

## *Programme Area Summary*

**Country:** Cambodia

**Programme Area:** Education 2005 - 2009

### **What is the aim of the programme area?**

To ensure that primary and lower secondary children in rural provinces of Cambodia receive a basic education that is based on their individual needs and abilities, regardless of their sex, disability or ethnicity.

### **Why is VSO working in this particular programme area and region?**

After nearly 30 years of instability, Cambodia has made progress towards stabilizing the economy, providing a stronger market orientation and restoring economic growth. However, many challenges remain towards achieving sustained development and poverty reduction. This includes developing an education service that is based on quality and accessibility to all children. There are high drop out rates in basic education, with most dropouts occurring before completion of primary school.

Improving the quality of essential services for the benefit of the disadvantaged within a framework of decentralisation is a central aspect of the Royal al of Cambodia development agenda. Constraints to implementing this agenda are: a lack of capacity and experience among provincial and district education authorities, a weak civil society, ineffective participatory approaches, a lack of well-qualified and well-trained teachers and a low access to basic education.

Although there have been significant improvements in the education service since 1990, there is still a need for further development. Child Friendly Schools and Inclusion are new strategies of the Ministry of Education to increase the enrolment and drop out rates.

Through the approval of various crucial grants, VSO Cambodia can fully implement its education plan with special focus to inclusion through the Mainstreaming Inclusive Education (MIE) project which is the a larger part of the education programme.

VSO Cambodia decided to focus on six rural provinces: Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Koh Kong and Kampot.

### **Key beneficiaries and partners:**

National/Policy Level Partners:

- Ministry of Education Youth and Sports Departments
- Disability Action Council
- NGO Education Partnership
- Kampuchean Action for Primary Education

Provincial Level Partners:

- Provincial Offices of Education (POEs) of the six provinces
- Provincial Teacher Training Colleges (PTTCs) and Regional Teacher Training Colleges (RTTCs)

District Level Partners:

- District Offices of Education (DOEs) of the six provinces
- Community groups
- School Cluster networks

Beneficiaries are poor communities, particular children in rural areas.

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### **Key objectives of the programme and the cross-cutting themes**

The objective is to make a significant contribution to improve the quality, accessibility and relevance of formal inclusive education services for primary and lower secondary children in six rural provinces of Cambodia.

The expected results are:

- improved technical and management Capacity of POEs, DOEs and School/Clusters leads to more effective schooling;
- trainee teachers, primary and lower secondary teachers and teachers will demonstrate that they are applying inclusive education practices and child-friendly teaching in six provinces
- the work of 'NGO Education Partnership' and the 'Disability Action Council' will be more reflective of local needs and realities
- increased capacity of MoEYS departments at/within central level evolving from a control to an impact/progress monitoring and support function

The programme is mainstreaming HIV&AIDS through VSO Cambodia's education, health and livelihoods programmes. The approach being taken is to increase the knowledge and awareness of VSO's partners and volunteers about HIV&AIDS prevention, treatment and care and available services and to encourage current partners to incorporate HIV&AIDS into their own activities.

Food security and poor nutrition, particularly in the poorer and more rural areas are issues affecting general health, people's ability to sustain a livelihood and children's ability to participate fully in school. Nutrition has been chosen as a cross cutting theme and volunteers and partners in each programme area are including activities to improve nutrition in their work.

### **Current programme activities**

#### *Focus of International Volunteer Placements*

- Provide technical assistance at the MoEYS at central level National Level Partners
- Provide long-term technical assistance at Provincial and District level
- Provide long-term technical assistance at DAC
- Facilitate communication for TTCs, PoEs and DoEs
- Mainstream inclusion into the work of PoEs, PTTCs, RTTCs and DoEs
- Provide technical assistance to the NEP
- Technical capacity support for KAPE

#### *Workshops, training and conferences*

- Provide training to MoEYS at central level
- Train Provincial offices of Education
- Conduct training at district and community level
- Deliver training on Child Friendly Schools
- Support the development of Model Child Friendly Schools
- Deliver training on advocacy for DAC members
- Disability training in provinces by DAC
- Training for PTTCs and RTTCs
- Deliver advocacy training for NEP's membership and MoEYS staff

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### *Research*

VSO Cambodia is part of VSO's advocacy research project "Valuing Teachers". The research aims to reveal the factors that motivate and de-motivate teachers in their jobs and to take the findings to the policy-making levels.

### *Partner exchange visits/ study tours*

Exchange visits within and across the province.

### *Providing grants and/or equipment for partners*

Small grants scheme for inclusive education and grassroots voices

### **What makes VSO's work in this programme area special?**

Despite the amount of discussion on the subject of inclusion, there is a lack of substantial policy guidance on, and implementation towards inclusion in Cambodia. With our Education Plan, VSO will help to move inclusion from the policy to a practical level by directly supporting Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports institutions and individuals to take action for inclusion.

What is significant about VSO's approach is not only the long-term support provided by a volunteer but also the methodology of capacity building. VSO's commitment to capacity building is based on the assumption that in order to achieve meaningful changes within society, we must first start with ourselves as individuals achieving positive behaviour change. We can then move to seeking organizational change within VSO Cambodia, before moving on the seeking change in our partners and, ultimately, more broadly within society. In this way VSO will deliver and support training and inclusion that focus not just on the acquisition of skills and knowledge but also fundamentally on exploring attitudes and values towards individuals taking action for inclusion.

VSO is ideally placed to help address the shortfalls in service for three key reasons:

- VSO is able to recruit volunteer professionals of the necessary skills base and experience in order to support the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports to achieve its targets;
- VSO's approach to capacity building can have a great significance in Cambodia where interventions are too frequently driven by outsiders and are often of a short-term nature;
- VSO has well established relationships within the government, with international organizations and NGOs working in this field and is well established in a number of provinces.