School Improvement Planning
Inception Report by Consultancy Team

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1. Background

1.1   School planning and improvement grants

The MoEYS, many donors and NGOs have focused on planning at school level in Cambodia over the last decade. It has been an important strategy in promoting decentralization and as a vehicle for strengthening the relationship between school and community. Amongst the most prominent interventions have been

- The Priority Action Program (PAP) of the MOEYS - a funding mechanism begun nationally in 2001 as part of a package of innovations intended to bring about education reform. The MoEYS makes annual grants under PAP 2 to all 6 000+ primary schools in Cambodia. Schools received funds only after they submitted proposals of how PAP money would be used as part of a broader school improvement plan (SIP).
- The MoEYS Education Quality Improvement Project (EQIP) which, between 1999-2004, used World Bank loan funds to make quality improvement grants to 1 000+ schools, moderated in 160 School Clusters, in three large provinces in the south of Cambodia. EQIP required schools to produce SIPs and School Clusters to integrate them into Cluster Improvement Plans (CIP).
- The Cluster Schools (1993-2001) and, later, Expanded Basic Education Program - EBEP (2001 - ongoing), including Child Friendly Schools, of the UNICEF/MoEYS. Grants are made on the basis of a School Cluster plan for activities in all schools in the Cluster.
- The Child Friendly Schools (CFS) program run by the LNGO KAPE in Kompong Cham as part of the national CFS initiative of the MoEYS. KAPE makes quality improvement grants through School Clusters (1999 - ongoing) and has introduced and refined many innovations in planning, including the concept of the activity menu.
- Programs by other NGOs, notably Save the Children Norway (especially in reintegration and remote areas), CARE (with a focus on girls participation in formal and informal education) and World Education/KAPE/CARE (in disadvantaged primary schools and School Clusters in under-served rural and remote areas). These agencies have developed various frameworks for planning, processes for consultation and ways of collecting detailed information at community level. In some cases, too, they provide funds for schools to realize their development plans.[1]

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[1] The topics of planning and quality improvement grants in Cambodia are well documented. On PAP, see, for example, the ESP and ESSP Reviews by year from 2001 to date. EQIP is extensively documented and was the subject of two major evaluations by Geeves (2002) and Marshall (2004), On School Cluster support and CFS, see UNICEF Master Plan 2001-2005 (2005) and a recent evaluation of Child Friendly Schools by

The main common features of these initiatives were that they :

- stressed the importance of consultation between the School Director, teachers and community members in developing SIPs (in line with the government's policy of decentralization) and required the signatures of community representatives, along with educational officials, on completed plans
- trained stakeholders to conduct a process of planning which identified local needs, set related objectives, agreed on activities to achieve these objectives and to set indicators and benchmarks which would enable measurement (see next point)
- stressed the importance of relating activities in the SIP to addressing the major education issues of enrolment, drop out, repetition, promotion and participation by girls which are the targets of the Ministry's Education Strategic Plan (ESP), Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) and the government's commitment to Education For All (EFA)
- recognized that the best way to strengthen the relationship between school and community was to enable decision making at local level and that this would only be meaningful if real and significant resources were available, real decisions about their use were made locally and stakeholder involvement was genuine

It is important to note that not all interventions by the MoEYS or NGOs on school planning involved local decision making about quality improvement grants. It is also important to recognize different levels of prescription about what could be included in plans between interventions which <u>did</u> expect local decision making. Some interventions were governed by rigid guidelines, others provided looser frameworks.

As has been frequently observed, the purpose of providing funds to build a culture of consultative planning in the education system is undermined if grants are not timely and predictable. These are problems which have constantly beset PAP even though the MoEYS has given top priority to school operational grants in the distribution of available PAP funds. The problems are still unresolved despite various attempts made to streamline systems, remove blockages and clarify responsibilities. In some cases schools have borrowed money against expected PAP income only to experience long delays in receiving funds. In other cases, when PAP funds did become available, very tight timelines were placed on schools to deliver plans, carry out spending and submit returns to District Offices. This triggered hasty spending and often meant that the consultation between schools and communities, theoretically integral to the process, became token. In the worst cases schools made plans for spending by simply making copies of forms prepared at higher levels. Such a practice also ran counter to the fundamental aim of promoting decentralization by providing resources to stimulate local decision-making which would be more responsive to local needs.

Grants made in other ways have achieved timeliness and predictability although not without problems. EQIP was probably the most significant large scale example in that it successfully

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Bernard (2005), On KAPE', see documentation of its interventions under the Child Friendly Schools Project (2003); on SCN see Ovington et al (2003); on CARE see CARE (GAP), 2000.

distributed funds with a high level of involvement from MoEYS staff. Many of these Ministry staff working with EQIP at provincial level were the same personnel responsible for PAP operational grants. EQIP funds were sourced directly by the MoEYS rather than through the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Payments were made at provincial ceremonies directly to School Clusters. These events were literally transparent with cash being distributed in clear plastic bags and amounts publicly announced. Despite initial plans to extend EQIP approaches to other provinces, the project closed in mid 2004. [2]

By the ESP-ESSP Review of 2002 there was general agreement that poor planning practices were limiting the effectiveness of the PAP grants in many schools. The Department of Primary Education had noted, however, that the quality of planning was better in schools which had the opportunity to moderate plans through meetings at School Cluster level. A proposal to build capacity in all 900+ School Clusters across Cambodia was circulated in September 2002, a policy development study was conducted in 2003 and this in turn led to the preparation of a training program implemented nationally in 2004-2005. The main subject of this training program was school planning. One of the steps in the development of this training program was a survey of work done on school planning in Cambodia over the previous decade by MoEYS and non-government agencies. This review provides one useful starting point for the current consultancy.[3] It has also been drawn upon, and updated, in the summary of various planning models given below on pp. 9-10.

1.2 Remote schools

Over the same period reports prepared for the annual ESP-ESSP reviews reflected a growing concern over the plight of schools in geographically isolated areas, especially those with significant ethnic minority populations.[4] Fayaud, in 2003, prepared a general survey of the location and condition of remote schools and of conditions for teachers posted to them. This study appears to have provided some of the background information for the current ADB Project as the figures quoted in the ADB proposal are the same[5]. Amongst the many issues identified by Fayaud were the poor living and working conditions of teachers, low salaries, lack of professional support from Cluster, District and Provincial officers, teacher absenteeism, the lack of qualifications of many teachers, incomplete primary schools leading

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[2] For references to EQIP funds disbursement channels and practices and details about grants distribution ceremonies, see Geeves et. al. 2002 : 58-59. The project was frequently criticized for setting up "parallel structures" for its improvement grants process (for example, Turner, 2003) but has also had its strong defenders.

[3] See, for example, ESPR 2002, p. 18, the Cluster study by Bredenberg and Ratcliff (2002), the MoEYS's Capacity Building in School Clusters Training Course (Geeves and Sokhak, 2004). The review of school planning in Cambodia was prepared as part of the 2003 consultancy on Operational Planning for School Cluster Development.

[4] For ESP- ESSP references, see for example, Education Sector Performance Review (ESPR) 2003 : 55; ESPR 2004: 32)

[5] It is important to note that Fayaud was using a definition of "remote" in 2003 (based on population density) which has now been superseded by a more sophisticated definition with ten characteristics (including geographical location (including border areas), post conflict/reconciliation, incidence of mines, ethnic minority populations, poorly developed infrastructure (roads, communications) and prevalence of malaria - see MoEYS, Prakas No. 1259, August 2005.

to early drop out and problems encountered by school entrants who did not speak Khmer.[6] Fayaud also noted the prevalence of assumptions within the Ministry, and wider Cambodian society, that many people from remote communities were not really interested in formal education for their children.[7]

The MoEYS first responded to these problems through a strategy of incentives. Teachers in lowland areas and towns were offered cash payments to transfer to under-served rural and remote areas. Monthly incentive payments were introduced for teachers in difficult and remote areas in 2004-2005 at the level of 50 000r and 60 000r per month respectively, a substantial payment when seen as a percentage of regular salary. Student teachers entering Primary Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs) are now told that they will be expected to serve an initial term in rural or remote areas. The MoEYS is also considering providing accommodation in some remote areas to encourage newly appointed teachers to stay. As a recent MoEYS' Education Sector Performance Report summarized the situation :

> *Despite one-off re-deployment payments between Riels 300,000 and 1.5 million (US$ 75-373), the incentive is insufficient to ensure re-deployment of staff.*
> *As with many resettlement programs, it is problematic to provide appropriate levels and kinds of incentives that will encourage staff and their families to relocate to a new area, including issues of separation from family, availability of land for food production and income generation and non-availability of housing in the new location.*
> *Deployment of newly trained teachers to remote and difficult postings where schools are under-staffed may be a more effective and sustainable because the resettlement constraints are lessened.*   MoEYS, ESPR 2004: 32

Over the past two years the MoEYS has been also giving greater prominence to broader strategies such as creating special quotas for student teachers entering TTCs from under-served areas, especially for girls and ethnic minority peoples. Special quotas have increased intake from such areas and allowed entry with a lower level of high school qualification than standard entry. A number of IO-NGOs and Provincial Offices of Education have been active in promoting these approaches.

Since 2002 there have been a number of education projects and studies in remote areas which have approached formal schooling in other ways and have challenged underlying assumptions. The most innovative of these, on many levels, is **the Highland Children's Education Project (HCEP)** implemented by CARE International in Ratanakiri Province since 2001. The project adopted a bi-lingual and bi-cultural approach to formal primary education, recruited ethnic minority staff and set about training bi-lingual teachers drawn from the three Tampuen-speaking and three Kreung-speaking villages where schools were to be established. School Boards, made up of respected villagers, were provided training by HECP staff. School Boards then selected teachers, organized the construction of school buildings (CARE provided metal roofing materials) and participated in workshops organized

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[6] For a discussion of issues affecting the performance of remote schools, see Fayaud 2003 : 15 and 21-24

by the project to discuss and agree on major focuses within the curriculum. The original intake of Grade 1 students have now progressed to Grade 4 and there have been three new intakes. A bi-lingual, bi-cultural curriculum has been compiled for Grades 1 to 3 and readers and other resource materials produced in the two languages. The curriculum also draws significantly on the MoEYS national primary curriculum because the intention of the project was that children could begin bridging to government schools from Grade 4. There are now some 40 teachers at work in the six HCEP "Community Schools". They undertook an initial six months of teacher training with monthly refresher workshops during the academic year. Many of them have raised their personal academic skills from approximately Grade 2 at the beginning of the project to Grade 5 and above. The teaching force is stable and attendance is generally good after some modifications to the timetable early in the project to take into account the local seasonal agricultural calendar. Children are demonstrating competencies in mathematics, reading and writing (in Tampuen or Kreung **and** Khmer) equal to or exceeding that of students at government primary schools, even town schools in Banlung (the provincial capital).[8]

2. Workplan proposed to address the Terms of Reference

Members of the KAPE Consultancy Team have useful first-hand knowledge of the general situation of primary education in four of the six provinces targeted by the project. They are familiar with Ratanakiri, Preah Vihear, Mondulkiri and Kratie Provinces through their involvement in projects such as HCEP (CARE), the Support to Disadvantaged Schools Project in Preah Vihear (SCN-JSDF) and ESCUP (World Education-KAPE-CARE). Team members have also had extensive and long term involvement related to school planning in both the UNICEF and KAPE Cluster Schools and Child Friendly Schools Projects. Training resources still used in these projects to inform school planning were originally developed by KAPE in 1999-2000 based on the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) approach.[9]

2.1 General work plan over 11 months

The KAPE team will use the initial four months of the consultancy to carry out a review of Government, donor and NGO school-based training programs for school improvement and compile an inventory of good practice. This review and reporting will examine school improvement planning in remote areas in various settings including schools implementing processes learned from

- training organized by the Department of Primary Education, MoEYS under its Capacity Building in School Clusters program
- applying guidelines issued under the MoEYS's PAP 2 program

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[8] On HCEP, see CARE (HCEP) 2004, Watt 2004, Geeves 2005
[9] The team leader currently works part-time in ESCUP, worked for HCEP from July 2004-March 2005 and has completed a number of evaluations for SCN including a current involvement with the project in Preah Vihear. Other team members have been core staff of KAPE, heavily involved in all aspects of the development and support of Child Friendly Schools in Cambodia since 2002.

- training by provincial and district trainers working under the CFS program in UNICEF-supported government schools
- training by trainers supported by NGOs working within government schools (for example, ESCUP (see below) and Save the Children Norway under the national CFS program)
- training by NGOs working in non-government schools (for example, the Community Schools supported by CARE in its Highland Children's Education Project)

Some of these investigations will be carried out by visits and interviews with practitioners and participants. This is the case in Koh Kong and Stung Treng (for which field trips are planned) and Preah Vihear (which the team leader will visit in early November). In the case of Kratie and Mondulkiri, members of the KAPE Consultancy team will be in regular contact with staff working on the school planning and quality grants components of the ESCUP project with target schools in both provinces. KAPE is partnering World Education in implementing this USAID funded project from 2005-2007. This will enable team members to compile a number of more in-depth case studies to help identify the issues involved. A field visit will be arranged to Ratanakiri, perhaps tied in with the visit to Stung Treng, and additional insights can be gained through meetings between the KAPE team and CARE HCEP staff who are providing technical assistance to ESCUP and are involved in regular consultations and workshops.

From the review, case studies and the identification of examples of effective planning, members of the KAPE consultancy team will work with Ministry counterparts to draft operational guidelines for school development appropriate for remote and incomplete primary schools. In working on developing the draft guidelines members of the KAPE consultancy team will be able to draw upon their background of work in this area over the past decade. The process of developing guidelines, and the development of the training curriculum discussed below, will begin with a joint meeting between the Consultancy team members and the GIU to set directions. Progress reports will be made regularly to the GIU through the lead consultant, Richard Geeves, who will be working on a half-time basis (2.5 days per week) from the GIU office at the Department of Primary Education from mid January 2006. Final drafts of guidelines and training curriculum will be submitted to the GIU for discussion in a workshop setting.

One of the principal tasks is expected to be the development of **_an activities menu specifically designed for remote schools_**. This will be especially useful in isolated areas where there can be expected to be very limited knowledge of possibilities. Compiling a menu for remote schools would also enable the team and Ministry counterparts to gather the most promising ideas from the various agencies who have worked in such settings (see the following paragraph for examples).

With MOEYS approval of the operational guidelines the consultancy team can then collaborate on the drafting of a training program and curriculum for SIP. The development of these courses would be directly informed by feedback from activities running in remote areas. These would include the "School and Community" component of the ESCUP program, in which staff will be trialing strategies for community mobilization to enhance participation

in the planning process. Other useful input on community mobilization strategies can be expected from the experiences of NGOs already noted, especially those working with schools in remote and/or ethnic minority communities such as CARE (in Ratanakiri) and Save the Children Norway (Otdar Meanchey/Siem Reap/Pursat/Preah Vihear). Part of such a training curriculum could be the compilation of an Activities Menu more appropriate for schools in remote areas. Menu items could include activities currently being implemented or planned by NGOs such as

- the building of culture centres and outside learning areas ("kiosks")
- supplementary programs in Khmer languages for children speaking vernacular languages
- supplementary learning materials in vernacular languages
- community mobilization for enrolment
- school fairs and school-based parent-teacher days
- school mapping and community profiling based on EFA indicators
- identification of community resource people for participation as instructors in cultural studies presented as local lifeskills programs
- exploration of the usefulness of making variations to daily and weekly schools timetables and to the school year under provisions for decentralizing the timetable (especially in areas where seasonal agriculture or fishing activities involve families moving away from normal places of residence and/or expectations that all family members would be involved in work).

Organizing TOTs at national, provincial and district levels would follow, probably towards the end of the school year in May or June (and the beginning of the second period of intensive activity in the consultancy in mid-2006). Some monitoring of local training by members of the team has also been budgeted for in KAPE's planning for carrying out the Consultancy. As has been repeatedly stated in the past, the capacity of trainers at national, provincial and district level will be a major determinant in the success of the intervention (see further comments, below, under "Issues".)

The KAPE team's completion of the final task, the medium-term capacity building strategy and plan (operational guidelines, training needs and programs), would be informed by field experiences in implementing the training program in 2006.

3. Immediate tasks leading to Situational Analysis

3.1 Investigate current planning practices in Koh Kong and Stung Treng

One of the initial steps in this Consultancy is to carry out a review of current practices in School planning in the six provinces targeted by the project - Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri, Kratie, Preah Vihear and Koh Kong. An important part of such a survey would be to establish the impact at the local level, of the school planning content of the Capacity Building in School Clusters training that was presented across the country in 2004-2005. Team members would go to the field to examine actual school plans and try to establish planning processes. Such a survey could also find out how Provincial and District education

officials dealt with the issues of delivery and follow up for remote schools. One of the focuses during the Training of Trainers from remote Provinces which took place in Phnom Penh in April 2004 was to establish to what extent School Clusters could be the mechanism for presenting the training course. In areas where Clusters were not strong or were unworkable because of the distance between schools, POE and DOE staff were encouraged to develop their own systems of delivery and follow up based on DOEs or POEs and using DOE/POE staff as itinerant monitors. [10] Teachers in remote schools in both Mondulkiri and Preah Vihear, for example, are reported to be meeting at Cluster level in areas where this was thought unlikely. Teachers in **very** remote schools in Mondulkiri are meeting with neighbouring school staff rather than traveling to Cluster Core Schools[11]. In Preah Vihear, small, mobile teams of teachers, recognized as being good practitioners, are traveling to assist Contract Teachers with basic planning and teaching and learning methods in small schools along the border with Lao in the District of Chheb.[12]

At the time of writing in late October the Ministry had yet to decide the Districts in which the pilot implementation will take place (except in Kratie). The Team will begin with a meeting at POE level and will ask which Districts the Province believes to be the most disadvantaged and arrange District, Cluster (if operational) and school visits there. A similar process will be followed at District level with the ultimate intention of identifying the most disadvantaged schools, especially incomplete schools in areas with enough children to make a Grade 1-6 viable.

The Team proposes organizing field trips to both Koh Kong and Stung Treng during the next six weeks. Instruments have been drafted for collection of information by the survey team. They consist of sets of questions organized under broad topics (see Attachment 1). Interviews would be conducted at Provincial, District, Cluster and School level. At school (local) level there would be separate question sets for School Directors, teachers and community members. Team members would carry out semi-structured interviews based on the question sets. An initial very broad and open question would elicit much information from the interviewee and, usually, could be followed up with more specific questions following up issues raised by them. Towards the end of the discussion the interviewer would scan the question set and his/her notes to see if any issues had escaped coverage. These could then be raised specifically.

3.2 Focuses for data collection on proposed field trips to Koh Kong and Stung Treng/Ratanakiri

3.2.1. At POE and DOE level
- the role of **POEs** in the planning process
- extent of POE knowledge of quality and general content of school plans

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[10] See Geeves 2003 (final report on TOT)
[11] Personal communication with Tim Sangvath, PEO Director , Mondulkiri, 22 October 2005
[12] See SCN, Progress Report No. 8 : April-June 2005, JSDF Grant for Public Education for Disadvantaged Children, p. 3

- extent of POE's ability to identify Districts/Clusters/Schools in which school planning is carried out well or where it is problematic and reasons for variation
- the nature of any follow up or monitoring of school plans and their execution
- POE's perception of problems, issues, success stories in relation to school planning

- the role of **DOEs** in the planning process
- extent of DOE knowledge of quality and general content of school plans
- extent of DOE's ability to identify Clusters/Schools in which school planning is carried out well or where it is problematic and reasons for variation
- the nature of any follow up or monitoring of school plans and their execution
- DOE's perception of problems, issues, success stories in relation to school planning

3.2.2   At Cluster and School level
- the role of **School Clusters** in the planning process
- extent of Cluster Director/LCSC knowledge of quality and general content of school plans
- extent of Cluster Director/LCSC's ability to identify Schools in which planning is carried out well or where it is problematic and reasons for variation
- the nature of any follow up or monitoring of school plans and their execution
- Cluster Director/LCSC's perception of problems, issues, success stories in relation to school planning

- whether **schools** actually have SIPs
- the quality, scope, depth and duration of existing SIPs
- what planning formats are used in schools
- whether individual school plans in Clusters or Districts are distinctive or formulaic
- the extent and form of teacher involvement in the planning process
- the extent and form of community involvement in the planning process
- whether final copies of plans were shared with other stakeholders (transparency)
- whether records of expenditure of school funds are displayed/publicized
- the nature of any follow up or monitoring of school plans and their execution which the school carries out internally or submits to the Cluster/DOE

3.3.3   General issues to pursue . . .
- Where schools get ideas for planning - from a formula, a Menu or independently ?
- How do Annexe Schools participate in SIP processes ? Do they prepare a discrete sub-plan or do they plan along with the Satellite School ?
- Who takes responsibilities for leadership and organizing consultation when schools are too small to have a Director (e.g. in the case of Annexe Schools, above) ?
- How do Directors, Teachers and education officials deal with issues of language in consultations about plans in ethnic minority areas ?
- How do Directors, Teachers and education officials planning discussions with ethnic minority villagers work with traditional authority structures ?

An early draft of this report would be submitted in December.

4. Key issues

4.1 Trainers

Training is seen as a core component of the project. It is clear that sustainable improvement in remote schools depends upon well informed education officials working at Provincial and District levels to provide support and responsive management. They in turn must have access to and support from specialist personnel at national level. The quality of training programs and the trainers will be critical in achieving such an enabling environment. Many previous, similar initiatives by the Ministry and its IO and NGO partners have failed or had limited impact because there was no systematic selection process for trainers. In some cases "trainers" were office-based, (senior) administrative staff with no field responsibilities at all. Many were selected because of the positions they held. Such staff, especially those with negligible adult training skills, minimal practical experience in school management or community consultation and with little evident interest in improving the quality of education, will never deliver the results the Ministry is striving to achieve.

Ways to deal with this problem might be to set a low upper age limit, for example 40 (real) years of age, coupled with a fairly high level of personal educational, recent, relevant operational field experience and insist on gender parity. Justifications for these criteria could include the need for sustainability of inputs, that conditions in remote schools are physically tough and require younger people and that the donor insists on the participation of women. A clear distinction should be made between providing information for officials in line management ("Managers" in the table below) who need a broad understanding of what is going on and the far more intensive preparation of Trainers. The Trainers will need to have thought through all the issues at greater depth. They will need to have anticipated the kind of questions and issues which may arise during training with School Directors, teaching staff and community members and be able to respond directly to them.

Table 1   *Needs of Managers and Trainers are different*

Managers	Trainers
Managers need • a broad understanding of proposed actions • a good knowledge of their responsibilities • a broad knowledge of the responsibilities of trainers • direct information about progress of activities through meetings and reports from trainers	**Trainers need** • to possess adult education/facilitation skills • very detailed understanding of proposed activities • opportunity to work with training curriculum developers on content and method • opportunities to analyse, discuss and practice activities in the training curriculum
Role Provide general coordination for Trainers, oversee administrative tasks of the ongoing project and ensure documentation is done.	**Role** Work directly with local stakeholders in training and follow up on implementation, progress, results and impact monitoring.
Training General training course (1 or 2 days)	**Training required** Detailed training program (c. 5 days or more)

4.2 Local choice (activity menus)

The issue of providing opportunities for schools and communities to make local choices between development priorities and options has been addressed by different agencies in different ways. It could be argued that there are three main ways, choice within very rigid frameworks, choice within looser frameworks and consensus after extensive consultation. No agency prescribes totally what should be done. Examples of each are presented in chart form below.

Table 2 Characteristics of current models of school improvement planning with particular emphasis on grant type and provision for local decision making

Project/intervention	Plan format	Gives Grants	General description
MoEYS - PAP 2 **National application**	Rigid framework	YES (School)	School based. Funds must be used in five categories limited by percentage, but appears to be becoming more flexible. No funds used for training purposes. Community and teacher consultation expected. Signature of SSC Chair required. School plans submitted to DEO for approval before funds given to school and administered by School Director.
MoEYS - Capacity Building through School Clusters **National application**	Loose framework	NO (use PAP)	School based, moderated at Cluster level. Uses limited menu, requires choice of at least one activity from each of five domains. Menu given to schools/Clusters to assist by providing ideas for interventions. Plan set out under six domains and based on simplified LFA approach. No funds can be used for training purposes. Community and teacher consultation expected. Signature of SSC Chair required. School plans submitted to DEO for approval before funds given to school and administered by School Director.
MoEYS PSPTP/IBSM National training course for School Directors and Deputy Directors **National application**	Loose framework	NO (use PAP)	School based. Training for school managers. More detailed training than given for PAP involving problem identification and analysis and choosing activities. Plan set out under five domains and based on LFA approach. Training under PSPTP intended to supplement basic training given under PAP. PSPTP based on former IBSM course developed by UNESCO-UNICEF but never implemented nationally in its entirety.
JSDF/SCN/PoEYS **Preah Vihear** Works in 152 schools	Rigid framework	NO (use PAP)	School based, moderated at DEO level. Plan written using five domains. No funds can be used for training purposes. Community and teacher consultation expected. Signature of SSC Chair required. School plans submitted to DEO for approval before funds given to school and administered by School Director. Many SSCs also experienced in handling grants for major construction projects.
HCEP (CARE) **Ratanakiri** - bilingual program in Tampuen or Kreung and Khmer for Grades 1-4 in 6 "Community Schools" managed by School Boards	Consensus	NO	School based, moderated at provincial level (independent). Community decision-making through School Boards which manage local school program including staff, buildings and setting directions for curriculum development. HCEP consults extensively with Boards over school development. Some construction materials given. Oversight of construction projects by HCEP staff. No grants given directly to schools.
CFS (KAPE-UNICEF-MoEYS) **6 Provinces** Kg Cham, Kg Thom, Kg Speu, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Stung Treng	Loose framework	YES (Cluster)	Cluster based. Schools representatives participate in developing the cluster plan in the LCSC. Plan set out under six dimensions and based on simplified LFA approach. Menu given to Clusters to assist by providing ideas for interventions. Annual grants made to Clusters and administered by LCSC, monthly or quarterly requests and clearances.
ESCUP (WE, KAPE, CARE)			Cluster based. Schools representatives participate in developing the cluster plan in the LCSC Menu given to Clusters with mandatory and elective elements. Grants made to Clusters and administered by LCSC

3 Provinces - xxx schools Kg Cham, Kratie and Mondulkiri (2 Districts in each)	Loose framework	YES (Cluster)	and partly by four CEFACs (on a pilot basis). Grants made to Clusters and administered by LCSC/CEFACs, monthly requests and clearances. LCSC/CFAC also administers funds for Community Teachers (c. 190 in total) and for minor infrastructure improvements. Schools also receive PAP and follow the requirements detailed above.
ADB (under development) **6 remote provinces** (St.T, Rtk, Mdk, KK, PVih,Krat)		YES (School)	School based. Annual grants. School level plans submitted to DEO for approval, reviewed by PEO (there may be a role for Clusters in some areas).

Developing a model for disadvantaged remote schools must be consistent with the Ministry's established PAP 2 and Cluster Capacity Building processes. Additional ideas, particularly relevant to the needs of isolated schools, have emerged in recent work in Ratanakiri (CARE-HCEP), Preah Vihear (JSDF-SCN) and Mondulkiri-Kratie (ESCUP), and these will obviously be of interest in the MoEYS-ADB project.

4.3 The role of the Commune

The project description talks about a Commune level institution being responsible for the administration of the grants and the general supervision of the scheme. This seems to the Consultancy team to be unworkable in present circumstances. It risks introducing a parallel process to an existing one which PEOs, DEOs, Clusters and schools have been working to consolidate since 2002. There is currently very little Commune involvement in education, either through the Councils' sub-Committees on Social Services or through the Commune Education For All Commissions (CEFAC), the local level of a hierarchy established under the National Plan for Education For All.

There have been two recent investigations of the capacity and potential role of the Commune Council, Bredenberg and Losert. Bredenberg documented a pilot training program for CEFAC members conducted in two Districts of Svay Rieng in 2004. In both cases, but especially in the case of the more remote of the two Commune Councils, he found that Commune Council level representatives had very limited knowledge of the operations of the education system at local level and that school staff would have to take a leading role in any activities carried out by the CEFAC.[13] Losert gave qualified support to a role for the Social Service sub-Committee of the Commune level to manage community-based pre-schooling. Her inquiry influenced UNICEF in its decision to work through the Social Services sub-Committee for the implementation of activities in its Seth Kumar program. Enthusiasm amongst NGOs and IOs for Commune Councils as a kind of "new frontier", at which the decentralization policies of the RGC might be played out with more genuine local consultation and more responsiveness to locally identified issues, now appears to have cooled. Recent disclosure in the media of instructions from the Ministry of Interior

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[13] Bredenberg 2003, Losert and Coren 2004

appearing to undercut Commune Councils authority to exercize powers decentralized to them, has not helped .[14]

The new School Cluster policies developed during 2003-2004 proposed included including both the Director(s) of Lower Secondary School(s) in the Cluster, if existing, and a representative of the local Commune Council on the Local School Cluster Committee. The inclusion of a Commune Council representative was problematic in that Cluster and Commune boundaries are different and it is not unusual to find Clusters overlapping two, three or even four communes. The working decision at the time was that representatives from any Council with a school in the Cluster could participate but that the Council with the largest number of schools in the Cluster would be the principal representative. Whether many Commune Council representatives have participated in LCSC meetings is not known but other experiences suggest that it would be rare. William Collins, for example, in his review of the scholarship program organized by Belgian Assistance, reported that informants at school level were unanimous in recommending that management responsibility for the scheme be moved from commune to school level. He noted that the " . . . comment that most commune authorities are too busy and pre-occupied with local governance affairs and are uninterested in local education affairs was widely heard during our research." [15]

It must also be noted that, although there is some representation of ethnic minorities at Commune level, representatives tend to be Khmer. In addition there is suspicion in many remote areas about the activities of commune authorities, especially in matters involving land and the exploitation of natural resources.

The Planning Consultancy team believes that setting up a Commune level body which had as one its responsibilities the reception, review and approval plans for school development would not be effective. Such a process, including the community consultation involved, would be carried out more effectively by individual schools with moderation at Cluster level. The team does agree, however, that it would be useful for School Clusters (or DEOs where Clusters are not exercising this function) to organize a meeting at which plans are summarized and copies of plans submitted to Commune Councils. Such presentations could be made in more detail to the CEFAC or sub-Committee on Social Services, if either body is functioning, or summarized more briefly and submitted to a meeting of the Council itself.

4.4 Teachers in remote schools in ethnic minority areas

The supply of trained teachers to isolated rural and remote schools continues to be a problem. Indeed in many areas it is now worse than ever, partly because of the historical inability to deploy teachers to such schools and partly because of the near elimination of Contract Teachers as a coping strategy. Double-shifting of teachers appears to solve the

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[14] See Cambodia Daily, "Govt. Guidelines Dilute Commune Councils' Power ", 5 September 2005, pp. 1, 17
[15] William Collins, BETT Scholarship Research with Strategic Partners Based on Interviews, 21 March 2005, MoEYS/BETT, (draft) p. 11

problem of teacher supply on paper but it is a highly unpopular policy with most teachers and is rarely practiced as intended (i.e. teachers working two full, four hour shifts per day in different classes). It frequently results in very large classes and/or reduced hours of instruction. In very remote areas, see box below, even the double shifting strategy cannot be applied because it has been impossible to place qualified teachers in these schools.

Remote areas

Schools in ethnic minority communities in remote areas in Cambodia have continued to rely on Contract Teachers because it has proved so difficult to identify mainstream, certified teachers prepared to go to relocate there. Those certified teachers who do work at these schools find themselves culturally isolated, unable to communicate in the languages of the children, and lacking specific preparation for multi-grade or Khmer as a Second Language (KSL) situations.

Ratanakiri Province in northeast Cambodia provides a good case study of the role and status of Contract Teachers in a remote province. The POE in Ratanakiri has only very recently been able to identify and post newly qualified teachers into many of the small schools in which Contract Teachers work. The older, certified teachers who are currently working in these schools were appointed years ago and have low levels of personal education and pedagogical training. In 2003-04, there were 89 Contract Teachers working in such locations, about 30% of the teachers working in formal education in the province. This figure has decreased to 50 in the new academic year (2004-2005) with the arrival of significant numbers of qualified Khmer-speaking graduates from the PTTC in Stung Treng. In contrast, many of the Contract Teachers appointed to small rural schools in the Province are ethnic minority people. The ability of these Contract Teachers to speak one or more of the minority languages, as well as Khmer, is clearly an educational asset, although the main criterion for selection is the level of personal education. POE officials observe that Contract Teachers are poorly motivated, partly because of their lack of training and partly because they are paid only ten months salary a year and that this comes twelve months in arrears.

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Bredenberg and Geeves, 2005 : 21-22
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In the ESP 2006-2010 the MoEYS made some major additions to its policy on teacher supply. These include giving priority to residents of seriously underserved communes and districts for admission to PTTCs (and working with NGOs to confirm resident status), requiring new graduates of PTTCs to work in underserved areas on graduation and maintaining the emphasis on the entry of women and student teachers from ethnic minorities (with minority language skills). The overall quota for entry to RTTC/PTTC was also raised from 3 000 to 5 000. It must be borne in mind, however, that much of this increase will be absorbed by the projected expansion of Lower Secondary Schooling (LSS) through a major construction program over the next five years under the Cambodian Education Sector Support Project being managed by the MoEYS.

These are welcome developments but the staffing crisis is likely to continue for several years into the future and has a number of implications for school development planning in remote areas. These include:

- the continued presence of Contract Teachers or Volunteer Teachers in very isolated areas, the posting of young and inexperienced to schools in which the educational

challenges are far more complex than would be found in mainstream Cambodian schools and where the amount of professional support available is very limited

- that many of the young teachers will be Khmer while the children they teach and the communities in which they live are of one or more ethnic minorities, with all the attendant culture and language differences with which to contend
- that ethnic minority communities are often not represented on School Support Committees (where these committees exist) and that, where they do participate, their representatives often cannot speak for the real authority structure within a village

It is likely that development plans from remote areas will propose activities aimed at supporting and retaining teachers and improving teaching skills as a way of raising learning. outcomes for children. Some of these may be without precedent. For example, in areas in which children enter school speaking vernacular language(s) and teachers are Khmer, with no knowledge of the children's language, a basic support provision could be to provide a bi-lingual assistant to the teacher. Ministry staff working on the Disadvantaged Schools project will need a high degree of flexibility to deal with such possibilities.

CARE's Highland Children's Education Program has demonstrated that community involvement takes considerable time and that it must involve tailoring the consultation process to authority structures and decision-making processes of ethnic minority peoples rather than the other way around. The HCEP has also shown the importance of ethnic minority technical staff playing an increasingly prominent part in project activities. Villagers welcome the involvement of ethnic minority staff, for obvious reasons, but these staff have also played a significant role in changing prevailing assumptions about the capacity and interest in education of ethnic minority peoples amongst education officials at provincial and district levels in Ratanakiri Province.

The main implications for school development planning are that such schools (and the teachers in them) will require more assistance than previously given. Some of this assistance is will not be financial or educational-technical. It may, for example, involve increasing the sensitivity of teaching staff to the complexity of the environment in which they are working. Maintaining assumptions that ethnic minority peoples are backward and should best be "developed" by increasing their use of Khmer language and accepting mainstream Cambodian socio-economic aspirations, will derail any attempt to build relationships between school and community. At the village level it is likely that mobilization and awareness raising activities for villagers will be necessary before any serious, consultative planning can take place. Villagers may also need to see some concrete improvements before participating fully, those these may be modest, for example, a reduction in teacher absenteeism. The consultative process set out in the existing MoEYS Cluster Capacity Building Curriculum will also need additional time and steps to ensure that community participation is genuine. In many of these communities such a level of involvement will never have taken place before. It is very much a case not only that consultation be done but that it be seen to be done by people of the villages(s) served by the school.

Annexes

Attachment 1   Instruments for investigating current school planning practices

Attachment 2   Timeline of proposed activities during the Consultancy

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Attachment 1   Instruments for investigating current school planning practices

Field trips to establish current planning practices in remote schools
Questions to direct investigations at POE level

District ……………… **Interviewee** ………………… **Date** ………/05. **Interviewer** ………………..

1. Current situation about SIP/PAP plans	
1.1 Is the POE generally happy with the quality of existing SIPs ?	
1.2 If there is room for improvement, what are the main issues ?	
1.3 Does the POE feel that teachers are involved enough in the planning process ?	
1.4 Does the POE feel that community is involved enough in the planning process ?	
1.5 Do POE staff ever look at SIPs or is this done at DOE ?	
1.6 Do POE staff know of any very good planning at particular schools ?	
1.7 Have their been any cases of schools not following plans in spending PAP money or any complaints from teachers or community about problems with planning and using PAP funds ?	
2. Variations within the province	
2.1 Which District in the province is the strongest in planning ?	
2.2 What are the reasons for this strength ?	
2.3 Which District is the weakest ?	
2.4 What are the reasons it is weak ?	
2.5 How are you assisting them improve ?	

3. CB Cluster training	
3.1 Who participated in Dept. of Primary CB training on SIP in 2004 in Phnom Penh ? What were their positions ?	
3.2 How did you arrange follow up training in the province ... Cluster level training, DOE or POE training ?	
3.3 What worked well in the training? What were the difficulties ?	
4. Commune Councils and CEFACs	
4.1 What is the role of Commune Councils in education in your province	
4.2 Do you have a PEFAC in your province ? Who are the members ?	
4.3 Have their been any meetings this year ?	
4.4 Are you aware of any functioning DEFACs or CEFACs in your Province at them moment ?	
4.5 If yes to the previous question, what are they doing	

Field trips to establish current planning practices in remote schools

Questions to direct investigations at DOE level

District ………………   Interviewee …………………   Date ………/05. Interviewer ………………..

1. Current situation about SIP/PAP plans	
1.1 Is the DOE generally happy with the quality of existing SIPs of schools in the District ? 1.2	
1.2 If there is room for improvement, what are the main issues ?	
1.3 Does the DOE feel that teachers are involved enough in the planning process ?	
1.4 Does the DOE feel that community is involved enough in the planning process ?	
2. Variations within the District	
2.1 Which clusters/schools in the District are the strongest in planning ?	
2.2 What are the reasons for this strength ?	
2.3 Which clusters/schools in the District are the weakest ?	
2.4 What are the reasons they are weak ?	
2.5 How are you assisting them improve ?	

DOE's continued

3. CB Cluster training	
3.1 Did Directors, TGLs and community representatives from schools in your District participate in Cluster CB training on SIPs in 2004 ?	
3.2 Where was the SIP training held ? How was it organized (i.e. how many days ?).	
3.3 What worked well in the training? What were the difficulties ?	
3.4 What were the results (i.e. were the plans that resulted good, better than before, the same as before ...?)	
4. Commune Councils	
4.1 What is the role of Commune Councils in education in this District ? Are they active ?	
4.2 Do you have a DEFAC in your District ?	
4.3 Who are the members ?	
4.4 Has it had a meeting this year ?	
4.5 Do you know of any functioning CEFACs in your District ? Please give their names.	
4.6 If yes to previous question, why are they working when many are not ?	

Field trips to establish current planning practices in remote schools

Questions to direct investigations at school level

1 School Directors

Questions	
Did you make an SIP for 2004-2005 ? Can we see it ?	
Who participated in discussions and making the plan ?	
How many meetings were held ? Who attended these meetings ?	
Did all the teachers participate ?	
Are you confident in organizing planning for your school ?	
What do you think are your schools main problems in addressing the goals of EFA ?	
Did you attend Cluster training on SIP in 2004 ?	
Did you understand it ? Were you able to apply it in your school ?	
Do you know how much PAP money your school was entitled to in 2004-2005 ? How much did it get ?	
What is the role of Commune Councils in education in your commune ? How does it affect this school ?	
Is there a CEFAC in this Commune ? Who are the members ?	
Description of plan Attach photocopy if possible	

2. Teachers

Questions	
What is your job at school ?	
Does your school have an SIP ? Have you seen it ?	
Did you have input into it ?	
How many meetings did you attend to discuss and develop the plan ?	
Are you a School TGL ? Are you a Cluster TGL ?	
Do you know how much PAP money your school received in 2004-2005 ?	
Is there a CEFAC in this Commune ? If yes, Who are the members ? Has it met this year ?	

3. Community Chair/other community

Questions	
Does your school have an SIP ? Have you seen it ?	
Did you have input into it ? Did you sign it ?	
Did other community members join in the meetings to develop the plan ?	
How many meetings did you and they attend to discuss and develop the plan ?	
How do parents and community contribute to this school now ?	
Are local families happy with the quality of education their children receive ?	
What do you think are the main problems in education here ?	
Is the Commune Council interested in education in this school ?	
Is there a CEFAC in this Commune ? If yes, Who are the members ? Has it met this year ?	
Do you know how much PAP money your school received from the government in 2004-2005 ? What was it spent on ?	

Attachment 2   Timeline of proposed activities during the Consultancy

Work Plan

October 2005 – September 2006 ('X' Denotes submission of deliverables)

#	Activity	2005			2006								
		O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
1	Inception report												
2	Research on current school planning programs												
3	Review of current SIP programs, including inventory of good practices			X*	X**								
4	Development of operational guidelines for school development proposal preparation						X						
5	Formulation and compilation of community mobilization strategies												
6	Design training program for school development planning including school management and classroom organization									X			
7	Facilitation of training workshops for central, provincial and district officials												
8	Preparation of medium term capacity building strategy, including operational guidelines, training needs and programs												
9	Testing of training plans at school level												X

* Draft ** Final