



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**NATION RELIGION KING**

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport**

**National Report  
on Human Right Education  
in Primary and Secondary School Systems  
of CAMBODIA**

**For the first phase (2005 – 2009) of the world programme  
For Human Rights Education in Primary and Secondary School System**

## National Report

### on Human Right Education

## in Primary and Secondary School Systems of CAMBODIA

For the first phase (2005 – 2009) of the world program

For Human Rights Education in Primary and Secondary School System

### I. Context

#### Historical Context

Cambodia has a long history dating to more than a thousand years. Kingdoms existed since the first century in the territory now known as Cambodia. In recent times, Cambodia suffered from more than two decades of civil war. During this time, more than three million people were killed, and almost four million more became victims of torture, forced labor and other human rights violations. This dark period, known the Era of the Crime Genocide, started on 17 April 1975 and ended 7 January 1979 (Liberation Day). On this day, the Kampuchea United Front for National Salvation completed the defeat of the Khmer Rouge regime that allowed the Cambodian people to regain their freedoms.



**Figure 1&2 : The travel back home on foot from the Killing Field, of Cambodian People, after 7 January 1979**

Photos of DCCAM in Phnom Penh

The new government following the liberation of Phnom Penh, with the official commitment to respect human rights forming a major part, immediately adopted an eight-point minimum manifesto. The manifesto states that the "People's Republic of Kampuchea is implementing the aspirations of the people concerning democratic

freedoms, freedom of religion, the right to work, to rest and to education; it respects the dignity and privacy of all citizens and establishes sexual equality and equality among the various nationalities living in Kampuchea."

The People's Republic of Kampuchea pursued a foreign policy of peace, friendship and non-alignment, strove to contribute to the "cause of peace, stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia, and to the cause of peace and progress the world over"

Following Liberation Day, Cambodia started to rise again from a situation of complete destruction of infrastructures including those of socio-economic and cultural. Cambodians joined hands to rehabilitate and rebuild the nation in all fields, with the support from within and outside the country.

Cambodia has an estimated population of over thirteen million at present in a total land area of 181,035 square kilometers.

### Constitutional/legal context

From 1979 up to 2008, Cambodia faced the challenges of national reconstruction, unity, rehabilitation as well as taking responsibility for its destiny. It strove to evolve toward progress, development, prosperity, glory, and the Rule of Law. The country's first Constitution after the Khmer Rouge regime ended was adopted and amended several times in response to the situation, until the present Constitution was adopted in 1993. Cambodia started ratifying several United Nations human rights instruments since the new government was established in 1979.

The practical application of constitutional provisions and international commitments to human rights is shown by the numerous official celebrations held throughout every year:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7 January - Day of Victory on Genocidal Regime</li><li>• 31 January - Day of Dental Health</li><li>• 24 February - Day of Mine Clearance</li><li>• 4 March - Day of Policy on Water</li><li>• 8 March - International Day of Women</li><li>• 22 March - Day of World Water and Meteorology</li><li>• 24 March - Day of Wiping Out Tuberculosis</li><li>• 7 April - Day of World Health</li><li>• 30 April - Day of Joining in ASEAN</li><li>• 3 May - Day of Freedom of the Press</li><li>• 8 May - Day of Red Cross</li><li>• 15 May - International Day of Family</li><li>• 31 May - Day of the World Without Tobacco</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 July - Day of Plantation</li><li>• 12 August - International Day of Youth</li><li>• 8 September - Day of National &amp; International Literacy</li><li>• 9 September - Day of the World Without Smoke</li><li>• 16 September - International Day of Ozone Environment</li><li>• 21 September - International Day of Peace</li><li>• 24 September - Day of Publication the Constitution</li><li>• 1 October - Day of the Old Age</li><li>• 5 October - Day of Teachers</li><li>• 23 October - Day of Peace Agreement at Paris</li><li>• 9 November - Day of National Independence Festival</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 June - International Day of Children</li> <li>• 5 June - Day of National &amp; International Environment</li> <li>• 12 June - World Day against Child Labor</li> <li>• 26 June - Day Against Addicted Drug</li> <li>• 1 July - Day of Fishes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 November - Day of Hygiene Environment</li> <li>• 1 December - Day Against HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• 3 December - Day of World Handicaps</li> <li>• 10 December - Human Rights Day</li> <li>• 4 December - Day of Joining as Member of UN</li> </ul>
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Furthermore, the government (through its ministries) has been working with the more than two thousand non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other members of the Cambodian civil society in raising human rights awareness and promoting the rule of law.

### **Educational context**

Along with the development of the constitutional/legal structure, the educational structure is likewise developing during the past two decades.

Starting in 1979 up to 2009, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) engaged in the improvement of the quality of education through the reform of the formal education system, its school curriculum, textbooks, and the teaching-learning approach.

The duration of the formal education system was changed three times as seen in the following, to meet goal of increasing teaching-learning sessions as well as to deepen knowledge acquired of children.

- a. 1979 – 1986 period - thirteen years (four years for primary + three years for lower secondary + three years for upper secondary + three years for higher education) or 4+3+3+3
- b. 1986 – 1996 period - fifteen years (5+3+3+4)
- c. 1996 up to the present time – sixteen years (6+3+3+4).

In the meantime, the teaching–learning approach in the formal education system was changed from teacher-centered to student-centered approach.

### **The School System**

The current school system has the following components:

#### **1. Pre- School**

- Lower Step (three years old children)
- Medium Step (four years old children)
- High Step (five years old children)

#### **2. Basic education - nine years**

The nine years of basic education comprise of two stages:

#### **Primary School**

Six grade levels:

- Grade 1 (six years old children)
- Grade 2 (seven years old children)
- Grade 3 (eight years old children)
- Grade 4 (nine years old children)
- Grade 5 (ten years old children)
- Grade 6 (eleven years old children)

### Lower Secondary School

Three grade levels:

- Grade 7 (twelve years old children)
- Grade 8 (thirteen years old children)
- Grade 9 (fourteen years old children) - the students have to pass an examination to be able to go to the Upper Secondary level.

### **Policymaking process**

Several policies and education strategic plans adopted by MoEYS have clear relation to human rights education, including the law that it has proposed:

- Policy for Curriculum Development,
- Policy for Child Friendly Schools,
- Policy for Children with disability,
- Education Strategic Plan,
- Policy for Gender Education,
- Policy for Education for All,
- ICT in Education Policy,
- Non-Formal Education Policy,
- Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS,
- Policy on School Health,etc.
- Education Law

These policies, strategic plan and law were developed through a common process consisting of consultations with various institutions and stakeholders. For example, a central commission that was drafting the Education Strategic Plan consulted with

- All Provincial Offices of Education, Youth and Sport (considered as the basic partners)
- All related institutions in the same level (considered as inter-related partners)
- All related Councils of Administrative Reforms (considered as supervisors)
- All related national and international organizations or commissions (considered as stakeholders).

## **II. Education laws and policies, the curriculum, and programs**

### **a. Policy for Curriculum Development for general education**

The Policy for Curriculum Development for general education (grade 1-12) was developed in 2004 to improve the quality and efficiency of education. The establishment of a policy for curriculum development is a necessary task to provide a guide for the development of the school curriculum. MoEYS produced it at the time when Cambodia was moving ahead in all aspects - economic, social and cultural.

The policy is intended to cover all government plans and targets, including the Second Cambodian Socio-economic Development Plan, the Governmental Poverty Alleviation Strategies, the Education for All (EFA) for 2003-2015, the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP), and so on.

The policy is a response to the demands of globalization, regionalization and individualization. The policy contributes to equitable access in basic education, expansion of public-private education partnership for high quality secondary education, and increase in accountability in developing standards in the three school levels (primary, lower, and upper secondary).

The key features of the 1996 Core Curriculum have been upgraded and improved. For example, the Policy for Curriculum Development establishes teaching time allocation. It provides time in the curriculum for Local Life Skill Program (LLSP) and offers subject choice selection for Grades 11 and 12 students by adding learning hours for each subject. It should be noted that students learn less subjects than before under the policy.

This policy was supposed to be started implementing in schools all over the country from school year 2007-2008 for grade 1, from school year 2008-2009 for grade 7 and grade 10.

#### **b. Policy for Education for All (6 Goals for 2015)**

The Policy for Education for All was adopted and published in Khmer in 2005. This policy consists of the following contents:

- Overview
- Development and support early childhood
- Basic Education in School System
- Life Skill Education in formal education and non-formal education
- Literacy for Adulthood
- Elimination of gender gap in primary and secondary education
- Reform and improvement in the quality and effectiveness of education in all aspects.

This policy is currently being implemented.

#### **c. Education Strategic Plan**

Among various strategic documents from the past, two recent Education Strategic Plans

have been selected for examination. The Education Strategic Plan 2001–2005, which reflects the education reform in Cambodia, enabled a notable progress in providing the equity in schooling access, the improvement of quality, curriculum standard, and management in education. Its implementation provides lessons for the next policy.

The Education Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010 identifies education policy and strategic priority of the education reform for the following five-year period. The MOEYS has been prioritizing the provision of equity in schooling access and quality in basic education, which is the Goal and Strategy of National Plan of Education for all, during this period. This plan, being implemented in partnership with private stakeholders, NGOs, and communities of parents, has also highlighted:

- Expansion of Early Childhood Education
- Expansion of Non Formal Education and Professional Training for Youth
- Increasing opportunities in Secondary Education access and in Higher Education access
- Ensuring the encouragement of capacity-building for educators
- Enforcing Education Law, good management, and accountability.

#### **d. Education Law**

The Education Law, adopted on 21 November 2007 and entered into force on 8 December 2007, is a new instrument to strengthen education.

The following are a few extracted provisions from this law that relate to human rights education:

- Provision 4, Chapter 1, "about General Disposition", stated that Education in this Law focuses on Learning Development Process or Physical, Spiritual, Mental and Moral Development Training obtained through all education activities which enabled learners gained sets of Knowledge, Expertise, Competences, and Values to become good person benefited for him/herself, his/her family, community, nation, and world.

The above definition extends comprehensive access of various interested kinds of Education included teaching/learning human rights.

However, every good educators in the world have admired good person firstly on his/her values regarding the respect of Human Rights.

- Provision 5, Chapter 2 "about Supreme National Council of Education", stipulated that

Should establish the Supreme National Council of Education which bears the following tasks:

- Propose to the Royal Government Education Policy and long term strategy to response the need of national socio-economic development.
- Assess periodically works related to the aspect of education, technical and vocational training for the Royal Government.
- Gather all resources for the benefit of Education.

The above provision reveals the great endless calling for contributions from all concerned stakeholders for the benefit of Education. This is the will of respect for Rights to Participation.

- Provision 11, Chapter 3 "about Administration and Educational Management", stated on the establishment of Academic Institution that

Public legislative individual, private legislative individual and/or physical individual has rights to establish Educational Institution. The Ministry of Education should prepare disposition and principle on the establishment and management of the public and private academic institutions in accordance to its type.

The above provision also enables access of various participations from all authorized individuals in providing education willingly.

- Provision 29, Chapter 6 "about Educational Policy, Principle, Planning and Strategy", stated on the Partnership for Education:

The State should open widely for the contribution of all the concerns namely the site of public, privacy, national organizations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and communities in the process of the development, establishment, assessment monitoring on the implementation, proposition for the review, and proposition for the revision on national policies, principles, planning, and strategies of Education.

The provision raised above reflects the intention of respect for political rights and socio-economical rights of all citizens.

- Chapter 7 stated on Education Rights and Duty.

- Right to Education (Provision 31): All citizens have rights to access free schooling for in public schools. The ministry of Education should arrange policy, principle, strategic planning and measures, step by step, to ensure the acquaintance of quality in education by following the general disposition in this law.
- Right to equality in schooling access ( Provision 32): The enrollment at grade 1 of the general education should be applied for children of 6 years old and over or at least over 70 months old at the date of entering school.
- Right to freedom of belief ( Provision 33): The state respects rights and freedoms of religious beliefs. The Ministry of Education should consider Buddhism which is of the state. All the enforcement for learners and the related to get involve in any religious activity and/or any religious practice even in the direct or indirect way in the process of education are prohibit.
- Right to the Quality of Education (in Provision 35) :

Rights of learners concerning education are as below:

- Rights to freedom of expression on academic views.
- Rights to meet education with quality.
- Rights to association as learners' group or learners' club for education.
- Right to be respected as human with dignity.

- Right to participation in cultural development: ( Provision 44, Chapter 8, about Resources for Education) :

The State should enhance and encourage charities in appropriate and necessary ways accepting education as the best investment.

All the individuals, priesthood, communities, local and international organizations, public and private institutions have rights to fully participation and contribution the resources either human , material, or financial resources aimed at support and develop the site of education.

Academic institution managers have rights to gather various legitimate resources from all areas to develop their institutions. The resources provision should be done by volition and non-conditions.

The Ministry of Education should ensure the transparency and accountability in management of financial support for Education.

The above chapter imposed the realization of the rights of all citizens.

#### **e. Policy for Child Friendly School**

The Policy for Child Friendly School was approved and signed on 14 December 2007 after a successful trial run for fourteen years (1993 - 2001) in extended target areas (ten provinces/municipalities – nationwide). The policy comprehensively covers all basic education schools in the country. It is meant to ensure:

- The exercise of child rights as universally accepted
- The improvement of quality and effectiveness in basic education
- The success of decentralization of the education system
- The determination of MoEYS in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the Goals and Targets of the National Plan of Education for All, and Education Strategic Plan.

The Policy for Child Friendly School presents:

- Contents, Effective Strategies and Implementation Principles of Basic Education through six components of the Child Friendly School program namely:
  - Equity in schooling access
  - Effectiveness of education
  - Child Protection
  - Gender Equity
  - Child Participation
  - National Support.
- Two significant factors in education development:
  - Ensuring equality of education
  - Appeal for participation from all the concerned partners.

In reality, the MoEYS has allowed the implementation on the child-friendly school project since 2002 with numerous international organizations and NGOs such as:

- UNICEF - it supported cluster schools in six provinces (Kampong Thom, Kampong Speu, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Stoeng Treng, and Udon Mean Chey

- Save the Children Norway – it supported cluster schools in six provinces and a municipality (Siem Reap, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Preah Vihear, Udon Meanchey, Kampong Cham, and Phnom Penh).
- Organization of Activities for Primary schools in Cambodia - it supported cluster schools in Kampong Cham.

In addition, the Program of Child-Friendly School was adopted on 22 August 2005, as a framework for nationwide implementation.

The implementation of the program helped upgrade the mission and the quality of basic education. In 2007, thirty percent of all major primary schools under the child-friendly school clusters have been upgraded as eight hundred forty eight schools of nine years education ( primary plus lower secondary school) in which thirty-seven schools were selected to try out the Program of Child Friendly School. The program will also extend to the upper secondary schools.

#### **f. Policy of Education for Children with Disability**

The Policy of Education for Children with Disability, being drafted in 2008, comprehensively covers all children with disabilities and is meant to ensure that they enjoy their right to education similar to other children without such disabilities. This policy supports the Policy for Child-Friendly Schools. The MoEYS is giving full support in implementing this policy to meet goals of Education Strategic Plan as well as National Plan for Education for All.

#### **g. Policy on School Health**

School Health Policy is an important contribution to improving the quality of education and reducing the transmission rate of various diseases, including HIV & AIDS in response to the « "National Plan on Education for All" through the assurance of justice, social equity, and child rights as well as direct contribution to the concerted effort of the nation for poverty elimination. It had been setting up from August 4<sup>th</sup> 2006 and has been publishing out in July 2008.

School Health Policy focuses on four principal components:

1. To provide basic healthcare services to school children, students, lower and upper pre-service teacher trainees and education staff in all public and private educational institutions to ensure equitable access to physical, mental, spiritual and social development.
2. To provide health education and focus emphasis on the communication which brings out the behavioural change and this is the most important attribute to providing information, knowledge, skills and changes attitude to be accountable to attain well-being and health safety.
3. To improve learning environment and physical health facilities suitable with current situation, circumstances, location and demography to ensure the effectiveness and quality of education.

4. To enhance wider involvement from ministries, institutions, all development partners and civil society on school health issues.

**h. Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS**

The policy had been published in May,2008. The Policy sets out the obligations and responsibilities of all those working in the educational sector to participate in the multisectorial response to the HIV epidemic across Cambodia.

**i. Curriculum Standards for Basic Education**

Curriculum Standards are the learning outcomes students should be able to demonstrate at the end of a particular stage of schooling. The Curriculum Standard for Basic Education was developed in 2006 and has been mainstreamed to all students, parents, and educational institutions as the criteria for student's outcome learning assessment.

**j. School curriculum**

Considering the new school curriculum for the academic year 2005 – 2009 onward, human rights concepts have been integrated into the curriculum in the following manner:

No.	Grade Level	HR concept/ HR realization	Number of Learning Hours (for HR Education)	Total Learning Hours in School year ( for all subjects)	Percentage %
<b>Primary School</b>					
1	Grade 1	CRC: Right to protection	14	950	1.49
2	Grade 2	CRC: Right to protection Right to education Right to development	24	950	2.52
3	Grade 3	CRC: Right to protection Right to education Right to development	8	950	0.82
4	Grade 4	CRC: Right to protection Right to education Right to development Right to participation	12	950	1.26

		participation			
5	Grade 5	CRC: Right to protection Right to education Right to development Right to participation	22	950	2.31
6	Grade 6	CRC: Right to protection Right to education Right to development Right to participation	23	950	2.42
<b>Lower Secondary School</b>					
7	Grade 7	CRC: Right to protection Right to education Right to Participation Right to belief Right to non-discrimination	41	1140	3.59
8	Grade 8	CRC: Right to participation Right to belief Right to non-discrimination	43	1140	3.77
9	Grade 9	CRC: Right to participation Right to freedom of belief Right to non-discrimination Right to Freedom of association	34	1140	2.98
<b>Upper Secondary School</b>					
10	Grade 10	UDHR: Right to freedom of expression Right to be protected by law	8	1140	0.70
11	Grade 11	ICCPR	8	1260	0.63

			ICESCR			
12	Grade 12		UDHR ICCPR ICESCR	28	1260	2.22

All human rights concepts integrated in the 2009 school curriculum are Constitution-based rights, or human rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

### **Right to participation in the education sector**

The Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) 2006-2010 was established to “put into practice” the “policies and strategies laid out in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2006-2010... The ESSP identifies the necessary program activities and priorities in reaching the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals and the goals set out in the National EFA Plan.” In order to do this, it promotes the multi-stakeholders approach by saying that

MoEYS recognises that an effective sector wide management and monitoring approach will necessitate collaborative planning with other key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Planning (MoP) and the Council for Administrative Reform (CAR). The ESP and ESSP also emphasise the need for strategic negotiation and consultation with other development partners, including donors, NGOs and civil society. Proposals for building up the capacities and partnerships for strengthened sector wide management and monitoring, alongside the capacity building required for improved planning and management of the priority programs is set out in Section 3.2.<sup>ii</sup>

The above quotation reveals the determination of the government to open opportunities to realize the right to participation of stakeholders in the education sector.

In summary, the MoEYS at the present has substantial and adequate legal instruments supporting human rights education. However, the educational laws, policies and curriculums do not cover the whole range of human rights, since they were developed for a limited range of objectives and tasks in the education sector. Obviously, some of them focus on particular human rights issues such as right to access schooling, right to quality education, right to non-discrimination, right to freedom of expression, right to freedom of association, etc.

### **Best practices on human rights education in the school system**

In general, in the school system, there have been practiced on the following aspects:

- Raising-awareness on human rights has been integrated in teaching-learning session of Moral-civic subject in class, extra-class and co- curricular

activities of all grade level of general education. Generally, each lesson have been conducted by following the process of 4A (Activity, Analyze, Abstraction, and Application). In teaching-learning process, teacher always asks “Do children have right to do this? or to do that?” or “ Do adults have right to do this? or to do that?”

- Assessment in human rights awareness has been conducted through monthly test, composition test, and national examination test
- Child protection programs against drug abuse, child labor, child trafficking, mine and UXO have been implemented. In the program implementation, children have been provided lesson entitled “ Caring life is Human Right”
- Child-Friendly School Program has been applied and mainstreamed throughout the country. The school program has instructed children to be aware that they are ensured to equality school access, to enjoy good education environment with solidarity, freedom, equality, equity, physical, mental, and psychological well being.

However, the application of the student-centered approach in teaching-learning activities has been found problematic due to a number of obstacles such as insufficient teaching-learning materials, over-crowded class, subsistent standard living of teachers, poverty of children and parents, etc.

The prospect of meeting the goal of human rights education is not bright unless there is significant development in human rights understanding and commitment of educators, and related stakeholders. Thus, human rights training for all citizens, not just children, should be prioritized in Cambodia.

### **Policy implementation**

From 1996, the MOEYS has undertaken the following main tasks:

- Enhanced the implementation of principles on free primary school access
- Prioritized the elimination on all forms of discrimination and obstacles blocking schooling access of children, especially children with disabilities and children of minorities
- Made effort to reforms the teaching–learning methodology
- Developed education programs to fulfill the needs of children
- Integrated human rights concepts in Khmer language and Moral–Civic subject

In May 2005, the draft of Cambodian action plan was raised and reviewed in a regional seminar. The action plan entitled “Project on training how to integrate human rights in the school curriculum, teaching-learning materials, and school climates, 2005 - 2007” was approved, and its implementation plan included human rights NGOs. In November 2005, the action plan was raised at the National Consultation Workshop organized by the Department of Pedagogical Research of MOEYS and funded by UNESCO Phnom Penh. The workshop resulted in the following recommendations:

- MoEYS should encourage the respect and the realization on human rights in the school system

- It should strengthen the ability of school teachers who had significant role in charge of human rights education and the central officers in charge of monitoring human rights implementation
- It should continue to integrate the human rights concept in all level of teacher training program
- It should submit request to the UNESCO office located in the country as well as in the region asking for the support of a consultant and of funding should develop national planning onward
- It should continue to integrate human rights, child rights in specific related subjects
- It should cooperate with human rights NGOs.

However, after the national consultation workshop, the implementation of the action plan failed to take place because of lack of funding support.

On 29–30 May 2007, the Department of Pedagogical Research held another national training workshop on “ Human Rights, Peace and Development-based Education” funded by UNESCO Phnom Penh, in consideration of the translation and publication of the Khmer version of *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools* (with the support of UNESCO, Bangkok) in October 2004, participation of Cambodian educators in the April 2005 workshop in Manila on the publication (with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights), the two-year project planning on the human rights integration into the formal school curriculums, teaching/learning materials and school environment for 2005-2007 (proposed by the Department of Pedagogical Research, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports), the November 2005 consultation workshop (with the support of UNESCO Phnom Penh) and the adoption of the MoEYS plan for human rights education, the reprinting of the Khmer version of *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools* (again with support for UNESCO Phnom Penh) in July 2006, and the need to provoke the interest of concerned institutions in implementing the MoEYS plan for human rights education.

The workshop had the following objectives:

- To develop and propose a cadre of teacher trainers on the integration of human rights into the school curriculum in each region of Cambodia
- To introduce the *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools* (Khmer version) as a basic material both for training teachers and use inside the classroom by:
  - Discussion on human rights concepts – based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - Discussion of the integration approach as applied to human rights education
  - Introduction of *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools* as example of how human rights are integrated into different school subjects.
  - Exercises on the use of the *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools*.
  - Exercises on training teachers on human rights application.
  - Planning on the follow-up and monitoring on training teachers on human rights application.

- To develop and propose a system for monitoring the training of teachers on human rights education.

With seventy-nine participants from the MoEYS,<sup>iii</sup> local human rights NGOs,<sup>iv</sup> and UNESCO Phnom Penh office, the workshop resulted in the following:

- The human rights concept was clearly understood through the presentations, question-and-answer and group discussions, and resulted in activities planning for human rights promotion for each respective institution/unit
- The participants proposed various ideas and recommendations to ascertain the strategies planned to achieve the goal of Human Rights, Peace and Development-based Education such as:
  - ✓ The human rights and peace climate should be nurtured continuously in the field of education in Cambodia
  - ✓ The *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools* should be reprinted more and offered as materials for use in the follow up pre-service and in-service training workshops for school teachers
  - ✓ All the materials and ideas especially related to the human rights teaching-learning process gained from this workshop should be delivered to all provincial officers, school teachers, students and parents.
  - ✓ UNESCO and or other related agencies should provide more support to carry out the follow-up training workshops at provincial, district and community levels.
  - ✓ All the messages from this workshop should be conveyed to the other officials at the lower levels at least during the monthly meeting.

Overall, this workshop provided the MOEYS with a powerful cadre of teacher trainers coming from all regions of the country. Second, another thousand copies of the second edition of the Khmer version of *Human Rights Lesson Plans for Southeast Asian Schools*, were distributed to the participants. In total, each provincial Office of Education received fifty copies of the publication to be distributed to selected schools and teacher training center in each province. However, the number of copies was insufficient compared to 23,997 copies needed (three copies for each of the 7,999 schools) for the whole country.

As raised by the NGO report and from the results of two times of different surveys (the survey of October 2007 and of May 2008) undertaken in selected target schools and institutions of all the twenty-four provinces and municipalities, thousands of replies had been sent back. But, because of time limitation in coding the replies, only some of them were selected randomly.

In general, we acknowledge that around 80 percent of all respondents (consisting of education officers, teachers and students) understand the human rights concept ( please see questionnaires in different categories in the Annex).

At one particular category of questionnaire, 456 primary and secondary school students' data sheets (238 of female) were randomly selected from the 1 440 ones sent back from all the 24 provinces-municipalities, to be coded and analyzed. The following are data

collected from their answers back to question asked for their recommendation related to HR conceptual understanding:

- 32.7% requested for the higher quality of education.
- 18.0% requested for the higher standard of living.
- 12.3% demanded the donation of learning supplies.
- 6.1% invited the raising awareness on Human Right to some of the local communities.
- 4.4% invited the raising awareness on Human Right to some of the teachers.
- 2.4% requested the donations of scholarships for poor children.
- 2.4% said thanks for the giving opportunities for them in answering the questionnaire and invited this activity be applied every year.
- 2.4% appealed for all children to treat each others with tolerance.
- 1.3% invited child rights to be disseminated to all children in all over the nation.
- 1.1% requested for having sufficiently teachers for their school.
- 0.4% appealed for all children to avoid drug abuse or they will damage themselves.
- And at last, 16.4% had no idea.

Concisely, through various activities conducted in the research, the result of the Human rights training project of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia with collaboration of various civil societies, NGOs, and INGOs revealed merely the acceptable result. It is seen as it has been confronted with many kinds of barriers included poverty. Obviously, the recommendations seen above reflected the involved concerns related to Human Right Education to be solved abreast from now on. For concrete ways, Human Rights Education in schools needs to be applied in parallel with fulfilling the demand for sufficient number of teachers, instructional materials, the support of teachers' living, the application of the strategy on poverty alleviation, etc.

However, even though regular official inspections are being done on all sectors of education, it is still crucial that schoolteachers are enabled in implementing human rights-based education in schools.

### **III. Analysis of laws, policies, education goals, curriculums and programs**

#### **a. Policy for Curriculum Development 2005 - 2009**

The Policy for Curriculum Development 2005–2009 is seen as a tool that provides the opportunity for human rights education in the school system. Some attitudes and skills for basic education prescribed by the policy relate to human rights. Provision 2.1 supports the right to education, right to participation, right to economic and social development, right to freedom of expression, right to freedom of belief, etc. (Please see annex).

A close examination of the curriculum shows that human rights concepts can be taught mainly and directly in the subject of Moral-Civic Education. This subject is one of the four strands (Moral-Civic, History, Geography, and Home Economics) of the Social Study subject and is a compulsory subject from Grade 1 to 10, and a selective subject from Grades 11 to 12.

The right to protection provision in the CRC is discussed, from grade 1 to grade 3 for three compulsory lessons per week, in the Science & Social Studies subject which talk about basic understanding on what should be done and what should not be done at home, at the public way to school, and at school, following the Cambodian traditional custom and the current rule of morality.

The rights to protection, development, be respected as a person with dignity, etc. provided in the CRC are discussed in the four compulsory lessons per week for Grade 4 and five lessons per week for Grades 5-6 in the Science & Social Studies subject. This subject includes the discussion on the current rule of morality plus how to have healthy relationship with each other among friends as well as people in a community, and what are the proper things to do to preserve good natural environment.

The two compulsory lessons per week for Grades 7-9 in Moral-Civic Education as one of the four strands of the Social Studies subject discuss the basic understanding on:

- Women's rights compared to stereotype in gender
- Healthy relationship between boys and girls
- The good way of selecting good leader or representative among class children
- Rights of the children with disabilities compared with stereotypes of discrimination
- Peace and disarmament
- Communal election
- The importance of job
- Multi-cultural belief
- Various human-rights-based opinions in the community on appearance, quality, expertise, and proficiency of man compared to woman, of one race compared to another race
- Principles on peaceful resolution in conflicts occurring at work places, or among people or nations
- The way to preserve Khmer traditional custom and attitude in accordance with the rising awareness on human rights
- Interesting principles of democracy
- Significance of the concept of good governance,
- The ways to developing careers.

Basic understanding of these topics lead to the understanding of the rights to protection, development, participation, social security, gender equality, rights as a person with dignity, etc., as stipulated in UDHR, CRC, and CEDAW.

In the Upper Secondary School Curriculum, as application of three provisions of the policy (provisions 9.3, 10.1, 11.1), more and deeper discussion of the concepts of human rights based on UDHR, CRC, CEDAW, ICCPR, ICESCR, and some domestic laws have been integrated into the subject of Moral-Civic Education from Grades 10 to 12. In addition, the time for Grades 11 to 12 lessons will increase from two up to six hours per week.

Nevertheless, there remains an uncertainty on how these lessons will "ensure that the students [will acquire] a more complex understanding of morality and civic responsibilities" because the subject is still considered a strand of Social Studies and an elective subject despite the provision of the Education Law that "...Education on morals and civics, on how to live together for peace, for sustainable development, on how to respect the values of various cultures and traditions, should be determined as main component of the core curriculum..."

On the other hand, parents/local community/NGOs have a role in helping schools with extra-curricular activities that support the Local Life Skills Program (LLSP) by providing opportunities for "training in specific life skills that have a particular relevance to local students" (provisions 3.1 to 3.11).

The policy has provisions for students with disabilities or special needs (provisions 3.14 to 3.19).

The implementation of the new curriculum was supposed to have started from school year 2007 - 2008 in Grade 1. As more grade levels are covered each year new textbooks and teacher guides have to be developed for each grade. The textbooks and teachers guide are being developed by the private sector, while the MoEYS is planning for teacher training.

But the mechanism for human rights training as well as assessment is still to be seen. The future contribution from any practical human rights education project will be significantly needed for benefit of replacing the national project (2005-2007) which was failed. At the mean time, the establishment an official monitoring system for HR education covering the whole process of the new project implementation is vitally interesting. However, there is still no specific system for monitoring and evaluating the use of this approach.

## **b. Education Law**

The Education Law is the main legal instrument that provides measures upholding human rights education in the school system. It defines education as focusing on "Learning Development Process or Physical, Spiritual, Mental and Moral Development Training obtained through all educational activities which enable learners gain sets of Knowledge, Expertise, Competences, and Values to become good person benefiting him/herself, his/her family, community, nation, and world" (Provision 4, Chapter 1).

This definition comprehensively covers various kinds of education not only the teaching/learning of human rights or other kinds of subject. According to this idea, every good educator in the world admires a good person primarily when his/her values respect human rights.

The law establishes a Supreme National Council of Education that has the following tasks:

- Propose to the Royal Government the education policy and long-term strategy to respond to the needs of national socio-economic development
- Assess periodically the activities related to education, technical and vocational training of the Royal Government
- Gather all resources for the benefit of education. (Provision 5, Chapter 2)

This provision gives the basis for unending yet significant contributions from all concerned stakeholders in education, not only in human rights education.

The law allows public and private entities to establish educational institutions, giving therefore different types of institutions the chance to be involved in education. The law likewise encourages contributions from public and private institutions regarding development/establishment/assessment/monitoring of education programs; or review of educational policies, principles, plans, and strategies.

Finally, the law lists a number of rights and duties of all citizens that should be realized, namely,

- Right to Education: All citizens have rights to access schooling for nine years without pay in public schools. The Ministry of Education should gradually adopt the policy, principle, strategic plan and measures to ensure quality in education by following the general disposition in this law. (Provision 31)
- Right to equality in schooling access: The enrollment at grade 1 of the general basic education program should be applied to children six years old and over or at least over seventy months old on the day of entering school. (Provision 32)
- Right to freedom of belief: The state respects the right to freedom of religious belief. The Ministry of Education should consider Buddhism, which is the religion of the state. All manner of forcing students to get involve in any religious activity and/or any religious practice, directly or indirectly, in the process of education are prohibited.
- Right to freedom of expression:
  - a. Rights to freedom of expression on academic views. (Provision 35)
  - b. The Ministry of Education should permit the dissemination of all educational information. All the falsification in any form should be prohibited. (Provision 42)
- Right to quality of education (Provision 35)
- Right to establish an association as students' group or club for educational purposes (Provision 35)
- Right to participate in the development of education standard (Provision 35)
- Right to be respected as human with dignity (Provision 35)
- Right to educational information: Educational information in all educational

institutions and academic institutions are public information except these related to persons. The educational and academic institutions should provide information to students upon their request. (Provision 43)

- Right to participation in cultural development: The State should enhance and encourage charity activities in appropriate and necessary ways to consider the support on education is the best investment. (Provision 44, Chapter 8, Resources for Education)

#### **c. Other educational policies**

The Policy for Education for All (6 Goals for 2015), the Education Strategic Plan, the Policy for Child-Friendly School, and the Policy for Education Children with Disability are important tools in providing orientation to activities that uphold human rights education in the school system.

#### **d. Education Sector Support Program**

The Education Sector Support Program has likely had significant role in supports human rights education in the school system. While it does not provide a specific program on teaching human rights in schools, it supports special programs related to the realization of human rights, such as the following:

- Scholarship program for girl children in remote rural schools
- Multi-grade system program
- Breakfast Support program
- Bilingual Program
- Child-friendly schools program,etc.

#### **e. Curriculum Standards**

The Curriculum Standards are the learning outcomes students should be able to demonstrate at the end of a particular stage of schooling.

The Curriculum Standards were issued in August 2006 and started implementing in parallel with the new curriculum from grade level 1 (2007 – 2008).

The Curriculum Standards were distributed to related institutions, all public and private primary and secondary schools, local communities, civil societies, and parents for being used as common tools for students' or children's learning outcome assessment .

The Curriculum Standards are tools ensured equal rights in education with quality access.

#### **General comments**

The laws, policies and curriculum emphasize certain values that should govern school ethos. Some of these values relate to human rights education, as in the following:

- A Child should be Good Student, Good Son/Daughter, and Good Friend
- Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, and Learning to Live Together
- Good Environment is Our Life
- Children need Good Teachers
- The Four Fundamental Child Rights are Right to Life, Right to Education, Right to Protection, and Right to Participation.

Pedagogy is given importance in the educational laws and policies, and in the curriculums.

The importance given to pedagogy is illustrated by the following provisions:

The teaching program for the delivery of the national curriculum in each school must:

- be structured, systematic and student-centered
- include in-classroom and out-of-classroom activities
- involve students in both theoretical and practical learning
- provide opportunities for the encouragement and development of creativity and imagination. (Provision 3.12, Policy for Curriculum Development 2005 – 2009)

Human rights education requires pedagogy that meets the requirements in this curriculum development policy.

Essentially, human rights education has been mainstreamed in the formal education system. And the existing human rights education in the schools in Cambodia is the foundation of the whole formal education system.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Cambodia should be proud of its achievements regarding holistic human rights education through the education law, educational policies, plans of action, school curriculums, training policies, etc. which reflect the will and commitment of the government toward the realization of human rights.

However, the implementation and realization of human rights is still on the way and affected by complicated issues. Thus the collaboration among stakeholders at international, national, and local levels in putting the will to do human rights education into fruitful practice is very substantial.

We believe that the level of overall input will be the level of overall output.

## **IV. Recommendations**

Though the implementation of the laws, policies, and curriculums is ongoing, there are limitations that have already come out.

Concisely, the following limitations have been identified:

- The activities of children's clubs (which focus on the exercise of child rights) are being encouraged but they have not yet expanded in a holistic sense throughout the country in conformity with the Education Law.
- The student-centered approach has been mainstreamed but it has not been properly employed in the teaching-learning activities due to the large number of students in each class.
- All forms of child punishment in schools have been prohibited, but there is yet particular system to monitor the situation and give back reports.

- Equity in schooling access is enhanced, but school drop-out caused by poverty is the main issue that cannot be solved within a short period of time.
- Even though several human rights trainings have been undertaken, they have not yet covered all the national educators and the schoolteachers nationwide.
- Even though some human rights materials have been provided, there is no sufficient number of copies to cover a large number of educators and teachers all over the country.
- With the new curriculum (2005 -2009), the moral-civic subject has become an optional subject at Grade 11 in the upper secondary school.

By the above way, it is notorious that as seeing among all subject areas within the curriculum, the Moral-Civic subject has plenty of rooms relevant to integrate human rights education, it will be put willingly as compulsory subject in the next revised curriculum policy.

To overcome the limitations of human rights education as well as of human rights realization in the school system in Cambodia, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

**a. Educational policies and curriculum**

- Human rights awareness-raising should be compatible with the realization and exercise of human rights as an efficient way of education.
- In applying the Education Law, HR Education as well as Moral-civic education should be legitimated as the compulsory subject since its study will result citizen with responsibility in fulfilling their rights and duty.

**b. Teaching/learning materials**

- The ongoing development of legal tools related to human rights education should be enhanced.
- HR Teaching/learning materials should be provided sufficiently to fulfill the need of every school in the country.

**c. Pedagogy – teaching/learning process**

- Human rights education should be separated as an independent subject covering the whole range of its contents and be adopted as compulsory learning through general education (12 years). From the prospect, any citizen who obtains good awareness on HR, often respect HR and domestic law.
- Human rights education should be considered an obligation for every child for the benefit of securing how to live together in a peaceful world. From this perspective, human rights education in the school system should be compatible with human rights education in non-formal education system.
- The teaching/learning process should always apply the student-centered approach.
- A special TV show program should be established for HR Education.

**d. Teacher training**

- Human rights training for teachers should be extended nationwide because human rights understanding will guide people to do the right act and avoid becoming unconscious perpetrators.
- The World Program for Human Rights Education should provide support the HR training for the intended Cambodian school teachers and education officers.

e. Assessment system:

- The National Human Rights Assessment System should be organized officially, comprised of various stakeholders from the national and local human rights NGOs and national educators, and be fully authorized to implement its mandate.
- The education juridical court should be set up and put to work.

f. Extra-curricular activities

- All stakeholders should support extra-curricular activities in order to cover the full spectrum of human rights practices.

g. School environment

- At every school, teaching- learning materials related to human rights education should be fully accessed by, or afforded to, every child as well as every educator because human rights concepts need to be practiced through and verified by instructional materials.
- A system or mechanism on human rights implementation and assessment in the school system should be established to help ensure the quality of education.

h. Role of international and local stakeholders

- Education should be considered as a priority in investment for the progress of the country.
- The participation of various stakeholders in the country's reconstruction, especially in education, is very important for sustainable development
  - All kinds and ways of supports to the HR education sector in Cambodia, especially the support of international consultant provided for reviewing the process of workplan implementation of recent is needed, for the benefit of school children as well as for the better world.
  - The criticisms from different stakeholders should be made and be along with constructive way, conveyed with applicable suggestions on how to make change, and should be assured that the wrongdoers are acknowledged and changed.
  - Cooperation with stakeholders in the implementation the human rights education project as well as the curriculum policy 2005-2009 should be existed and started by the present time.

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**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> E.V. Kobelev, *Kampuchea: From Tragedy to Rebirth*, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 1979.

“ Education Sector Support Program 2006-2010, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in [www.moeys.gov.kh/en/education/essp06-10/1-introduction.htm](http://www.moeys.gov.kh/en/education/essp06-10/1-introduction.htm)

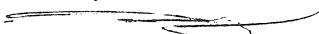
“ Departments and Institutions under the MoEYS (73 persons)

- Regional Pedagogical Training Centers from 8 Provinces (6)
- Provincial Teacher Training Centers from 18 provinces-municipalities (17)
- Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sports from 24 provinces – municipalities (29)
- Department of Pedagogical Research (12)
- Department of ASEAN Affairs
- Department of Teacher Training
- Department of Secondary Education
- Department of Primary Education
- Department of pre-school Education
- Pre-school teacher training Center
- Department of Non-formal Education
- Department of Higher Education
- Directorate general of Education

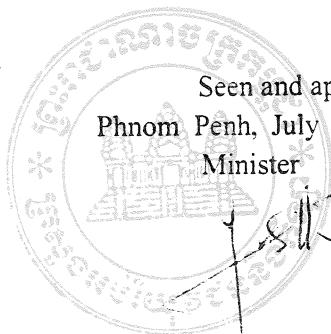
“ Cambodian League for the promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), Cambodian Center for Children Rights.

Phnom Penh, July 17, 2009

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