

**SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM**

**Program Overview**

The School Dropout Prevention Pilot (SDPP) program is a three-year multi-country program, funded by USAID, aimed at mitigating school dropout in primary and secondary schools. The SDPP program will:

- **Design and test the effectiveness of interventions to prevent school dropout in four countries—Cambodia, India, Tajikistan, and Timor-Leste.**
- **Generate evidence for interventions that can be used by USAID and ministries of education to decrease dropout rates and address dropout-related behaviors that put students at risk.**

**Cambodia**

**Dropout Trends**

Analysis of Cambodia’s Education Management Information System data shows that:

- Dropouts are most acute at the lower secondary cycle among male and female students (20%), compared with primary (9%) and upper secondary cycle (12%).
- Dropout rate spikes in key entry points for the various educational levels—grades 7 (20%), grade 9 (21%), and grade 12 (15%).

**Dropout in Context**

A situational analysis was conducted in three high-dropout provinces to identify the factors and conditions associated with dropout, develop a profile of a child at risk of dropping out, and inform intervention selection and design. The top reasons of student dropout among 3rd, 8th, and 9th grade students in the target provinces—cited by at-risk students, dropouts, and their parents/guardians—are both economic and academic.

**Economic reasons** are the top three reasons cited:

- Nearly three-quarters of the at-risk students, dropouts, and dropouts’ parents/guardians cited the need to supplement income through household chores or domestic work. About half cited the need to work to earn money.
- 50% of at-risk students and their parents/guardians and 33% of dropouts and parents/guardians cited school-related expenses.

Students also drop out of school for academic reasons:

- About one-third of dropouts and one-fifth of at-risk students said they were unable to keep up with their lessons.
- About 20% of at-risk students and dropouts cite poor academic performance.

**Top Reasons of Dropout by Students, Dropouts, Parent/Guardians**

- **Fear of not being able to earn money.**
- **Fear of not being able to continue education.**
- **Fear of not being able to find work in the future.**
- **Fear of being listed as a dropout.**
- **Fear of being excluded from peer group.**
- **Fear of being unable to participate in school activities.**
- **Fear of being stigmatized.**
- **Fear of being discriminated against.**
- **Fear of being欺负ed.**
- **Fear of being bullied.**
- **Fear of being teased.**
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- **Fear of being bullied.**
- **Fear of being teased.**

**The Interventions**

In agreement with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, SDPP will target grades 7, 8, and 9 in six provinces—Baranyi Munch, Bintang, Kampong Speu, Prey Veng, Pursat, and Svay Rieng. Key education stakeholders attended a design workshop to develop ideas for dropout mitigation through a consultative process. Two priority interventions—an Early Warning System and Computer Labs—were developed, consistent with the ministry strategic sector plan and replicability requirements. Implementation of the interventions began in October, 2012.

- **Students Studying in the Computer Labs Installed by SDPP**
- **Early Warning System** (to reduce student absenteeism and support at-risk students in school)
  - Use existing student level data on attendance, performance, behavior or. etc. to identify students at-risk of dropping out of school
  - Enhance the capacity of schools to address the needs of at-risk students
  - Strengthen the partnership between school personnel and the parents/guardians of at-risk students

**Impact Assessment**

Intervention impact on dropout will be assessed using randomized control trials. Outcome measures include: between- and between-grade dropout, grade completion, promotion, attendance, and performance. Changes in student, teacher, and parental knowledge, attitudes and practices for dropout prevention will also be measured. Data will be collected and analyzed at baseline, midline, and end line.

A sample of 322 schools was selected (based on an anticipated dropout reduction of 7 percentage points). Only schools that have target grades, are not subject to high migration, are accessible, have a room to dedicate to a computer lab and agree to participate in SDPP were treated schools.

Schools were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. 215 schools are implementing the EWS intervention, 108 schools (of the 215) also received computer labs, and 107 schools received no interventions and serve as the control group.

In Cambodia, SDPP is implemented by Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE)

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