs and provide appropriate support to children with disabilities,
- ❖ Establish a referral system for children with disabilities to hospitals or development partners for follow up.
- ❖ In order to refer children with disabilities, utilize community mapping and a referral system for village health workers.
- ❖ Utilize the official checklist format that is used in the general census.
- ❖ Provide technical assistance to relevant agencies and stakeholders, on developing identification tools in the school effectiveness form for collecting disabilities statistics.

Strategy 2: Implement early intervention and other services to children with disabilities**Implementation Guidelines:**

- ❖ Establish linkages with the Ministry of Health for early intervention such as: immunization and health education on communicable diseases and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation for rehabilitation for children from birth to 5 years old, particularly children who are at risk of becoming disabled.
- ❖ Place children with disabilities ages 3 to 5 years in community/state/private pre-schools and home-based programs.
- ❖ Apply child-centered principles reasonably to all teaching and learning activities for children with disabilities.
- ❖ Implement school readiness programs (SRP) for 6-year-old children who are in grade 1 of primary school and have not passed preschool.

- ❖ Provide life skills activities and programs to support children with disabilities.
- ❖ Placement age-appropriate in regular classrooms.
- ❖ Provide appropriate supports and differentiated instruction regarding to their special needs.
- ❖ Collaborate with Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training institutions and development partners to provide vocational training after basic education.

Strategy 3: Provide the opportunity for, and implement, an inclusive education program

Implementation Guidelines:

- ❖ Provide teaching aids and assistive devices: prostheses, orthoses, mobility aids, wheel chairs, adapted learning materials, and barrier-free infrastructures for accessibility (ramps, toilets, and playgrounds) following Universal Design standards.
- ❖ Provide and coordinate transportation to and from school.
- ❖ Provide modifications or alternative assessments on national standardized tests.

Strategy 4: Increase the enrollment of girls with disabilities

Implementation Guidelines:

- ❖ Collect statistics of girls with disabilities in order to enroll them in schools.
- ❖ Develop role models by inviting women with disabilities to participate in school activities, e.g., school support committees.
- ❖ Award non-monetary incentives or provide shift or schedule flexibility to girls with disabilities to come to school, help at home and participate in community tasks.
- ❖ Provide scholarships to girls with disabilities to attend school and complete basic education (9 years).
- ❖ Coordinate awareness-raising activities and develop training materials to promote the role of girls/women with disabilities in education.
- ❖ Provide life skills training to girls with disabilities by attending vocational training at lower secondary school.

- ❖ Provide opportunities for women with disabilities in school management and other committees.

Strategy 5: Raise awareness about understanding of disability

Implementation Guidelines:

- ❖ Effectively disseminate implementation Plan concerning disabilities to all Provincial and District Offices of Education, cluster schools, development partners, stakeholders and communities.
- ❖ Establish peer groups that offer support to children with disabilities, e.g., child-to-child activities, within and outside schools.
- ❖ Develop role models by inviting people with disabilities to participate in school activities, e.g., school support committees.
- ❖ Provide specific information about infrastructure for school accessibility, e.g., ramps, toilets, playgrounds for children with disabilities, to provincial and district offices of education, cluster schools and schools.
- ❖ Provide visual information on availability of services, gaps in services and referral routes.
- ❖ Promote the understanding of disabilities and child rights to an education.
- ❖ Encourage parents of children with disabilities to set up self-help groups to strengthen understanding for information sharing, experiences, income generation and advocacy.

Strategy 6: Support program from the education system

Implementation Guidelines:

- ❖ Develop an Inclusive Education module with appropriate instructional materials to accompany the modules on Child Friendly Schools.
- ❖ Develop teaching aids to access the Inclusive Education module.
- ❖ Provide training in Inclusive Education as a component of Child Friendly Schools to all pre-service trainees in Provincial and Regional Teacher Training Colleges.
- ❖ Provide certified training in Braille instruction and Sign Language through the Provincial and Regional Teacher Training Colleges to selected trainers, and then provide cascade training to pre/in-service teachers.

- ❖ Place more teachers in rural and remote areas where the children with disabilities live.
- ❖ Collaborate with development partners and stakeholders to set up resource centers for teacher training in special education.
- ❖ Collaborate with NGOs and IOs to train classroom teachers on inclusive education, Braille and sign language module.
- ❖ Establish a quality standard to measure and evaluate the progress of program implementation for education of children with disabilities.

