

Cambodia Final Report for Change Project

Country Team: Cambodia

Project Title: Guideline for increased participation in pre-school curriculum, piloting Battambang town Pre-school, Battambang Province

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1. Introduction

Human development is part of the National Rectangle Strategy of The Royal Government of Cambodia. In the part of Human Development, the policy makers suggest to start from age zero for targeting. The pre intervention should be focus on the current and future skills needed for developing a country like Cambodia. Current preschool curriculum is not well implemented, this refers to the monitoring results of the implementation process (Early Childhood Development in Cambodia, 2014).

2. Frame of Reference

Children are the heart of developmental psychology. The environments in which a child grows up can have a powerful impact on development. Learning is the basic to our understanding of human behavior. It is involved in nearly all aspects of life. As young infants, we learn to hold ourselves upright, to walk and to use our hands. Later on, we learn to run, to play baseball and to use a can opener. Moreover, we learn to read, to write, to memorize information to help us pass an exam. We learn how to get people to give us what we want by asking, bargaining, being nice or pouting. We even learn to be afraid of the dentist or taking exams, and then we learn to overcome these fears. We also learn how to learn. Not all of the behaviors that we learn are acquired in the same ways. Furthermore, the same behavior can be learned in different ways. At this stage, children depend on adults, especially teachers who help them to learn. An important task of the pre-school is to establish and help children

acquire the knowledge on which our society is based on. Care and consideration towards children, justice and equality, the rights of children, esp. the right to participation of each individual shall be integrated in to the curriculum and implemented by the teachers in any kind of pre-school.

Teacher's attitude influences the child's understanding and implementing of their rights in society, the teachers serve an important role in the teaching and learning processes. Those who work in pre-school should uphold the fundamental values of children that are integrated in the curriculum and should be clear about meaning and how to perform it.

Education laws and policies

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the first priority for the Minimum Development Goals announce in the agreement of Education for All Committee Forum in Dakar, Senegal 2000. Represent to the goals, the Royal Government of Cambodia have develop the Early Childhood Education Policy for children aged 3 to 5 years old (MoEYS, 2000). The implementation of the policy was less effective and produced fewer results. The only achievement was the increase of the quantity of the children age 5 years old in the current implemented year.

In year 2008, Education Law was developed and mentioned in article 15 "The state shall have a comprehensive and unique Education System, which includes formal education and non-formal education. Informal education is the preparatory study of the education system".

Article 16 of the Education Law mentioned that the state should support Early Childcare and Childhood Education from age zero, generally provided at Childcare Centers in communities or at home. Kindergarten Education shall commence prior to Primary Education for preparation to attend primary school. The ministry in charge of education and other relevant ministries and institutions shall determine the meaning of Early childcare and Childhood education (MoEYS, 2010).

The Education Strategy Plan 2014-18 was developed in sub sectors. Early Childhood Education was prior in the first sub-sector. In this term Early Childhood Education sub sector have included outcome indicators into all priority education policies by setting numerical objective each year from 2014 to 2018 and focus on each main ECE services such as Public Pre-school, Community Pre-school, Private Preschool, and Home Based Education Program.

Preschool context

In Cambodia, Public Pre-school is the first intervention for any young children from age 3 to 5 years old in all aspects and in all levels such as majority children, ethnic-minority children, disable children etc. There are two different kind of public pre-schools; the separated pre-school and the pre-classes attached in primary school.

The government establish the facility and infrastructure and the budget for preschools such as teacher salaries, electricity payment, water payment and small repairing. Other kind of support to pre-school from government is the operation budget support and budget for support learning activities (young children received 9000 riels per year from 3 ages to 5 in all kinds of preschools).

Problem statement

The teachers are trained by the government for two years. Recently we have the remaining teachers; most of them did not well in using the pre-school teaching methods or teaching styles. On the other hand, some of them are primary school teachers, and have used only primary teaching methods. How can they implement preschool curriculum well? Actually most pre-school teachers did not understand our new curriculum without guidelines for interpret activities to their teaching. Moreover, teachers do not understand the Child Right Convention in classroom or in preschool because they still teach in the teacher center style and in problems to understand participation, particularly for the young children in preschool.

3. Purpose

The project aim to develop the teacher knowledge in practicing the new Preschool Curriculum that have integrated the 3Ps (protection, provision and participation) in general and in particularly participation. Our main objective is to encourage children to participate in activities and make decision by their own. Regarding to the Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Right of the Child mentioned in article 12 on page 152 paragraph 6: “A world feed for children, state commit themselves in its declaration to listen to children and ensure that participation is implemented. We must respect their right to express themselves and to participate in all matter affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity”. Article 31, page 469, concerns the child’s rights to rest, leisure, play, and recreational activities and to participate in cultural and artistic life. At page 470 in the first paragraph mention of principal 7 of the 1959 declaration of the Rights of the Child, state: “the child have full opportunity to play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purpose as

education”. The same article raise the right to “engage in play and recreation activities appropriate to the age of the child” that integrate to many element of a preschool curriculum like sport, performing and creative arts, mathematics and technology and so forth.

Target group and stakeholders

Our target groups of the project are the teachers and the school principal in one public preschool, “Battambang Town Preschool” in Battambang province.

The stakeholders are Provincial of Education (PoE) and District of Education (DoE) officers, which are responsible for the Early Childhood Education in Battambang province. These persons from DoE and PoE will also participate in the training and can be seen as both target persons and stakeholders. We expect to have persons from the Curriculum Development Department, Teacher Training Department and Preschool Teacher Training Center involved in developing the guidelines for using the curriculum. We have presented this project to UNICEF to ask for some kind support such as financial support and renovate concept into the Pre-school Curriculum Guideline.

Early Childhood Education officer at ministry level will support the developing of the curriculum guideline and monitoring, especially develop the training materials and conduct the training.

4. Methodology and activities

The team has identified many activities for implementing the project plan. Respond to the first output of this project, the team will develop a new guideline for preschool teachers so that their activities will integrate the right to participate in learning activities for the child. This guideline will be a part of the revised Preschool Curriculum.

Before we started the process of preparation the guideline for preschool, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport suggested conducting a Consultative Workshop on Preschool Curriculum Revision. The workshop, initiated by the ECED and MoEYS, invited all relevant stakeholders for a three- day – workshop in Phnom Pehn. The Minister of Education opened it and key-note speaker was the Director for UNICEF. Our mentor Lena Andersson was also invited to make a presentation of the Swedish Pre- School System. The purpose of the workshop was to provide case studies of preschool implementation and to discuss preschool curricula from other countries and listen to the suggestions from the stakeholders from 12 provinces. During the Workshop, batch 19 also have the occasion to meet the school principal

of the target school of the project and presented the project informally to her and to ask for permission to apply the CRC context to her school for our pilot project. In the discussion, she agreed to apply more CRC context to her school and open her school for our project.

After attending the progress workshop in Zambia, CRC change agents batch 19 has call CRC change agents Cambodia team to attend the meeting two times. Firstly, CRC batch 19 presented the objectives and activities to the big group and also presented the process of implementation activities to the team. It was help on 21st June 2014 at Early Childhood Education Department of Ministry of Education Youth and Sport. Secondly, the second meeting has conducted for CRC team batch 19, the meeting help on 18th - 20th August 2014 at ECED office, MoEYS. During this meeting, the team has developed the training module and training materials to train the target teachers and school principal. The team also designed tools for monitoring activities for consultative in the training.

Before we trained the target group, the team has met the PoE, DoE and School Principal in the target preschool school on 20th July, 2014 at Battambang Pre-school. On the 22nd - 24th September 2014, the CRC team has conducted the training on “How to implement CRC, in particular the 3P’s in the pre-school classroom”. 20 participants participated in the training, from Battambang Krong Preschool, the Principal, 7 Preschool teachers, and School Principal from Chea Sim Preschool, 5 Preschool Teachers, District of Education Battambang Krong, and Provincial of Education Battambang Province. The purpose of the training was to build capacity to the SP, the teachers, the DoE and the PoE on how to apply CRC, the 3P’s, especially the participation of the children during class activities, such as group discussion, group playing, and some more activities in class. We did apply the pre, post-test to the trainees, and discuss the monitoring tools during the training session. The second training on CRC, 3P’s and pre-mathematics at preschool level has been conducted at Battambang preschool with 20 participants from Battambang Krong Preschool. The purpose of the training was to strengthen knowledge and capacity of preschool teacher on teaching methods, which included the 3P’s, participation in particular, for improving the children’s activities in the class.

After the training sessions, the CRC change agents met two times for monitoring activities. First, the monitoring visit held on 19th September, 2015, and it was a joint visit to the PoE and the DoE’s Battambang province. The monitoring took one day and the team observed the teaching activities from morning session. In the afternoon, the team has provided feedback to SP and teachers. The second monitoring visit happened on the 5th January, 2015. During

January 2015, the CRC team has met to collect all information, do analysis, and wrap up to write the final report.

5. Results

After the Consultative Workshop in Phnom Pehn, the participants of the conference have understood the status of the Preschool curriculum implementation in Cambodia and they have agreed that we need to revise the Preschool Curriculum. They did also agree to start preparations for developing the Core Curriculum at National level, and let the schools identify activities based on learning outcome in the core curriculum for practicing learning and teaching activities (Early Childhood Department, 2014).

The guest speakers at the Consultative Workshop have presented overviews of Preschool Curriculum in general, and focus on the development skills needed for the child in the 21st centuries and in current situation of the Cambodian context.

ECED invited persons from relevant stakeholder such as Primary Education Department, Curriculum Development Department, Teacher Training Department, and Development partners such as UNICEF, WB, UNESCO, Plan International, Save the Children and **our batch 19 CRC team**. The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport arranged working groups and presented the persons from the above organization to participate to provide input to the curriculum (Early Childhood Department, 2014).

It means that our project have risen to the national level!

At the first meeting on June, the CRC team 19 tried to find out and did research to collect any documents related to our project such as teaching guideline of pre-mathematic, pre-writing, sport, creativities and arts. Then the team integrated the CRC into the content guide for teachers to motivate the child participation in all steps in the class.

At the second meeting, the team show the integrated preschool guideline documents, the training documents, and the materials that has been develop during the meetings. Training schedule, pre-test and post-test, PowerPoint slide, copy handout, LCD, flip chart was prepared and ready for the training.

20 participants has received the training on integrating the CRC in the teaching guideline. We can see a changing attitude of the teachers and the school principal. Before the training, around 40% got positive results from the pre-test and after they got 85% from the post-test.

Two classes have received visits from CRC change agent team. We observed that many children in the class were so active and enjoyed teaching and learning activities. The team gave some advice to the teachers, such as the way to manage the children in big class and how to focus on children who are not much involved in class.

On the second monitoring, we follow up recommendation from the first meeting, we observed that teachers has changed and followed the team's advices. The team also discussed with the school principal and gave some suggestion. A clean environment is important as well as more playground materials. The playing materials could motivate the children's participation in all activities.

6. Discussion and Reflection

The Consultative Workshop was very important in providing information to all stakeholders, especially on the challenges of using the current curriculum. This information motivated our team to build commitment to revise it. Since we were invited to the committee, our team also had the chance to participate in it. We used this occasion to provide input of our CRC knowledge in the new Curriculum. As a separate task, our CRC team conducted the meeting on preparing the guideline for Preschool teachers, and integrate the Child Right Convention into it, especially focus on the participation for the children in learning activities. Moreover, the CRC team needed to identify baseline indicators of the starting project into the pilot school and in the end of the pilot process; we could easily identify the impact of the project. After we applied the training to the teachers, the positive way of teaching with full participation from the children has been received and there is now a wish to motivate the children and involve them in all activities in and out classes. Teachers have understood the impact of the CRC and the 3 P's. They suggested changing their daily lesson plan and follow the CRC content that the CRC team has taught them. 80 % of the children in the target school are more active compared to the baseline of children shying, crying, and fearing.

The school principal is paying more attention to the CRC, she motivates the teachers and support them with teaching and learning materials and enforcement to get more participation in and out class. She suggested establishing Parental Education in her school, to apply CRC to children at home and everywhere when children have caregivers close by them.

The School Committee has also understood the CRC message, especially the importance of children participation. They suggested making a School Plan supporting child participation, which followed the instructions of our CRC team.

Provincial and National Level of Education have understood the importance of the CRC and learned a lot from the target school and the project for change. The team has recommended implementing of training modules such as Community Preschool Training module and Parental Education Program Training Module and the Early Childhood Education at National Level has agreed on that.

7. Way Forward

In the process of revision the Preschool Curriculum, the committee conducted many meetings and workshops (see appendix 1 and 2). In parallel with this process, our CRC team also conducted meetings in preparation for the guideline for preschool teachers.

Our CRC team set May 2014 for preparation the guideline and training materials. In July 2014, the team trained the preschool teachers and the target groups in the project. During the new school year 2014-2015 the teachers applied the activities to the children; then the team did the monitoring supported to the teachers in teaching process.

A Preschool Resource Center (PRC) will be built in Battambang province. The PRC function is to implement teaching and learning activities into other schools and to support technical assistant to other Community Preschools, Home based Education/ Parental Education Program and other Preschools, which are poor in technical assistance. The PRC will get a operational budget and more capacity to monitor and support their activities (Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2014). Our target Preschool is a key school to other ECE program in the province and will held monthly meetings, trainings, and monitoring activities.

List of References

Education Law (2010). Phnom Penh: Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Report on the Consultative workshop on Preschool Curriculum revision, (2014)
Phnom Penh: Early Childhood Departement, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Hodgkin, Rachel and Newell, Peter. *Implement Hand book for the convention on the right of the child*. UNICEF

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy (2011). Phnom Penh Early Childhood Department, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Preschool Resource Center Operation Manual, (2014). Phnom Penh: Early Childhood Department, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

Appendix 1

Project Plan of preschool curriculum revision

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Time line</i>							
	<i>2014</i>				<i>2015</i>			
	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
Consultation Workshop to Revise PS Curriculum	<i>x</i>							
Design Detail activities of the process	<i>x</i>							
Assign team and Term of Reference	<i>x</i>							
Study broad on Preschool curriculum in other countries		<i>x</i>						
TA selected		<i>x</i>						
Technical team meeting		<i>x</i>						
Research and starting revise		<i>x</i>						
First Workshop to review 1 st draft of the Core Curriculum		<i>x</i>						
Reviewing based on recommendation from the workshop		<i>x</i>						
Selected 25 preschool for piloting		<i>x</i>						
Trained the teachers in target school		<i>x</i>						
Monitoring on implementation the new curriculum in academic year 2014-15			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	
Second workshop to review after piloting						<i>x</i>		
Reviewing in the team						<i>x</i>		
Reviewing by Committee in MoEYS							<i>x</i>	
Approved by Minister							<i>x</i>	
Publish and disseminate over the country								<i>x</i>
In –service training to teachers								<i>x</i>
Include content into Pre-service training								<i>x</i>

Appendix 2

Project plan of Preschool guideline to use preschool curriculum

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Time line</i>							
	<i>2014</i>				<i>2015</i>			
	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
CRC team meeting		<i>x</i>						
Research and starting preparation the guideline		<i>x</i>						
Design content and materials for train the target Pre-school teachers		<i>x</i>						
Train the Preschool teachers and target group		<i>x</i>						
Monitoring on implementation the new guideline in academic year 2014-15			<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>				
Final report submitted				<i>x</i>				