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Developing School Clusters in Cambodia:

Suggestions for Future Practice

and

Increased Coordination

among Program Components

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1. Background and Objectives

1.1. Rationale

The purpose of this report is to inform future development practice with respect to efforts by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) and UNICEF to develop school clusters in new provinces in central Cambodia. The target provinces in this regard include Kampong Speu and Prey Veng Provinces. This report comes at the conclusion of a 5 year period in which UNICEF has been working in over 40 school clusters in 6 other provinces. This report attempts to look at how past experience in these provinces can help to guide future efforts in new cluster school sites. In particular, the report looks to review some of the activities undertaken in Svay Rieng Province that went to great lengths to increase coordination between UNICEF supported activities in the sectors of education, health, and community development. At that time, Community Action for Social Development (CASD), now known as Seth Koma, played a lead role in coordinating such activities. Because UNICEF seeks to develop a more closely integrated project structure in the new provinces, this experience should provide valuable insights about how to achieve increased coordination.

1.2. Objectives

The end product of this report is the creation of a set of guidelines that will support the evolutionary progress of new clusters. This should occur in an intersectoral setting in which clusters both receive and extend support to the health and community development programs. The process objectives in achieving this product include the following:

- To review and record the evolution of school clusters in UNICEF supported areas between 1996 to 1997, especially in Svay Rieng Province.
- To review and describe the activities undertaken in Svay Rieng Province to enhance collaboration between different development sectors.
- To propose a strategy for future cluster school development activities in new provinces.
- To suggest a menu of activities or services that could support UNICEF efforts to improve the teaching and learning process.
- To identify key capacity building activities required for school, cluster, district, and provincial levels in the new provinces.

2. Cluster School Development: What We Know from Past Experience

2.1. Evolving Definitions of School Clustering

Since 1994 when MoEYS promulgated cluster school development as an official development strategy for Cambodian primary schools, clusters have become a familiar part of the development landscape. Outcomes associated with cluster school development have historically included the following:

- ♦ Improving access, quality, and administration of primary education.
- ♦ Overcoming the disparity between schools
- ♦ Reducing the wastage rate in primary education.
- ♦ Promoting community participation in education.
- ♦ Using school clusters as a means of serving whole communities with educational opportunities.

The development of school clusters, however, has not been without problems and there are many valuable experiences from past practice that can help better inform future development methodologies. As a result of past experience, clusters are no longer thought of in a superficial sense as merely a grouping of schools loosely joined together to "help each other." Current practice in many areas now emphasizes cluster school development as a process of *institution building.* These institutions usually refer to systems that oversee general administration within the cluster, utilization of resources, planning, and other essential duties. Familiar examples of such systems include resource centers, cluster-based libraries, teacher development systems, and local cluster school committees (LCSC).

A better defined model of school clustering in Cambodia has led to clearer linkages between expected outcomes and the functional processes clusters need to perform in order to achieve these outcomes. This has in turn has led to more functional definitions of cluster school systems. Depending on local need, cluster functions have typically included *resource sharing, capacity building,* and ensuring *accountability* for performance. Establishing functionally based definitions of school clustering has been an important lesson from past experience because such definitions hold the key to establishing satisfactory mechanisms through which to effectively monitor cluster performance. When performance definitions of various cluster systems were not functionally based, it was very difficult to outline exactly how such systems should operate. Another of way of saying this is that functionally based definitions of clustering enable one to work backwards from general statements of purpose to the observable practices needed to fulfill those purposes. Ar-

ticulating these practices in turn provides the tools needed to carry out evaluation in a valid and consistent manner (Figure 2.1). The cluster school project in Svay Rieng, for example, developed a very useful functionally based instrument that attempted to evaluate clusters in terms of the performance of discrete systems within the cluster. This instrument looked at the observable practices (e.g., the rotation of library books) that each cluster system should possess to realize stated functions such as resource sharing or capacity building.

Function based definitions have helped to mitigate conflicting performance expectations of different cluster systems such as resource centers which in the past led to serious disagreements about their effectiveness. For example, functional descriptions of resource centers have helped clusters to identify observable practices that they should perform. These have included the development of school rotation schedules (implied function: resource sharing) and daily sign out ledgers for teachers when borrowing teaching aids (implied function: accountability). Before the existence of such descriptions, many resource centers never advanced farther than the construction of buildings and the provision of furnishings although some have held that this constituted "functional" resource centers. Recent efforts by MoEYS to support resource center development, however, have resulted in better articulated statements of observable practices based on implicit functions. This has in turn greatly facilitated efforts to evaluate resource centers.

Figure 2.1: Linkages between Outcomes, Cluster Functions, and the Evaluation Process

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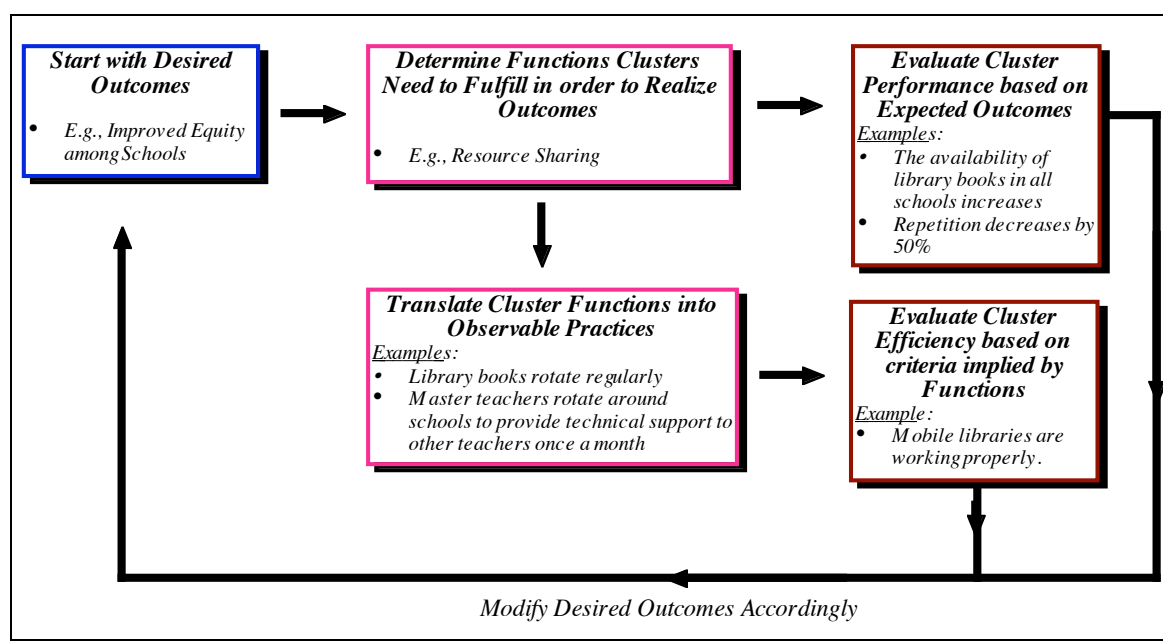
2.2. How Clusters Evolve

Cluster school development in Cambodia has gone through a painful period of stalled evolution. The main reason for this was an excessive emphasis on the development of school infrastructure which tended to displace efforts to develop process institutions within the cluster (such as operational resource centers and libraries). The completion of many construction initiatives along with a very large investment by the Prime Minister in school buildings during the last election has somewhat eased the need for school infrastructure. This, along with many reforms in project operation, has enabled clusters to regain some degree of equilibrium in their evolution.

In comparing the developmental evolution of old and new clusters in Cambodia, one sees that clusters tend to pass from an initial stage of *prescriptive development* to one in which *stakeholder driven development* is more apparent. Prescriptive development usually consists of the emplacement and reinforcement of many of the cluster systems referred to above. Prescriptive approaches can be inimical to efforts to strengthen local ownership of a cluster when such approaches span a long time frame. Nevertheless, some degree of prescription in the form of *fixed interventions* seems to be required in the early stages of a cluster's development.

In Cambodia, there have historically been 5 key systems or institutions in the cluster that carry out most of its stated functions. These are described in Box 2.1. Because it is difficult at the outset of a cluster school project to expect stakeholders to know how to set up such systems let alone operate them, cluster school development seems to first require

BOX 2.1: *Common Cluster-based Institutions*

1. Cluster School Committee:
The main decision-making body within the cluster which makes all decisions regarding the allocation of resources, general planning, and implementation of all cluster-wide activities.
2. Resource Center[1]
The institution responsible for the *organization and maintenance* of teaching aids, for researching and planning the *production* of new teaching aids, and for ensuring *dissemination and usage* of materials in surrounding schools.
3. Cluster School Library
The central library system within the cluster which coordinates all library related activities in different schools
4. Teacher Supervision System
A local network usually animated by master teachers (technical grade leaders) who provide technical support to teachers throughout the cluster.

5. Parent Associations
Cluster-based associations of parents who assist the cluster in implementing specific activities to promote parental involvement in education.

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[1] The MoEYS has recently changed the terminology describing several of the institutions resident in school clusters. In this respect, *resource center* is now an inclusive term that takes in the *materials resource room* (MRR, formerly known as the resource center), the *library,* and the *cluster school office*.

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a period of fixed interventions to help stakeholders understand how such systems should work. Such interventions may last anywhere from 6 months to 2 years depending on local conditions. The degree and duration of such interventions usually seem to depend on the previous exposure of stakeholders to new ideas and practices in education as well as their general level of sophistication.

The nature of fixed interventions referred to above primarily focuses on human resource development to bring about the resource management and administrative structures needed in the cluster to utilize the budgetary support to be provided. In the past, human resource development of this nature was very problematic due to the scarcity of training modules in each of the systems areas mentioned in Box 2.1. Although cluster school administrative guidelines were provided by the Ministry at this time, they were not explicit enough to inform the articulation of observable practices within cluster systems described above. As a result, the adequate development of libraries, resource centers, and local cluster school committees has historically been very difficult. The MoEYS has recently, however, moved forward aggressively to provide such manuals. Of particular note in this regard has been the development of guidelines for the training of master teachers, also known as technical grade leaders.

When cluster school systems are operational, the nature of material and technical support can change to allow for greater autonomy and latitude for innovation among stakeholders within the cluster. It is at this point that the uses of external support provided by donors tends to be more determined by service recipients than by the service providers. This transition often occurs when external assistance is changed from support of fixed interventions such as those described above to cluster-based grants. These grants are used to enable implementation of specific activities to achieve objectives identified by the local cluster school committee. It is important to remember, however, that LCSCs require previous training in planning and management (i.e., a fixed intervention) before they are able to effectively utilize grants in this way. The essential point to grasp, however, is that the provision of cluster grants in this way can help move a cluster's development to a more stakeholder driven footing. The adjustment in the form of external assistance can, therefore, greatly facilitate the evolutionary development of a cluster.

Some of the activities that more advanced clusters with mature institutions have been known to administer with grant support include student remediation programs, breakfast feeding programs, and student scholarships among others. This stage of evolutionary development implies a common metaphorical conception of clusters as a *pipeline* or conduit in which cluster systems are expected to transform inputs into outputs (Figure

Figure 2.2: The Cluster as a Conduit for Resources
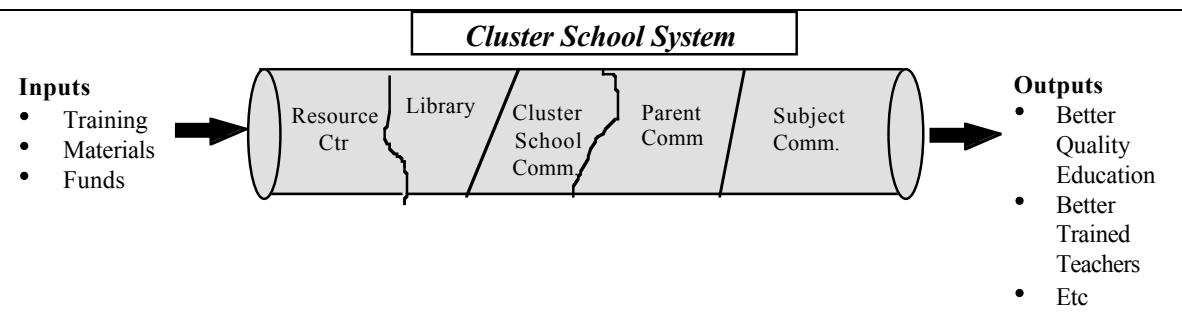
2.2). This level of maturity, however, has on average required a minimum of 3 to 4 years to achieve in the Cambodian context.

An important intermediate step between the period of fixed interventions and that of more purely stakeholder driven development has entailed the use of activity or service menus (Figure 2.3). This was an innovation developed in Svay Rieng Province to facilitate annual planning by local cluster school committees. The idea behind the menus was to provide for increased freedom in the selection of cluster activities while maintaining a structure that ensured continuity with program goals. Each activity in the menu was paired with a desired output. When local cluster school committees compared outputs from their own annual plans with those listed along side particular activities in the menu, this helped to suggest some possible interventions that could be used to achieve stated outputs (Figure 2.4). The activities stated in the service menu also helped to stimulate additional thinking about other suitable activities that might achieve stated objectives. Thus, activity or service menus helped clusters to achieve greater freedom in planning while staying within the broad planning parameters set out by the program.
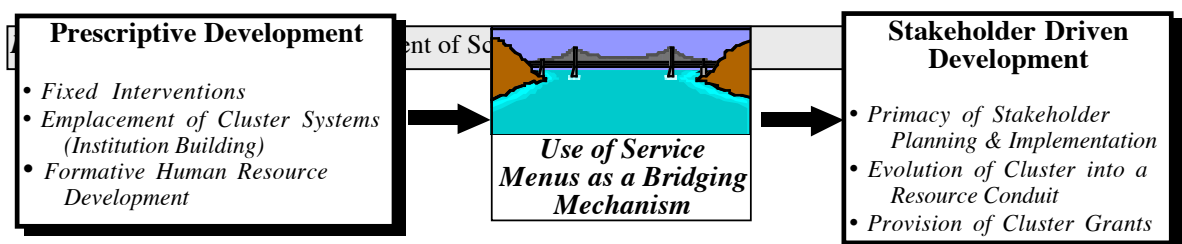
2.3. The Primacy of Human Resource Development

As implied in the above discussion, human resource development of key cluster personnel is one of the critical first steps in the development of a cluster school. This should take precedence over all other considerations including that of infrastructural development. There are 5 primary categories of personnel and stakeholders in the cluster requiring training during the formative stages of the cluster. These generally correspond with the institutional systems identified earlier:

Figure 2.4: Linkage between Service Menus and Annual Cluster Planning

Cluster System	Focus of Human Resource Development
1. Local Cluster School Committee	♦ School Directors ♦ Administrative Support Staff (e.g., secretary) ♦ Technical Grade Leaders ♦ Resource Center Manager ♦ Librarian ♦ Parent Association Representatives
2. Teacher Supervision System	♦ Technical Grade Leaders
3. Resource Center (Materials Resource Room)	♦ Resource Center Manager ♦ Technical Grade Leaders
4. Library	♦ Librarian
5. Parent Association	♦ Parent Association Committee members ♦ Parents

With respect to human resource development, two important lessons have emerged from cluster school development experience during the last several years. As previously noted, one of these is the need for discrete training modules that develop local expertise through participant-centered processes. The provision of purely expository guidelines in

the past led to very trainer-centered presentations by district and provincial officials responsible for their clusters. These trainings usually missed the mark and did not build much local capacity. The second lesson of significance refers to the need to make such trainings as *hands on* as possible. One effective way of achieving this has been to hold these trainings on site in clusters. If personnel from several clusters are being trained simultaneously, a useful alternative is to conduct the training in the institutional setting to which it relates. For example, librarians should actually be trained in a library setting so that participants have the opportunity to organize books and posters in a way that maximizes access, to arrange furniture in a way that enhances usability by young children, and other competencies set out in each training module.

The completion of formative human resource development activities for key personnel in the cluster sets the stage for everything else that comes next, particularly with respect to capacity building functions within the cluster. That is, it enables cluster school personnel to provide effective support services to target beneficiaries comprising high risk students, teachers, poor families, remote schools, etc.. Examples of such services might include library rotations to remote schools, increased availability of teaching aids for teachers, administration of scholarship programs for poor students, etc.. The completion of formative human resource development activities of this nature, therefore, directly relates to enabling clusters to move on to the next stage of their evolution where stakeholders receive greater responsibility for planning and identification of needed interventions within the cluster. When such training is displaced by other priorities such as building and construction as initially happened in Svay Rieng, valuable time is lost in bringing the cluster to maturity.

2.4. Management Structure

The development of effective management structures in the UNICEF cluster school project was a long and arduous process made all the more difficult by the lack of project staffing and the highly dispersed nature of cluster sites. The initial management structure originally envisioned entrusted direct implementation of the project to Ministry sanctioned bodies called Provincial and District Cluster School Committees (PCSC and DCSC). In most instances, these committees never seemed to live up to the high expectations placed on them. In general, the manner in which the PCSC and DCSC were (and

continue to be) staffed greatly limits their effectiveness. The various department heads who comprise the committees both at provincial and district level simply do not have the time, to say nothing of the expertise, needed to implement a cluster school project. It must be remembered that clusters are extremely difficult entities to create. They require high levels of expertise on the part of implementers and long periods of sustained contact with clusters to get them moving. PCSC members often have neither the expertise nor the time for such sustained contact. Clusters can not be developed effectively when the POE or DOE pop in once a month for an abstract lecture on cluster operation as provincial staff are sometimes accustomed to doing.

Figure 2.5: Preferred Management Structure in UNICEF Supported Cluster Projects
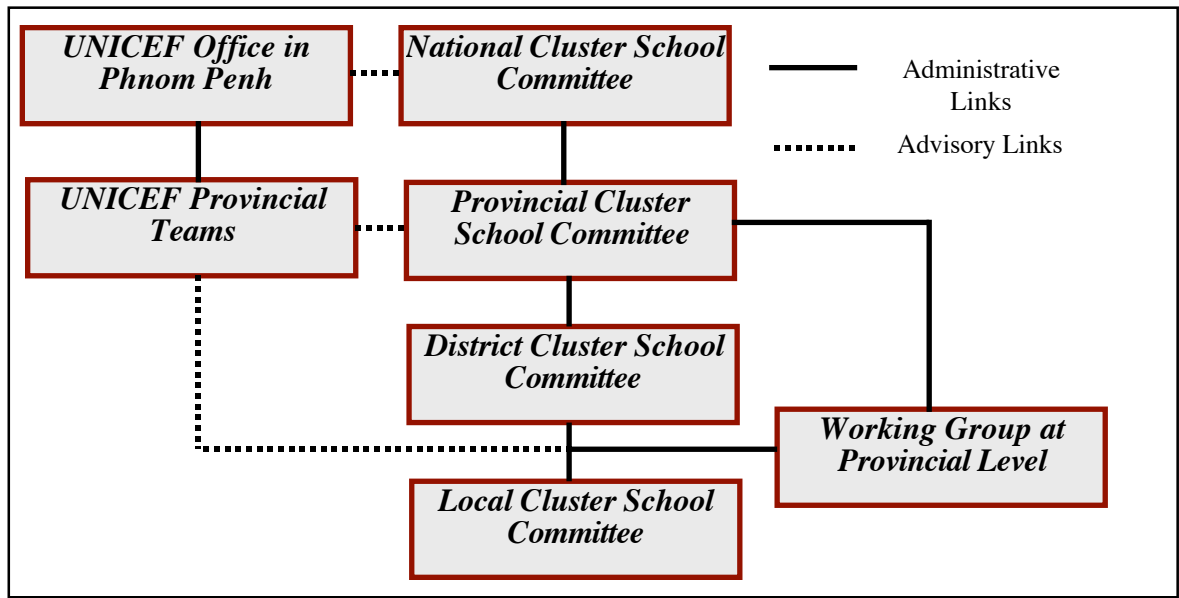
The development of clusters in UNICEF supported areas has seen the search for a more effective project management structure that also maintains some deference to Provincial and District Cluster School Committees. This has been a delicate task as these bodies continue to project a high profile in the most current version of MoEYS cluster school guidelines. This search has moved in the direction of designating the PCSC and DCSC as oversight bodies responsible for making cluster school policy in the province as well as interventions in difficult issues which lower level officials can not resolve. In actual practice, both the Ministry and most POEs have agreed to entrust direct implementation of cluster school development to a small working group (Figure 2.5). The members of this working group are generally drawn from the Provincial and District Offices of Education; they tend to be individuals who have the time (and motivation) to be intensively trained

and who in turn can work intensively with local cluster school staff. To make this working arrangement compatible with current MoEYS guidelines, the working group has been subsumed under the PCSC as a subcommittee. The working group is required to make regular reports to the PCSC or at least the POE Director on a quarterly basis.

2.5. Need for Integrated Development Approaches

It has already been stated that one of the central elements of cluster school development is institution building. Among the important cluster-based institutions developed through this process are resource centers, governing committees such as LCSCS, libraries, bodies representing parents, and teacher supervision systems, among others. In order to maintain optimum operation of these systems, coordination and linkage are essential. Yet it has often happened that project designs do not facilitate the kind of synergy needed among cluster based institutions to maximize functionality.

There are several ways in which institutional development activities in clusters can become delinked from one another. One way is when formative activities within the cluster occur in parallel. In Cambodia, for example, a large teacher training program supported by USAID was implemented in parallel with activities to develop management bodies within the cluster. This meant that the teacher training project structure was external to the clusters in which the training activities were occurring. Since sustained systems of teacher supervision and support are often a major component of capacity building activities within clusters, this was a major oversight in project design. When teacher training activities are delinked from cluster school development in this way, the latter tends to become a *hollow shell*. In order for a cluster to have truly functional capacity building systems, there must be a process of informing cluster staff of how teacher training is to occur regularly within the cluster. This is usually a slow process of not just telling people what to do in a one-day training session but of building habits of actually undertaking these tasks over a long period of time. In divorcing teacher training from cluster school development, cluster school development activities have in the past set up unsustainable training networks which disappeared when the teacher training was completed. Because these training activities were never linked to cluster school structures, many clusters were left with the hollow shell of a capacity building function but no content or institutional memory of how to carry it out. Since one of the key functions of cluster school development is

capacity building, teacher training must be an integral element in the design of a cluster school project.

One of the best examples of a successful integrated development approach in UNICEF supported clusters is the Technical Grade Leader (TGL) training initiative that began in 1999 in Kampong Thom Province. Historically, UNICEF supported clusters had initially pinned their hopes for teacher development on other donor supported projects such as CAPE (Cambodia Assistance to Primary Education) and PASEC. Due to political events and problems in delinkage of inputs from cluster based systems, teacher development activities provided by these projects have neither been consistent nor sustained. As a result, classroom teaching in UNICEF clusters has not seen the change to a more student-centered orientation originally hoped for. The TGL initiative, however, has gone a long way to changing this situation. Because of its focus on the cluster setting, this initiative has helped to put teacher development back on the cluster school agenda. Not only have the training modules developed as a result of the TGL program been an invaluable tool to support teacher development, but the strategy for its implementation actively focuses on the development of a cluster based teacher supervision system. By creating a competent cadre of master teachers based in each cluster, the TGL initiative has finally integrated teacher development into a cluster school development framework.

2.6. Equity Concerns

One of the important early goals of school clustering was to increase equity between schools. Because the government and donors did not have the resources to help every school equally, clustering was thought of as an appropriate strategy to deal with the general lack of resources among many schools. It was thought that if the core school of a cluster received a significant amount of resources, these could then be shared with other surrounding schools. It was hoped that resource sharing systems within the cluster would, therefore, greatly increase the efficient utilization of limited material resources. Based on this assumption, the MoEYS and UNICEF moved forward with plans to make significant investments in core schools throughout the country. Such investments usually took the form of building construction, especially for a resource center cum office and library, furniture for these facilities, teaching aids, and library materials. In addition, TGL training

usually included a large number (though not all) grade leaders who were resident at the core school.

Unfortunately, due to the inoperative nature of the resource sharing systems in a large number of clusters, many of the resources placed in core schools did not benefit satellite schools. This was especially the case early on in the program during the period of intensive construction. Indeed, the fact that so many resources were placed in core schools meant that inequities between schools had actually *increased.* Ineffective operation was particularly true of resource centers which have been among the most difficult resource sharing systems to develop in school clusters. The causes for this situation are remarkably similar from place to place. One of the main reasons has already been discussed, namely the fact that construction activities tended to displace systems development activities early in the program. Other reasons included staffing shortages both in the project and in clusters themselves; the inability of UNICEF staff to visit clusters frequently due to their dispersed nature; slow movement of funds from the central level to clusters; inefficient management arrangements (i.e., lack of working groups); and poorly defined guidelines about the specific practices that should be set up in order to share resources. It has already been pointed out, too, that at the beginning of the cluster school program, there were initially no discrete training modules on how to develop capacity for running resource centers, libraries, and local cluster school committees.

A number of actions to remedy the apparent inequities within clusters were taken shortly after an evaluation of the UNICEF cluster school project in 1998. One of these was a reinvigorated focus on institution building and the phasing out of construction activities after 1998. Better articulated management arrangements in provinces using working groups were a major part of this effort. With UNICEF's support, the MoEYS has also begun to develop manuals that make the practices needed to effectively share resources more explicit. In addition, UNICEF began to systematically support local income generation activities in clusters, particularly those relying on Teacher Association Credit Schemes. These income generation activities were crucial because they provided readily available funds to local cluster school committees to subsidize travel costs of school directors when going to the core school. School directors need to travel to the core school regularly in order to receive and return materials from the resource center and library as

well as attend LCSC meetings. This innovation not only mitigated the problems generated by the slow movement of funds within the project but also brought a higher degree of sustainability to program activities.

2.7. Community Participation in Education

Using cluster school systems to improve the participation of communities in education has had a checkered history of success and failure. In the early stages of cluster school development in Cambodia, efforts to involve communities in education focused largely on generating local funds for the construction of classroom infrastructure and resource centers. By and large, these efforts have been successful. But efforts to involve communities in the *substance* of education have been difficult.

Because the culture of community support for education varies significantly from province to province, it is difficult to generalize why community participation efforts have been problematic during the last several years. Differences between areas notwithstanding, there are basically 5 important factors to consider with respect to this issue:

1. *Disjuncture between bodies that represent the community and parents:* Each school in Cambodia has what is called a "School Support Committee." Sometimes this committee is referred to as a "Parent Teacher Association" or simply a "Parent Association." In most cases, however, the committee usually consists of community elders who volunteer to help the school. Thus, the term Parent Association is really a misnomer. Committee members are not generally elected in any sense but occupy these positions more by merit of their age or status in the locality. These individuals tend not to be the parents of the children in schools but rather the grandparents. Furthermore, women or mothers are rarely represented on the committee.

2. *Lack of representative bodies which can represent the "community:"* This issue relates to the first. The individuals or bodies frequently used to represent communities at school level are sometimes not well equipped to do so. For example, individuals such as commune leaders and village chiefs are really representatives of the local authority and not necessarily the community. Village Development Committees (VDCs) have been much better placed to serve this function; but because schools often serve several villages, it has been difficult

to coordinate the involvement of several VDCs simultaneously at school level. The creation of School Support Committees tends to duplicate the activities that might better be served by an umbrella grouping of VDC members.

3. *Difficulty of parents to involve themselves in school-community issues:* While School Support Committees are generally very effective in generating income for the school, especially through their close connections with the temple, they often have little understanding of the issues necessary for real parental involvement in education. These include the need for parents to meet with teachers regularly, help children with their homework, or ensure regular student attendance. Although it does sometimes happen that some parents might be sitting on the committee, most parents are frequently too distracted by the grim battle for economic survival to be much involved in school-community issues. Thus, by default, this responsibility generally falls to the elders of the community.

4. *Tasks to improve community participation lack specificity:* In the past, the methodology for increasing community participation in education has not been clear. In many cases, these interventions have consisted of raising funds for construction and/or having meetings with parents once every trimester. Usually the parents who attend these meetings are the ones whose children attend school most regularly while those whose children are at the greatest risk of repeating or dropping out do not or can not come. When LCSCs urge parents to be more "involved" through what ever community body that exists (School Support Committee, Parent Association, etc.), the specific tasks to be done beyond those related above are neither clear nor explicit.

5. *Limited competence of School Support Committees:* The elders who sit on the School Support Committee can be very diverse in their make-up. Sometimes, they possess a high level of sophistication in their knowledge of management and organization, particularly in urban or semi-urban areas. But in many cases, too, they have failing faculties and are not really able to lead many of the community participation initiatives that clusters frequently try to initiate. They may have difficulty doing detailed accounts, writing reports, or organizing surveys. As a result, these community participation initiatives frequently fall to

the school directors to implement which more or less defeats the purpose of involving the community.

Although the success of cluster school development activities to increase the involvement of communities in education has largely been limited to construction, there have been some effective measures in Svay Rieng and elsewhere to improve involvement in issues of educational substance (Box 2.2). One of these measures relates to efforts to help strengthen the structure of the School Support Committees so that a division of labor is more apparent. Training in the duties of each member of the committee has accompanied these efforts. Another useful measure is simply giving the committees concrete tasks to perform. As noted above, initiatives in the past to increase community involvement have often been very superficial consisting of little more than trimester meetings of parents in which the latter are harangued to send their children to school regularly. Simply providing grants to the School Support Committee through the local cluster school committee can greatly clarify the tasks required to achieve the kinds of participation expected. Activity grants can include support for such interventions as scholarship pro-

> **BOX 2.2**: *Cluster Mediated Measures to Increase Community Participation*
> ♦ Creating a division of labor in school support committees
> ♦ Providing training in the division of labor agreed upon
> ♦ Provision of grants to communities (via LCSCs) to implement specific activities
> ♦ Encouraging review of committee membership in order to increase the representation of younger individuals, women, and parents
> ♦ Provide report cards regularly to parents to ensure regular communication between teachers and parents.
> ♦ Introduce activities of particular interest to communities such as scholarship and school breakfast programs

grams for poor students, support for the disabled (e.g., identifying students with specific needs and providing assistance as required), purchase of report cards to strengthen communication between parent and teacher, or breakfast programs. Grants are generally provided for a specific activity selected by the LCSC and members of the school support committee to achieve a stated objective (e.g., the attendance rate of students increases). In this respect, activity menus can be very useful for enabling this kind of selection process. When tasks are made concrete in this manner, it both clarifies and strengthens the kinds of intervention needed to increase community participation.

The above measures notwithstanding, the efforts of most UNICEF supported clusters have not yet been able to improve the representation of parents in the committees that

have orchestrated many of the activities cited above. In general, these committees are not composed of parents nor are they representative of parents in an elective sense. This has so far been a shortcoming of most cluster school development efforts. Given the high level of activity of Village Development Committees achieved by the former CASD program, this should represent a rare opportunity for cluster schools in UNICEF supported areas to reconstitute their School Support Committees into elective bodies. The VDCs in a cluster school catchment area could somehow be called upon to form a committee that is responsive to community participation issues (as opposed to construction only). This seems highly recommended given that the VDCs are both elective and experienced in community mobilization techniques.

2.8. Using Clusters to Facilitate Decentralization

The term "decentralization" has two aspects which should be considered in the context of efforts to use school clusters to facilitate greater local control of decision making. On one level, decentralization refers to the desire to give greater control of the use of resources to the local level. On another level it refers to the desire to make education service providers accountable to service recipients, i.e., parents. School clusters supported by UNICEF have made great strides in achieving the former but less so with respect to the latter. This assessment should perhaps be qualified by noting that improvements in "upward" accountability to the District and Provincial Offices of Education as well as UNICEF itself has to a significant degree been achieved. Upward accountability refers to requiring clusters to develop performance standards with respect to student learning, classroom practice, etc. and to monitor their own progress towards these explicit standards. "Downward" accountability of schools to parents, however, has not yet occurred partly for many of the same reasons relating to lower than expected community involvement related above. The inability or unwillingness of parents to be directly involved in their children's education, the lack of concrete institutions representing parents at the school level, etc. make it difficult for schools to report about performance standards even if they had the intention to do so.

Decentralization in the local use of resources has been achieved through the decision of the MoEYS and UNICEF to route funds directly to Provincial Offices of Education instead of passing through the National Cluster School Committee as was the past

practice. At the cluster level, the utilization of these funds has been greatly facilitated by the introduction of Logical Framework Approach Planning or LFA. This reform of the planning process allows each LCSC to analyze its own problems and to determine its own objectives, activities, and budgetary requirements based on this analysis. The degree to which each UNICEF supported cluster has been able to develop its own plan, however, has varied from place to place. In some provinces, plans were sometimes created at provincial level with only partial representation from each cluster supported by UNICEF. In such cases, activities tended to be standardized across clusters thereby limiting ownership of the planned activities as well as direct control over allocation of resources. This situation was especially prevalent in provinces with a large number of supported clusters and only limited technical staffing available on the UNICEF side. Although such plans went much farther to achieving some form of decentralization in school planning than had previously been true, it fell short of what could be achieved when an entire school cluster could sit down together without interruption to develop their own plan.

An important element in achieving decentralization through LFA planning at cluster level has been the development of local capacity to formulate indicators, establish baseline data points, and to conduct surveys according to parameters set out in each indicator. Survey activities took the form of *action research* to inform the evaluation process as well as future planning. The data collected as a result of such surveys in turn helped clusters to know whether they had achieved the performance standards set out in their indicators. The development of performance standards through the formulation of indicators has been a major means for clusters to develop some sense of accountability even if it only currently occurs in an upward sense. The challenge to further strengthen decentralization will be to develop accountability downwards to parents. In order to achieve this, clusters must try to develop the institutional framework in which accountability to parents can be realized. In the absence of an historical tradition, this will entail trying to help communities to develop representative community bodies that are characterized by a higher degree of parental interest in education as discussed earlier.

2.9. Intersectoral Coordination

Cluster school development activities supported by UNICEF have had important opportunities to address *out of school factors* affecting children's education through their

association with major programs supported by the CASD and Health Sections. Cluster school projects supported by other agencies have often lacked this kind of intersectoral support. While collaboration among UNICEF programs in the past could always have been closer, important experiences have been generated that have important implications for future intersectoral cooperation. Experiences from Svay Rieng Province have in particular been of note in this regard due to the formation of discrete intersectoral working groups composed of representatives from all 3 sections.

The framework for cooperation between sections in Svay Rieng began later in the province rather than at the outset. This was a limiting factor, particularly in the sense that many program sites within the province lacked geographical overlap. In this respect, intersectoral collaboration was only possible in 2 clusters (out of 5) where all 3 sections were supporting program activities. Nevertheless, a collaborative framework was developed with the following specifications:

1. *Establishment of an intersectoral committee with fixed membership:* This committee was not a group whose membership varied with each meeting but rather a fixed group of key program staff from each program. In general, the committee consisted of members of the working group associated with each provincial department and section. This included Department representatives from Education, Health, and Women's Affairs at both provincial and district level. Among education representatives, the cluster school director was also included as part of the committee. Local representatives for CASD included commune leaders from areas served by school clusters; for Health, local representation was embodied by the Health Center Head. On UNICEF's side, representatives included the program Advisors and technical support staff based in the province.

2. *Fixed meeting days:* The committee met on the fourth Thursday of each month in order to avoid schedule conflicts well in advance. Thursday was a day that worked well for the Education program because students were not in schools on these days and core school technical meetings occurred on the first and third Thursday of each month. Thus, meeting on this day did not affect program technical support at cluster level.

3. *Setting common geographical target areas:* As noted above, intersectoral collaboration was limited to those areas where all 3 programs were working.

4. *Linking target institutions at local level:* Institutional cooperation was supported between clusters, VDCs, and health centers. This included regular communication on fixed days at both local and provincial level and joint planning.

5. *Identifying intersectoral areas of cooperation:* This required setting out those common points shared by each program where collaboration could be beneficial to realizing goals set out in each sector (Figure 2.6): For the education section, this included objectives relating to school health and addressing out of school factors that affect access and parental support of education in the home.

A number of strategies were employed to achieve the intersectoral collaboration set out in the framework described above. One of the most important of these strategies was *joint planning* among all sections. Initially, this kind of planning was somewhat problematic because school clusters do their annual plans on the basis of the academic year (typical planning months: August-September) whereas other sections do their planning on the basis of the calendar year (typical planning months: October-November). In view of this situation, each section agreed to allow for revisions in its workplan pending the completion of a joint plan to be done in December. Draft workplans were exchanged by each section before the scheduled meeting in December. The intersectoral committee described earlier met several times in order to coordinate all activities in preparation of this meeting. This included:

♦ *Scheduling* of the joint planning session and *identification of participants*
♦ Development of an *agenda* for the session to be sent to each participant

Figure 2.6: Framework Outlining Intersectoral Cooperation
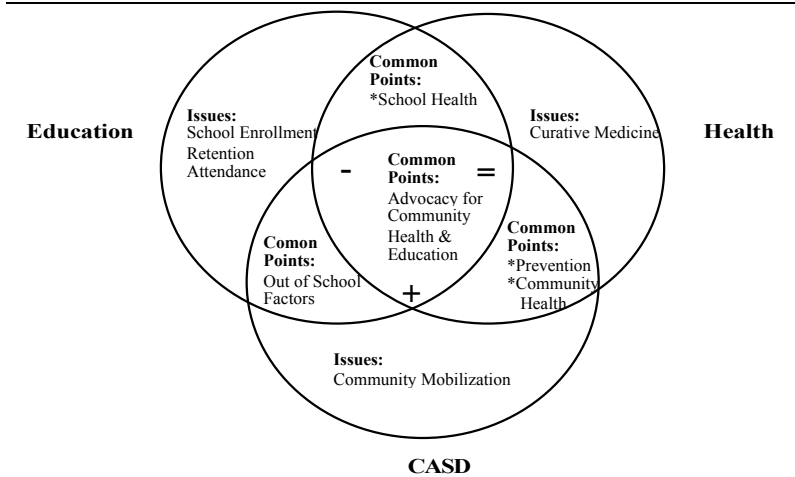
- Preparation of *summaries of section plans* highlighting possible points of collaboration
- Development of a *needs chart* to complement section plan summaries. This chart indicated possible intersectoral objectives or outputs, the technical assistance required to achieve the objective, and the section from which this assistance was requested.
- Preparation of a *budget* to be provided for the joint planning session including support for travel for counterparts working with each section.

When the joint planning session took place in December, a plan was developed using the format shown in Table 2.1. The joint plan was reviewed regularly at each monthly provincial intersectoral meeting in order to determine progress, problems encountered, and required revisions in implementation. Examples of some of the collaborative activities that were developed as a result of this kind of planning are set out in Box 2.3.

Table 2.1: Joint Planning Format for Intersectoral Planning

Objective or Output	Technical Assistance Required	Joint Activity	Animators	Section Responsible	Timeframe

Other strategies to further intersectoral collaboration included regular information exchange and the establishment of intersectoral working groups at local level. Information exchange, for example, included the collection of statistical data on educational indicators for provision to CASD as well as discussion of problems encountered in program implementation, particularly with respect to out of school factors. Later on in the development of intersectoral cooperation, the provincial committee requested local actors at commune level to organize their own meetings since this is where collaboration between projects was most important. A system of rotating the chairmanship of the meeting was discussed and established. Guidelines to help structure activities for the committee were also established. These paralleled operating guidelines for the provincial intersectoral committee. In particular, local level meetings were expected to review progress of activities set out in the joint plan and make modifications in implementation accordingly.

BOX 2.3: *Examples of Intersectoral Activities*

- School enrollment drives orchestrated by VDCs
- Cluster library support of village reading halls
- Cluster identification of children at risk of repeating and provision of these names to VDC run credit schemes in considering loan applications
- Tree planting on school grounds organized by VDCs
- Cluster based drawing contests on AIDS
- IPM activities in schools using CASD resource persons
- Provision of wells in schools by CASD
- School deworming programs

Although significant progress was made in intersectoral collaboration in Svay Rieng Province, there were important problems that should be kept in mind for future reference when replicating such cooperation in new provinces. A basic problem that greatly limited cooperation was the failure early on in the organization of program activities to work in the same target areas. To some degree, this was the result of different geographical target units used by each sector. For example, the Education Sector used school clusters as its primary geographical unit whereas CASD used villages and communes. In many cases, a cluster might overlap 2 communes one of which was covered by CASD and another one which was not. Although the problem of differing target geographical units is one to be aware of, careful planning should be able to anticipate and resolve such difficulties.

Perhaps the greatest problem encountered during this period of intensified intersectoral collaboration was the fact that efforts to cooperate at provincial level did not always translate into collaboration at the local level (e.g., commune, cluster, and district level). Although local actors were requested to meet to discuss specific aspects of joint planning, they frequently did not do so. Among the reasons cited for this failure were an overload of duties to perform, difficulties in communication (lack of icoms, etc.) and travel, and inadequate resources to pay for local travel (i.e., no per diem). Although clusters did at least have their own funds available for local travel as a result of cluster-based income generation schemes, personnel in other sectors found such travel difficult. In addition, the separate operating structure of each program component supported by UNICEF tended to reinforce the resistance to consistent cooperation between sectors.

Historical patterns of working in the different government departments also hindered cooperation between projects. In general, the provincial departments of Health, Education, and Women's Affairs did not have a tradition of regular communication. The mechanisms for increasing communication between departments were of an ad hoc nature and their sustainability after the cessation of external aid is in some doubt. In addition, each sector had its own operating structures at local level which sometimes duplicated one another. For example, the VDCs and School Support Committees were separate structures that had very similar functions relating to the support of schools. Because of this overlap in operating functions, coordination was often difficult.

3. Guidelines for Cluster School Development

The following are suggested guidelines for the development of new clusters in both the old and new provinces. There is, however, some bias towards the assumption that the activities in question are occurring in a province which has had little experience of cluster school development. These guidelines are based in large part on the experiences of setting up school clusters in other provinces recounted in the previous section. They are not intended to replace the guidelines developed by the MoEYS but to complement them. While the Ministry guidelines provide the regulatory framework within which to build clusters, the following suggestions are more specific to project development concerns. Thus, these guidelines seek to assist project planners in developing an effective project design that meets the expectations set out in the UNICEF Master Plan of Operations 2001-5.

The topics covered under these guidelines are as follows:

1. *Management Structure Arrangements*
    *   *Membership*
    *   *Division of Labor*
    *   *Relationship with other administrative structures*
2. *Conceptual Frameworks for the Development of Clusters*
    *   *Cluster functions*
    *   *Cluster sectors*
3. *Evaluation Procedures*
    *   *Process Indicators*
    *   *Summative Indicators*
4. *Using Exploratory Surveys to Initiate Cluster School Development*
    *   *Setting selection criteria*
    *   *Setting a baseline for purposes of comparison*
5. *Human Resource Development*
    *   *Areas of training*
    *   *Delivery of training*
6. *Community Participation*
    *   *Identifying Observable Practices with respect to Parental Participation in their Children's Education*
    *   *Structures that facilitate participation of "substance"*
    *   *General strategies to increase community participation*
7. *Using Clusters to Facilitate Decentralization*
    *   *Decentralization and the Local Allocation of Resources*
    *   *Decentralization and Downward Accountability*
8. *Promoting Intersectoral Collaboration in the Context of School Clusters*
    *   *Common Intersectoral Foci*
    *   *Specific Strategies to Increase Intersectoral Cooperation*
9. ***Use of Service Menus to Facilitate Cluster School Development***

3.1. Management Structure Arrangements

3.1.1. General Observations

The best place to start a cluster school project is to identify the direct counterparts of the project. This implies the need for a working group which can have sustained contact with target clusters. Working group members should be chosen with the intention of building local capacity at provincial and district levels. Members of the working group who are government counterparts will work side by side with UNICEF staff based in the province.

3.1.2. Membership of the Working Group

It is recommended that the working group in the province include representatives from both district and provincial level. All selections should be made in consultation with the PCSC. For each district where clusters are supported, one district person should be recruited. Such recruitments ensure that at least one member of the working group is district based. It is essential that the individuals recruited for this position have the time to ensure sustained contact with clusters. A minimum of 3 days per week is usually a good guide for the actual time commitment that will be required. Strong candidates for this position tend to be *maitre formateurs* within the district or the head of the primary education section. Motivation to learn, receptivity to new ideas, trainabililty, and industriousness are all key criteria to consider in making selections. Although local circumstances may dictate otherwise, it is recommended that DOE directors or vice directors not be selected for this position due to the limited availability of time which they may be able to provide to the project.

At provincial level, the working group should have at least one member from the POE. More than one person is desirable if possible. The same selection criteria described above should also apply, particularly with respect to time requirements. Good candidates at provincial level are often those who work in the Primary Education Office as this office has general responsibility for the development of clusters in the province. Selection of individuals in this office, therefore, builds local capacity.

3.1.3. Division of Labor within the Working Group

Each member of the working group should have an explicit job description. For

members who are recruited from the POE, a specific area of capacity building should be assigned according to the expertise or interests of individuals. For example, one person at the POE may have experience in library development. This individual should then be responsible for training and monitoring library organization in all clusters.

District based members of the working group generally have a very broad range of responsibilities from planning to training to evaluation. Below is a sample of a possible job description for such district based individuals:

> **BOX 3.1:** *Sample Job Description of District-based Members of the Working Group*
> 1. Provide training to cluster school personnel in all areas relating to the general operation of the cluster including resource centers, local cluster school committees, increasing parental involvement in education, income generation, and other areas.
> 2. Attend meetings of the working group regularly.
> 3. Assist local cluster school committees to do their annual planning using LFA.
> 4. Work with cluster school personnel and communities to plan activities which are appropriate to the needs identified from field assessments.
> 5. Assist cluster school personnel and communities to organize and implement activities which have been determined as part of their annual planning, especially those which have been selected from the UNICEF service menu.
> 6. Assist in the disbursement of funds to clusters or communities for the implementation of activities identified in the annual plan.
> 7. Monitor and oversee the operation of all activities pertaining to cluster school development using both formal and informal assessment instruments.
> 8. Monitor and oversee the use of all funds provided to clusters and communities by the project.
> 9. Report any irregularities in the implementation of project activities to the working group.
> 10. Develop new activities for inclusion in the UNICEF service menu which will help increase the functioning of the clusters.
> 11. Provide reports and data to the working group for purposes of quarterly and annual reporting to donors about the quality of project implementation and the achievement of objectives.
> 12. Provide written schedules of planned activities each month.

3.1.4. Relationship with Other Administrative Structures

The provincial working group is intended to be the implementational arm of the PCSC. It does not replace the PCSC. The working group should provide regular reports to the PCSC and DCSC at least once a quarter. Meetings with the PCSC to review progress should occur at least twice a year. The working group should also request the inter-

vention of the POE or POE Director to solve problems that require high level attention (e.g., loss of supplies, egregious incompetence at school level, etc.).

3.2. Conceptual Frameworks to Guide Cluster School Development

3.2.1. Rationale for a Framework

All interventions organized under a cluster school project should be grounded in a refined conceptual framework which helps rationalize the selection of technical inputs for cluster school development. That is, the identification of technical inputs should occur in a way that targets and serves specific cluster functions. In the past, this has been a serious problem in efforts to develop school clusters because technical inputs were never rationalized (i.e., linked to specific functions) in a systematic way. This often led to a confused patchwork of activities within clusters with no clear overriding purpose or link to quality improvement in schools.

3.2.2. Sectors and Functions

In order to address this past deficiency in cluster school development, each cluster school development project should attempt to link each of its services to *specific sectoral areas of development* within a cluster as well as *specific functions* which clusters are supposed to serve in their quest to enhance quality. Suggested sectors (or institutions) and functions are shown in the double matrix of Table 3.1. While the sectors identified in this table are also covered in the Ministry's Cluster School Guidelines, the functions provided are intended to help clarify and rationalize the identification of technical inputs which are relevant to cluster school development.

BOX 3.2: *Suggested Functions School Clusters Should Serve*
Resource Sharing:
Refers to the maximum utilization of scarce educational resources, both human and material, by developing institutional mechanisms which help to share these resources throughout the cluster (e.g., mobile libraries, resource center service schedules, joint planning exercises etc.).

Capacity Building:
Refers to the development of institutionalized mechanisms within the cluster which improve the ability of staff to carry out their work (e.g., provision of technical support to teachers through a cluster-based teacher supervision system).

Accountability:
Refers to the institutionalization of mechanisms which hold staff responsible for their performance (e.g., the development of teacher supervision systems which hold teachers accountable for their teaching).

In the literature on cluster school development, clusters are supposed to facilitate improvements in the quality of children's learning through the adherence to 3 functions. These functions are Resource Sharing, Capacity Building, and Accountability. These are defined as follows:

By using the conceptual framework described above, a cluster school development project can determine whether the selection of specific technical inputs are justified or not. Table 3.1 shows an example of the rationalization of a fictional project's technical inputs using the conceptual framework explained. Since all the inputs indicated for each sector can be rationalized in the matrix according to the function which they serve, they can be accepted as justified.

3.3. Evaluating Cluster Performance

3.3.1. Kinds of Evaluation

There are 2 kinds of evaluation that a cluster school project should build into its monitoring system. The first kind stresses evaluation of the processes occurring within the cluster such as resource sharing or accountability. The second kind should stress summative indicators specified in the cluster's annual plan such as rates of repetition and dropout.

3.3.2. Cluster Evaluation Using Process Indicators

Figure 3.1: Example of a Cluster School Evaluation Instrument that Assesses Process Indicators

Cluster School Evaluation Instrument

Name of Cluster/District: _____/_____   Date: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____   **TOTAL SCORE:** ▨ %

Evaluation Key: **Over 65% = Very Good; 50-64% = Satisfactory; Under 49% = Needs Improvement**

Rating Scale				Directions: Score each item according the scale shown in the left hand column. Use the following guidelines in assigning a score for each criteria:
Very Good (VG) 2 Pts	Satisfactory (S) 1 Pt	Needs Improvement 0 Pts	Total	**Very Good = 2 Pts** Means that the activity or product in question demonstrates a high degree of creativity and self-directed work **Satisfactory = 1 Pt** Means that the activity or product in question has been done to a minimum but adequate standard **Needs Improvement = 0 Pts** Means that the activity or product in question has not been done or has been done to a quality below that expected by the evaluator A Calculation Area has been provided at the end of each section to total the points in each column. Add the points for each column and enter the total score at top of the section. Convert this to a percentage by dividing by the number in the lower part of the box. When you have finished scoring all sections, add up the section subtotals and enter the TOTAL SCORE in the space provided above. Convert this score to a percentage by dividing by 116. Please note that starred criteria (*) have been weighted twice as heavily as other criteria.
		28	%	**Section 1 : Resource Center**
				A. Organization and Maintenance
				1. A system for managing keys to the RC is in place so that the Ctr is not locked during teaching.
				2. Materials are easily accessible (Possible Evidence: Materials are easily found when requested; Materials in bags are labelled and sorted by set; Maps and posters are <u>not</u> nailed down).
				3. Older materials which have been lost or damaged have been replaced.
				4. There is an updated inventory of materials and teaching aids available in the Resource Center as well as a listing of materials received from donors like CAPE.
				B. Research and Planning
				5. A Teaching Aids Planning Chart which indicates the materials to be made or acquired, the quantity needed, to whom they are to be provided, and how they are to be acquired has been developed for each grade.
				6. The Resource Center Manager can tell the evaluator how specific teaching aids are used as well as the grade and lessons for which they are relevant.
				7. Resource Center staff have produced new materials for instruction as a result of their own creativity and discussions with teachers.
				C. Dissemination and Usage of Materials
				8.* Resource Center materials are found to be used in the core school (Possible Evidence: Teaching Aid Borrowing Booklet or actual observation of classes). [Multiply Score by 2]
				9.* Resource Center materials are used in surrounding schools (Possible Evidence: Teaching Aid Borrowing Booklet; actual observation of classes; service schedules). [Multiply Score by 2]
				10. A Teaching Aid Borrowing Schedule has been made by the LCSC.
				11. A list of the materials available in RC has been posted in each school office.
				12. Use of teaching aids has been discussed in Thursday Mtgs (see Training Plan)
				Calculation Area (Enter Total Score for This Section Above)

Early on in the development of a cluster school project, it will be useful to determine all the observable practices in the operation of a cluster's different sectors or institutions that one would ideally expect to see some time after these sectors actually begin to function. As noted earlier, these observable practices can be derived from a conceptual framework that specifies the functions that one sets for each cluster sector. For example, if one expects a resource center to facilitate the sharing of resources within the cluster, one might set out the following observable

Table 3.1: Sample of a Matrix for Rationalizing Technical Activities according to Function and Sector

Function / Sector	Resource Sharing	Capacity Building	Accoutability
Library Development	**RS 1.** Setting up Mobile Libraries	**CB1.** Conducting Library workshops to train librarians.	**A1.** Organizing daily monitoring of usership of libraries.
Resource Center Development	**RS 2.** Setting up teaching aid rotation schedules **RS 3.** Ensuring access to all teaching aids in school offices and RCs	**CB2.** Conducting Resource Center Workshops to train RC managers. **CB3.** Introducing teachers to the teaching aids available in the RC. **CB4.** Assisting teachers to duplicate teaching aid prototypes housed in the RC.	**A2.** Organizing teach-aid borrowing systems in all schools. **A3.** Linking access to credit loans on very favorable terms to teaching aid usage.
Teacher Supervision & Support Systems	**RS 4.** Organize cluster wide trainings for teachers on Thursdays organized by grade leaders **RS 5.** Setting observation- feedback schedules for grade leaders to assist all teachers in their teaching	**CB5.** Using cluster based grade leaders to train teachers on methodology days. **CB6.** Using cluster based grade leaders to provide mentoring support to other teachers.	**A4.** Forming teacher supervision teams to observe classroom teaching as a follow-up to Thursday training. **A5.** Tabulating observation scores for reporting to LCSC.
Community Outreach & Participation	**RS 6.** Enabling local parent associations to access cluster funds to provide scholarships for poor children.	**CB7.** Training Parent Association leaders to administer scholarship funds to poor students.	**A6.** Developing tracking and referral systems administered by comunities to follow up on student dropout.
Local Cluster School Committee Development	**RS 7.** Developing annual improvement plan for cluster-wide implementation **RS 8.** Allocating cluster resources to specific member schools which are weakest in the cluster.	**CB8.** Training LCSCs in the development of objective-based annual plans. **CB9.** Training directors in the use of perform-ance indicators to achieve quality improvement goals.	**A7.** Forming survey teams to collect data pertinent to indicators stated in annual plans. **A8.** LCSCs submit regular reports which can describe progress towards stated objectves vis a vis stated indicators.

practices that should characterize resource center operation:

♦ Setting rotation schedules of teaching aids with surrounding school directors.
♦ Directors discuss with teachers the teaching aids they require for lessons in the coming month.
♦ Satellite schools organize teaching aids in such a way that they can be easily accessed by teachers after they arrive at the school
♦ etc.

Based on these expectations, the working group can develop an evaluation instrument that assesses the operational processes of each cluster sector. An example of a cluster school evaluation instrument derived in this way is provided in Figure 3.1.

Similarly, the working group can use this listing of practices to inform the development of training modules to build expertise within the cluster. These expectations should be provided to cluster personnel in an explicit form in order to let them know the criteria upon which they will be evaluated.

3.3.3. Cluster Evaluation Using Summative Indicators

Summative indicators through which to assess the effectiveness of a cluster should be set out in the annual plan developed by the LCSC at the beginning of the year. These indicators outline the standards of performance to which the cluster must strive. These standards are set by the LCSC itself based on what committee members think they can achieve. The common reference point of each indicator is the objective or output stated in the annual plan. Common summative indicators include performance targets in the reduction of repetition, dropout, or enrollment. During or at the end of the year, the LCSC should conduct surveys to determine whether they have achieved their performance targets or not. The following is a useful reporting format for summarizing such survey results:

Table 3.2: Sample Reporting Format for Summative Indicators		
Long Term Objective The number of children completing a primary cycle increases.	• At least 27% of the children enrolled in the 1997-8 academic year in 5 out of 6 schools complete their primary education in the 2002-3 academic year.	• Of the 6 schools reporting, all seem to be retaining students at a rate well above the target for 2001-2. Rates of retention range from a high of 61% in Pich Montrey School to a low of Prey Cheu Teal School.
Output 1: Classrooms are not overcrowded.	• At least 80% of the classes in all schools have student numbers of 45 or less by the beginning of the academic year.	• Of the 104 classes in the cluster, only 55% were able to achieve student teacher ratios of 45 or less, thereby missing the performance target set.

3.4. Using Exploratory Surveys to Initiate Cluster School Development

3.4.1. General Uses of Exploratory Surveys

Cluster school development activities should be preceded by exploratory surveys. Such surveys generally have 2 uses. The first of these is to help inform the process of cluster selection based on certain predetermined criteria. The second is to establish a baseline for purposes of comparative assessment.

3.4.2. Surveys to Select Target Clusters

Because cluster school development in the UNICEF context will be following the selection of villages by Seth Komar, the usual criteria used to select target clusters may not apply. In general, however, selection criteria include the following:

- ♦ *Accessibility by the working group*
- ♦ *Security for travel*

- *Distance between core and satellite schools*
- *Suitability of a core school (e.g., availability of infrastructure to house re-source the resource center, library, and office)*
- *Existing school infrastructure (available infrastructure allows reasonable class sizes of 50 students or less; available infrastructure insures that teachers will have some chance of implementing the new pedagogical techniques in which they will be trained, etc.)*
- *Leadership potentials in the cluster (e.g., a majority of school directors show some effort to meet with teachers regularly, organize existing resources how-ever limited, etc.)*
- *Availability of human resources (e.g. personnel is available to run the library, resource centers, act as TGLS, etc.)*
- *Trainability of available human resources (e.g., years of education of teachers, work experience of directors, etc.)*
- *Parental support of schools within the cluster (e.g., existence of School Sup-port Committees, visible evidence of support of the school by parents however limited, etc.)*

These criteria are used to ensure that there is some reasonable expectation that a cluster school development project will succeed. For example, a cluster in which satellite schools are 10 kilometers or more from the core school has only a remote chance of establishing effective resource sharing systems. Although officially a cluster, it is clearly not a viable one. It is, therefore, unlikely that expending resources in such a cluster will achieve any-thing. While it may seem a callous decision to abandon such schools, school clustering is surely not an effective strategy through which to provide assistance in such cases. The limitations of school clustering must be recognized and other alternative strategies identi-fied. Exploratory surveys of the nature described can help ensure that cluster selections lead to feasible implementation environments for the project. If possible, they should be conducted by the working group in the academic year preceding actual project start up.

3.4.3. Using Surveys to Establish a Performance Baseline

Sometime during the first year of cluster set up, the project should collect data on certain basic performance indicators. This data will provide a point of comparison for as-sessing change. The following data should be collected during such surveys:

- *Completion (Survival) Rate in the Primary Cycle Preceding the Current Cycle*
- *Repetition Rate by Grade/Sex*
- *Dropout Rate by Grade/Sex*
- *Gross/Net Enrollment Rate (at least one)*
- *Gross/Net Intake Rate (at least one)*
- *Gender Parity Index for Enrollment*
- *Student Teacher Ratio by Grade*
- *Building Utilization Rate*

3.5. Human Resource Development

3.5.1. General Observations

As noted in Section 1 of this document, systems development or institution building should be among the very first activities undertaken in the cluster. Failure to do so may lead to a period of stalled development as happened in Svay Rieng Province and elsewhere. Systems development implies the development of the human resources to run each sector within the cluster. Once again, the content of such training can be inferred from a conceptual framework and associated evaluation instruments.

3.5.2. Areas of Training

Human resource development regarding the manner in which clusters should be operated must move beyond simple orientations to the goals and structure of school clusters. Table 3.3 illustrates a suggested list of training topics for the working group to im-

Table 3.3: Important Human Resource Development Topics to Address in Clusters

Topic	School Directors	Technical Grade Leaders	Resource Ctr Mgr	Librar-ian	Parents/ School Support Commit-tee	Available Documentation
1. LFA Planning Techniques • *problem analysis* • *objective writing* • *writing activities* • *etc.*	x	x	x	x	x	• UNICEF/Cluster Planning Guidelines • MoEYS Cluster Planning Manual • LCSC Training Manual/KAPE
2. Basic Concepts in School Clustering	x	x	x	x	x	• MoEYS Cluster School Guidelines • Cluster School Orientation Training Package/KAPE
3. Compiling, Analyzing, and Interpreting Statistical Indicators	x					• LCSC Training Manual/KAPE
4. Developing/Conducting Surveys to Monitor Cluster Indicators	x				x	• None
5. Conducting Participant Centered Meetings	x	x			x	• MoEYS Cluster School Guidelines (1995)
6. Planning Teacher Training & Supervision Systems in Clusters	x	x				• EQIP Program Manual • LCSC Training Manual/KAPE
7. TGL Methodology Manual		x				• MoEYS/UNICEF TGL Manual
8. Classroom Observation Techniques	x	x				• EQIP Program Manual
9. Roles and Functions of RC Managers			x			• MoEYS RC Orientation Manual • RC Manager Training

Topic	School Directors	Technical Grade Leaders	Resource Ctr Mgr	Librarian	Parents/ School Support Committee	Available Documentation
						Manual/KAPE
10. Interface between RC Managers and Other Cluster Staff	x	x	x	x	x	• MoEYS RC Orientation Manual • RC Manager Training Manual/KAPE
11. Research and Planning of Teaching Aids		x	x			• MoEYS RC Orientation Manual • RC Manager Training Manual/KAPE
12. Production of Some Basic Teaching Aids		x	x			• MoEYS RC Orientation Manual • RC Manager Training Manual/KAPE
13. Guidelines for the Organization of Teaching Aids			x			• MoEYS RC Orientation Manual • RC Manager Training Manual/KAPE
14. Measures to Ensure Use of Teaching Aids in Schools	x	x	x			• MoEYS RC Orientation Manual • RC Manager Training Manual/KAPE
15. Library Organization and Access				x		• Training Manual for Librarians/KAPE •
Topic	**School Directors**	**Technical Grade Leaders**	**Resource Ctr Mgr**	**Librarian**	**Parents/ School Support Committee**	**Available Documentation**
16. Establishing Mobile Libraries	x			x		• Training Manual for Cluster Librarians/KAPE
17. Organizing/Strengthening Parent Associations	x				x	• MoEYS Parent Association Guidelines
18. Principles of Test Development for Cluster-wide Testing	x	x				• LCSC Training Manual/KAPE • Question Formats in Testing/KAPE
19. Income Generation in School Clusters	x				x	• MoEYS Manual on Income Generation • Teacher Association Credit Scheme Training Manual/KAPE

3.5.3. Delivery of Human Resource Development

There are several important considerations to observe when organizing and implementing human resource development packages. These can be summarized as follows:

♦ *Deliver content in a participant-centered manner*
♦ *Ensure that content is concrete and explicit*
♦ *Identify measures to ensure sustained contact with trainers for purposes of reinforcement and follow-up*

The first of these considerations has not always been easy to achieve given the lack of documentation in the form of training modules. Much of the available documentation cited in Table 4 is in an expository format and leaves much to the trainer in terms of creating participant-centered activities. In the past, the lack of ready made training mod-

ules has led to very lecture oriented training with predictable results for internalization by cluster school personnel. Project personnel are strongly urged to avoid this format of training delivery and put the extra time into the development of lesson plans that stress participant activity.

Similarly, lecturing on abstract principles set out in expository documents has not led to concrete presentations of content either. Several suggestions can help to ensure that this problem is avoided:

♦ *Identify concrete products to which the workshop will lead.* Such products might include the actual organization of a library that facilitates access by children; actually equipping resource center with a set of basic teaching aids; helping school directors to develop an actual survey form to follow up on a given set of indicators, etc..

♦ *Hold training workshops in the institutional context to which they apply.* For example, a library training should be held in a cluster library; a resource center training should be held in a resource center, etc.. Organizing workshops in this way will facilitate the completion of concrete tasks/products described above.

♦ *Focus on quality, not quantity.* This sometimes requires limiting the number of participants in a workshop. Although it may be a temptation, for example, to invite all teachers to participate in a teaching aid production workshop, it is probably best to focus on only the TGLs and the Resource Center Manager. Dissemination to teachers would then be the task of these individuals.

♦ *Set out explicit task work for participants to complete after the workshop.* It may not always be possible to complete a concrete product during the time limit set by the workshop. In such cases, the facilitator(s) should identify specific tasks/products to be completed after participants return to their respective clusters or schools. Directions for completing the task should be explicit; exemplars of products should ideally be provided; and a specific deadline should also be set for completion of the task. Taskwork with these specifications helps to set the structure within which animators can have sustained contact with clusters. When explicit task work is not set, participants generally return to their respective sites and nothing happens.

3.6. Community Participation

3.6.1. General Observations

Given the long past history of cluster school development in Cambodia, it is no longer acceptable to be satisfied with only community support of school construction as the litmus test of participation. Although community support of school construction is no small accomplishment, future cluster school development efforts should move forward to realizing greater parental participation in children's learning. This is really the substance of community involvement.

3.6.2. Identifying Observable Practices with respect to Parental Participation in their Children's Education

Once again, identifying *observable* practices is a very useful starting point for developing a strategy that will increase parental participation in education. This helps avoid past mistakes in which formulations of strategy never got beyond very general statements of purpose such as "parents support education" or "communities are involved in education." Identifying the observable practices that communities should perform in the area of education should be done with all the stakeholders in the cluster. To some degree, this process of identification will be arbitrary leading to different formulations of community participation in different clusters. Sometimes, the identification of such practices can be problematic if stakeholders' local vision of community participation is fixated on school infrastructure. In such cases, identifying ideal community participation practices may require concrete examples such as those provided in a service menu. These should be discussed thoroughly before identifying those practices which the cluster wishes to realize.

After having identified these observable practices, working groups, in collaboration with cluster school personnel, can work backwards to the development of concrete measures through which to realize the practices selected. Box 3.3 shows some concrete examples of how the identification of observable community

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BOX 3.3: *From Observable Community Practice to Implied Activities*

The examples below try to demonstrate how the identification of observable community practices helps to generate a strategic outline of activities to perform in the cluster.

Observable Practice: Parents and teachers communicate regularly through the medium of report cards
Implied Activities:
- Purchase report cards
- Call parent meeting to explain how to sign report cards
- Distribute report cards to students regularly
- Monitor degree to which teachers fill out report cards
- Monitor degree to which parents sign and return report cards

Observable Practice: The Parent Association supports and administers a scholarship program that provides assistance to the poorest children in the community.
Implied Activities:
- Identify the job duties required to administer a scholarship program (e.g., surveys, ranking of survey data, contacting beneficiary families, etc.)
- Develop a survey form with which to identify children who qualify as poor students
- Meet representatives from all local communities in the cluster and explain how to administer the survey and tabulate the data
- Prepare and administer a budget for those who will administer the survey
- Community representatives administer the survey
- On the basis of survey data, select students who qualify for the program
- Distribute scholarship benefits to qualifying students on a regular basis (stationery, etc.)
- Monitor receipt of scholarship benefits
- Monitor attendance and continued enrollment of benefits

practices can inform a project of the activities to be organized. At the beginning of a cluster school project, external support of community run activities will likely be necessary to jump start community involvement. After the cessation of this support, the institutional memory of such practices should be strong enough to sustain some of these practices though at a much lower level of intensity. Such probabilities are made much more likely when clusters have their own sources of income.

3.6.3. Organizational Structures to Facilitate Community Participation

Community participation initiatives have in the past relied primarily on School Support Committees (SSC). While these committees are adequate for organizing local income generation activities, they are less so for initiatives that seek to get parents involved in education as noted in an earlier section. This is largely because the School Support Committees are primarily composed of village elders and not parents. Given the degree of community mobilization that can be expected from the Seth Komar program, UNICEF supported clusters will have significant opportunities to deal with community bodies that are very strong organizationally. Community participation initiatives in clusters should, therefore, try to capitalize on these opportunities, particularly where it involves working with Village Development Committees. The following are some suggestions for doing so:

♦ *Increase the membership of School Support Committees to include members of the VDC.* This can be done at two levels. At one level, VDC members can sit on SSCs for each individual school. At cluster level, VDC members can sit on a broadly based cluster school-community committee. In this respect, it is likely that a single cluster will comprise the jurisdictional areas of at least 10 or more VDCs. With VDC members strongly represented, this committee should enable reliable communication between clusters and local villages. This is particularly true because VDC membership is elective and not voluntary as is the case with the SSCs.

♦ *If School Support Committees are very weak organizationally, the cluster may opt to replace them entirely with members chosen from each VDC surrounding the school.* There are a number of ways in which this can be done. With respect to a single SSC, a school director could, for example, meet with VDC chairpersons in his or her school catchment area. VDCs could then be asked to select a member to sit on a community-based committee or make membership on such a committee automatic for VDC chairpersons. As in the SSCs, the membership of the school director would also be automatic. A cluster-wide school-community committee could be formed in the same way. Since most clusters do not usually have such committees anyway, this should not prove difficult (i.e., there is no committee to replace).

♦ *Following efforts to increase VDC membership in school-community committees, develop a division of labor for the committee.* This should involve the development of a structure within the committee (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson,

etc.) and a detailed description of the duties of each position identified. Depending on the diversity of tasks which the committee is responsible for overseeing, this division of labor can be very detailed. For example, there may be a subcommittee for a breakfast program, for a scholarship program, for tracking and referral of dropout students, etc..

♦ *Provide training to community-based committees in the performance of duties, handling of funds, and other tasks.*

♦ *Specify how these community bodies will interface with the Local Cluster School Committee.* This will be very important because it is likely that resources for community involvement initiatives will be released through the LCSC. The LCSC will, therefore, have to establish regular meeting times with the committee, a place for the meeting, how resources are to be disbursed to committees, how liquidations are to be done, and other matters.

3.6.4. Strategies for Increasing Community Participation in Education

There are a number of specific suggestions that cluster school development projects should consider in trying to increase community involvement in education (Box 3.4).

First, tasks for the community to perform should be *explicit.* As noted above, clusters should not make vague formulations of what involvement should entail. These usually lead to useless community meetings followed by nothing. Such approaches suffer from a lack of both form and substance. Clusters should, therefore, discuss with the community *specific tasks* that they can perform to improve the education of local children. This can include the administration of any number of specific activities of

> **BOX 3.4**: *Strategies to Get Communities Involved in Education*
> • Be explicit about the tasks to be performed
> • Try to identify tasks of importance to communities (e.g., food programs, etc.)
> • *Incentives:* Use the LCSC as a conduit to provide grants to communities for the implementation of specific activities.

which scholarship and school breakfast programs have already been mentioned. In selecting these activities*, try to focus on matters of importance to communities.* For example, the response of communities to administering breakfast programs in other provinces has been astonishing. Food for children is, therefore, something of significant importance to communities. This has greatly fostered their involvement in an activity at the school.

Another related suggestion concerns the use of *incentives* in the form of grants. Grants provided by a donor can be provided to communities to implement many of the activities mentioned earlier. Such grants can help lead to the identification of explicit tasks for the communities to perform that was earlier stressed. Grants should be provided to the community using the LCSCs as a conduit. Service menus can be used to great effect to help communities identify the grant related tasks that they would like to implement. The

use of menus in this way facilitates freedom for communities to choose their own activities while keeping the selection process within an acceptable structure.

3.7. Using Clusters to Facilitate Decentralization

3.7.1. Decentralization and the Local Allocation of Resources

Clusters should be developed in a way that they can facilitate decentralization. At one level, decentralization implies the local control of resources. Since the administrative body best positioned to plan and administer the allocation of resources within the cluster is the local cluster school committee, efforts to promote decentralization should focus on this committee. As a representative body of all schools, this committee can, if functioning properly, determine allocation of both material and monetary resources equitably within the cluster.

The effective allocation of resources, however, requires effective planning. Planning sessions in clusters should typically last 3 days in which each LCSC does a problem analysis, converts problems into desired positive conditions (i.e., objectives), and then arranges objectives hierarchically so that relationships delineating cause and effect are evident. Objectives fit into 3 categories: long term, short term, and outputs. The achievement of outputs is the necessary precondition for the achievement of the short term objective which is in turn the precondition for the achievement of the long term objective. After objectives have been categorized in this way, the activities and resources needed to achieve the specified outputs should then also be identified. Each of these elements is then placed into a planning matrix such as that shown in Table 3.4. Each cluster should then submit a planning matrix using the format shown so that a review of the logical relationships between activities and objectives is greatly facili-

Table 3.4: An Example of a Planning Matrix

Long Term Objective *	Indicators *	External Factors * *
Short Term Objective *	Indicators *	External Factors *
Outputs * * * * * *	Indicators * * * * * *	External Factors * * *
Activities * * * *	Inputs/Budget * * * *	

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tated. When an entire cluster school committee is given the opportunity to undertake this kind of planning, decentralized allocation of resources can be greatly facilitated.

Cluster planners should make every effort to ensure that clusters have the technical support to carry out log frame planning in the way described above as well as the opportunity to do planning as a *full* committee. This approach to planning should discourage past practice in which only several representatives of a cluster met together with representatives from other clusters at provincial level to develop a plan. Planning in this way leads to over standardization of activities across clusters, poor congruence between activities and local problems, and most importantly, weak local ownership of a plan.

Later in the development of a cluster, the provision of grants can also promote decentralization and bottom-up planning. Grants can be provided on the basis of activities identified in each cluster's annual quality improvement plan. Aid in the form of grants to implement these activities should be funneled through the cluster committees. Grant based activities can be used in conjunction with service menus to give some idea of the range of possible activities. The project can specify funding levels for a cluster based on its size. For example, clusters with less than 80 teachers might receive grant funding of $2,000 while those with more than 80 teachers might receive funding of $3,000. All activities chosen by the committee must be budgeted by the cluster within this funding level. Grants may be used by the cluster to purchase materials for the resource center, expand the holdings of cluster libraries, conduct small workshops, and provide small scholarships to the poorest students in each cluster. As noted earlier, Local Cluster School Committees are the key points of contact for all grant requests. Priority should be given to proposals to organize quality improvement activities as opposed to requests for "dumping" infrastructure and materiel into cluster sites (unless such material requests are somehow linked coherently to a worthy activity).

Other cluster level decision making regarding resource allocation may include setting rotational schedules within the cluster for resource distribution. Such decision making also adheres to the LCSC. This can refer to local decisions to share library books, teaching aids, and human resources such as the TGLs. Project support should assist LCSCs to develop systems through which such rotations can take place. Several manuals already exist about organizing teaching aid rotations among schools, mobile libraries, etc..[2]

Another important means through which to ensure local control of resources is support of cluster based income generation. Income generation schemes in clusters are important because they provide readily available funds for travel between schools. Thus, material and monetary resources which are received at the core school can be quickly disseminated to satellite schools. When such income was not available, it led to infrequent contact between member schools and a failure to take action to administer available resources. This led to increased inequity between the core and satellite schools.

> **BOX 3.5**: *Strategies to Help Clusters Support Decentralization*
>
> - Provide technical support to LCSCs to conduct LFA planning
> - Provide the opportunity to LCSCs to make plans as a *full* committee at the beginning of the year
> - Avoid standardized cluster plans across provinces
> - Provide guidance to LCSCs about making equitable allocations of resources requested in a plan to satellite schools.
> - Use the provision of grants in conjunction with service menus to promote local decision making with respect to quality improvement activities.
> - Provide guidance to LCSCs with respect to locally set rotation schedules for teaching aids, mobile libraries, etc..
> - Support local income generation activities in order to ensure local autonomy in operating those cluster systems responsible for resource allocation.

Some of the strategies used to facilitate decentralized allocation of resources within the cluster are summarized in Box 3.5.

3.7.2. Decentralization and Downward Accountability

At another level, decentralization implies what is known as "downward" accountability. Whereas upward accountability would apply to performance reports to superiors at district, provincial, and ministerial level, downward accountability refers to reporting to service recipients. This refers primarily to the parents in each school area. Schools are very fond of telling communities where they are falling down in their responsibility to

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[2] MoEYS, *What is the Cluster Materials Resource Room?*, Phnom Penh, 2001 (not yet published)

support the school but rarely feel it necessary to report to communities about internal school performance. LCSCs should, therefore, be trained to make reports to the Parent Association (or School Support Committee) of each school at least once per term. These reports should preferably be provided in a written form if possible. The report should cover areas of success, areas of failure and compensatory responses. Because schools tend to write reports in a manner that is unexplicit and often vague, guidelines should be provided to ensure coverage of specific areas of concern to parents. These are summarized in Box 3.6.

BOX 3.6: *Reporting Topics in School Reports to Parents (to be organized by LCSC)*

- Change in repetition rate from previous year
- Change in dropout rate from previous year
- Achievement test results (if available)
- Average teacher attendance
- Number of days in which the school was closed
- Amount of funds received from various sources
- Amount of funds spent and for what
- Special activities organized by the school (school breakfasts, support to poor children, library expansion, etc.)

The presentation of these reports should include a provision to allow parents to respond to what has been reported by each school. The role of the LCSC should be to help each school prepare these reports and ensure that they are delivered to each association. This activity should be recorded in the annual planning schedule of the cluster.

Another useful way in which clusters can promote downward accountability is through cluster-wide testing. Such tests help to provide a comparative standard of performance between schools and also among teachers. They also provide an external standard of performance to report to parents in addition to rates of repetition. Although there is a danger of introducing too much of a competitive atmosphere among teachers, cluster wide testing can help teachers to see how their students are performing relative to others. The LCSC should ensure that performance on such tests does not become the overriding concern among teachers. One way of avoiding this danger is to make test results nonbinding. Alternatively, such tests may not be applied to all teachers in all schools but may be done as spot checks of performance. Cluster-wide testing requires that TGLs have some knowledge of test development. If this is not the case, the project should provide technical support in this area. The steps in organizing cluster-wide testing include the following:

- *Provide training to TGLs in test development techniques (if necessary)*
- *Meet with teachers from all schools by grade to determine the broad areas of curriculum coverage. This will help ensure that the tests have some degree of*

KAPE, *Cluster Librarian Training Manual,* Kampong Cham, 1999.

content relevance to what children have learned.
- ♦ *Develop tables of specification for each subject/grade according to discussions with teachers*
- ♦ *Develop tests according to tables of specification*
- ♦ *Be sure that test formats conform with formats that children are used to seeing in all schools*
- ♦ *Provide model test papers to all schools to give some idea of the test formats to be used if there seems to be great diversity between the question types used by individual teachers.*
- ♦ *Administer tests at end of the term or academic year*
- ♦ *Compute average test scores for each teacher/school*
- ♦ *Inform individual directors/teachers of student performance based on these averages.*
- ♦ *Provide forums for constructive discussion with directors/teachers about areas of strength and weakness*

3.8. Promoting Intersectoral Collaboration in the Context of School Clusters

3.8.1. Intersectoral Foci

As stated elsewhere in these guidelines, UNICEF supported programs in health and community development (Seth Komar) offer special advantages to cluster school development. Common central foci between the education sector and Seth Komar/Health include *out of school factors* and *school health.* The new development context for cluster school development has lately underlined the importance of intersectoral cooperation much more than was true in the past. For example, the conclusions of several studies have indicated that traditional educational interventions in the school have not had the expected effect on school participation or internal efficiency (i.e., repetition and dropout). This is largely due to out of school factors and the tendency of children at the highest risk of repeating or dropping out of school to have very low attendance. That is, these children are not in school enough to benefit from many of the inputs that focus on *in school* factors (e.g., improved infrastructure, teacher training, textbook provision, etc.). Poverty and poor health are among some of the major out of school factors responsible for this effect on education. Thus, cluster school development projects need to shift their focus to out of school factors such as health and the financial distress of families. This shift has already been evident in several recent initiatives such as MoEYS' recent Priority Action Plan (PAP) activities.

Another major change in the development context that will facilitate greater focus on out of school factors and health is the tentative decision of World Food Program (WFP) to support school breakfast programs in several UNICEF sites. This program will

provide the needed backdrop to increase the health of school children and energize communities to increase school participation. The assistance of the Health and Seth Komar programs will be essential in realizing this outcome.

3.8.2. Specific Strategies to Increase Intersectoral Cooperation

The following is a list of guidelines that will help education program staff in provinces to increase their cooperation with the Seth Komar and Health Sections. As with all previous guidelines, these actions are stated in the institutional context of school clusters.

1. *Establish an Intersectoral Committee at Provincial Level:* This should be the first step in intersectoral cooperation. This committee should have a *fixed membership* to ensure continuity in discussions and activity. Membership of the committee should include all province based advisors and technical support staff on UNICEF's side as well as key government counterparts from each department. These individuals should also be members of the respective working group of each program. For education, it is further recommended that cluster school directors be included in the committee. *Meeting days should also be fixed* at a frequency of at least once per month. Intersectoral committees are not recommended at local level due to the artificiality in such arrangements and their failure to be very effective bodies in Svay Rieng Province. Rather, intersectoral cooperation at local level should be achieved through more substantive linkage between permanent institutions (as opposed to the creation of artificial committees) (see below).

2. *Establish Common Working Sites:* Failure to set common working areas between each sector was a major limitation in past efforts to achieve intersectoral collaboration. Since the geographical units used in each sector are not the same, care must be taken to ensure congruence of coverage. For example, Seth Komar will set its geographical coverage using villages and communes while education will use the school cluster. Since clusters do not always coincide with commune boundaries, careful planning should occur to ensure that Seth Komar is not covering "half" a cluster as was sometimes the case in Svay Rieng.

3. *Identify Intersectoral Areas of Cooperation:* The following areas are likely to be of common interest to each service sector. Relevant points of institutional contact are carefully noted:

   - *Seth Komar-Education*

N o.	Activity Area	Indicator	Relevant Education Activity or Context	Relevant Cluster School Counterparts

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1.	Provision of wells to schools	• Use of safe drinking water	• School Breakfast Program	• LCSC • School Support Committee
2.	Community child care and education: Increase survival rate; reduce repetition; eliminate gender gap	• Learning achievement • Repetition rate • Children reaching grade 5 • Net attendance rate	• Cluster level planning • Student remediation Programs • Girls' Scholarship Program	• LCSC • Technical Grade Leaders
3.	Increase school access: school mapping; expand availability of grades in schools; school construction	• Net enrollment ratio • Proportion entering school	• Scholarship programs for poor children • Enrollment drives • School construction	• LCSC • School Support Committee
4.	Life skills training	• Number of children receiving life skills training	• Cluster based IPM Programs	• LCSC

- *Health-Education*

No.	Activity Area	Indicator	Relevant Education Activity or Context	Relevant Cluster School Counterparts
5.	Service delivery channel to reduce VAD through schools	• Proportion of children receiving Vitamin A supplements	• School Breakfast Program	• LCSC • School Support Committee
6.	deworming	• Proportion of children receiving deworming tablets	• School Breakfast Program	• LCSC • School Support Committee
7.	Iron supplementation	• Proportion of children receiving iron supplements	• School Breakfast Program	• LCSC • School Support Committee
8.	Health training for teachers/distribution of medicine	• Number of teachers receiving training	• School Breakfast Program	• LCSC • Technical Grade Leaders
9.	Review existing curricula to include relevant health and nutrition education	• Availability of health curricula in schools	• School Breakfast Program	• LCSC • Technical Grade Leaders

4. *Ensure Institutional Linkage at Local Level:* Efforts should be made to replicate inter-collaboration at local level much as occurs at provincial level. As noted above, however, artificial linkages in the form of special committees should be avoided. Numerous difficulties were recorded with these arrangements in Svay Rieng. It is recommended that linkages be built into existing committees and local structures. For example, it was already stated in the section on community participation that School Support Committees in schools/clusters should possibly be reconstituted to be more of an extension of VDCs. This would help fill an administrative vacuum created by non-

functional SSCs. With respect to linkage with health, it is likely that the extensive introduction of school breakfast programs in collaboration with WFP will provide a framework for important collaboration with Health Centers. As has happened in other cluster school projects, these programs have provided a useful context to do health training on deworming and hygiene (facilitated by cluster based Technical Grade Leaders) as well as orchestrate the distribution of deworming tablets (facilitated by LCSCs and Breakfast Program Committees). Similar arrangements should be organized in UNICEF cluster sites as well.

5. *Conduct Joint Planning:* Joint planning among all sections is a key strategy to ensure proper cooperation and coordination between sectors. Because of differences in the planning time frame of each sector, joint planning should follow the completion of draft workplans by each section. These should then be exchanged in November for purposes of comparison and identification of possible linkages. A joint plan should then be developed in December with participation of representatives from each locality. Because of the magnitude of intercollaborative activity in provinces, it may be necessary to hold these joint planning sessions in several stages in different districts. When completed, the plan should be reviewed on a monthly basis at each provincial intersectoral meeting. The steps in organizing joint planning activities were presented in an earlier section. They are presented again below for convenience:

   ♦ *Scheduling* of the joint planning session and *identification of participants*
   ♦ Development of an *agenda* for the session to be sent to each participant
   ♦ Preparation of *summaries of section plans* highlighting possible points of collaboration
   ♦ Development of a *needs chart* to complement section plan summaries. This chart indicated possible intersectoral objectives or outputs, the technical assistance required to achieve the objective, and the section from which this assistance was requested.
   ♦ Preparation of a *budget* to be provided for the joint planning session including support for travel for counterparts working with each section.

6. *Regular Information Exchange:* Intersectoral meetings at provincial level are a good forum at which to exchange information. Since each section has output targets relevant to other sections, this exchange of information should greatly facilitate program monitoring. For example, Seth Komar has set a program target of increasing survival rates to Grade 5 to 60% by 2005. Thus, it will be incumbent on the education program to assist school clusters in compiling baseline data and regular reports about progress towards this target during the coming 5 year cycle.

3.9. Use of Service Menus to Facilitate Cluster School Development

In order to facilitate cluster school planning, cluster school projects should develop Service Menus which outline all the technical support which the project is able to provide. Service Menus may differ among provincial sites within each province depending on the technical expertise of each project team. Alternatively, UNICEF may decide to have one service menu but then rotate some project staff from province as the need for technical expertise specified in the menu arises. A topical example of a service menu is shown in Table

3.5. In this particular example, 33 services in 5 cluster school development sectors have been articulated. These include Community Participation, Library Development, Resource Center Development, LCSC Support, and Teacher Supervision Systems. Service Menus are intended to help clusters identify activities of a technical nature which might facilitate the achievement of specific outputs stated in each cluster's planning matrix.

Table 3.5: Sample Listing of Services in a Service Menu

Service Number	Service Title	Sector
1	Community-based Referral System	Commun. Participation
2	Community Administered Scholarships	Commun. Participation
3	Community Outreach Systems	Commun. Participation
4	Strengthened Reporting to Communities	Commun. Participation
5	Community-based Student Remediation Activities	Commun. Participation
6	Peer Support Systems	Commun. Participation
7	Community-based Curriculum Development	Commun. Participation
8	Orchestrating Community Enrollment Drives	Commun. Participation
9	Development of Parent Association Systems	Commun. Participation
10	Library Organization and Development	Library
11	Book Writing	Library
12	Mobile Library Development	Library
13	Story-telling	Library
14	Improving Library Utilization by Students	Library
15	Resource Ctr. Organization and Development (1)	Resource Center
16	Resource Ctr. Organization and Development (2)	Resource Center
17	Teaching & Learning Aid Development	Resource Center
18	Maximizing Use of Learning Aids by Students	Resource Center
19	The Concept of a Cluster: Important Facts for LCSC	Local Cluster School Comm.
20	Defining Functionality in the Cluster for Assessment	Local Cluster School Comm.
21	Objective-based Planning in the Cluster	Local Cluster School Comm.
22	Evaluation of Planning Objectives & Data Collection	Local Cluster School Comm.
23	Classroom Evaluation as a Tool for Cluster Planning	Local Cluster School Comm.
24	Improving Student Evaluation and Cluster-based Testing	Local Cluster School Comm.
25	Participant-centered Problem Solving Approaches	Local Cluster School Comm.
26	Enhancing Cluster-based Income Generation	Local Cluster School Comm.
27	Cooperative Learning: An Approach to Improving Classroom Learning	Teacher Supervision/Support
28	Participant-centered Technical Meetings (cf. Serv #25)	Teacher Supervision/Support
29	Developing a Cluster-based Teacher Supervsion Syst.	Teacher Supervision/Support
30	Enhancing Teaching Aid Usage thru Activity Fairs	Teacher Supervision/Support
31	Objective-based Lesson Planning	Teacher Supervision/Support
32	Improving Student Evaluation Practices (cf. Serv #24)	Teacher Supervision/Support
33	Improving Observation/Feedback Practices among	Teacher Supervision/Support

The actual format of a menu should be somewhat detailed to enable cluster personnel to get some idea of the content of each service. In order to facilitate the pairing of services with outputs or objectives specified in a cluster plan, the menu should indicate the kind of output it will contribute to. To facilitate the process of budgeting for the service using grant funds, some notional budgetary amounts should also be specified with each service in the menu as well. An example of the possible format of a service menu is provided in Table 3.6. below:

Table 3.6: Sample Format of a Service Menu				
No.	Sector	Service Title/ Desired Output	Description of Activity	Resources Required
1	Community Participation	Student Scholarships *Output:* Dropout/absenteeism are reduced.	UNICEF would provide assistance to Parent Associations in setting up a system through which to identify needy students at risk of dropping out who would be eligible to receive small scholarships consisting of books, pens, or clothing. A series of orientations with Parent Associations would help to set up a committee which would administer a scholarship fund in a way which prevented nepotism (i.e., through the development of clear selection criteria) and which also did accounting and reporting on a regular basis.	• Per diem for orientation participants (optional) • Refreshments for orientation • Photocopies of documents • Nominal stipends for monitors (funded externally initially with planning for localization through cluster income generation schemes)
2	Library	Development of Cluster-based Library System *Output:* Central libraries at the core school are able to provide effective services to students and teachers.	UNICEF would assist core schools to set up libraries (where they do not exist) which are properly organized through the provision of a 5 day workshop covering the following topics: Day 1: What is a library? Day 2: Duties of a librarian Day 3: Coordination between the library and other sectors of the cluster (e.g., resource centers, etc.). Day 4: Coding, record keeping, and reporting within a library Day 5: General principles of library organization and maintenance Actual implementation of the principles discussed in the above wkshp would occur through planned on-site support visits to each cluster library by the appropriate facilitator. Furniture and stationery should also be provided and organized where these do not already exist. This service is also appropriate for core school libraries which have been set up	• Remuneration for workshop participants • Copies of the Manual on Library Development • Other workshop stationery • Library stationery including ledger books, general supplies, and plastic • Furniture and books where these have not already been provided.

			by a donor but which are not operational according to accepted principles of practice (see manual).	

Service Menus can play an important role in the planning process of each cluster by facilitating the logical identification of activities which can help achieve desired outputs. Each service activity is paired with objectives (or outputs) commonly identified by clusters. After determining an output, the cluster can simply choose the service activity paired with the output for inclusion in its annual plan. By linking the development of grant proposals to local planning, projects can help to support and strengthen an integral part of the cluster school development process (i.e., rationalized planning).