



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2008

Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE)

The present report has been compiled to promote transparency and accountability in agency finances and implementation of technical initiatives during the 2008 fiscal year (Oct 2007 to September 2008). The report provides an overview of all receipts, expenditures, and progress towards stated objectives for all supported projects and research initiatives.



Development with a Human Face

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Programming Scope and Beneficiaries

The present report has been compiled to provide an overview of KAPE’s technical programming and the financial health. The report provides a description of the activities and achievements of the various programs supported by KAPE, the scope and size of these programs, and the financial health of the agency. The latter of these includes a summary of funding received by donor, disbursements, and the allocation of funds during the fiscal year ending on 30 September 2008. This report will be distributed to agency donors and the KAPE Board of Advisers to promote accountability and transparency in the administration of agency programming.

Agency Profile

- Date Established: 1999
- National Staff: 38
- Expatriate Advisers: 2
- Cash Receipts FY 08: \$625,000
- Primary Schools Served: 187
- Secondary Schools Served: 21
- Districts Served: 6
- Number of Projects: 5

In all, KAPE provided support to 187 primary schools and 21 secondary schools across six districts during the 2008 Fiscal Year. The number of supported schools remains relatively stable from last year. During the year, the agency was able to raise \$625,000 in funds to support these schools, which encompass over 100,000 children. The number of target districts remains the same from last year and include the following:

- Ponyea Krek
- Tbong Khmum
- Dambae
- Koh Sotin
- Prey Chor
- Batheay

Box 1: Supported Programs in FY08

- Girls’ Education Initiative (GEI)
- Child Friendly Schools Development Project (CFSD)
- Child Friendly Schools in Remote Areas Project (CFSRA)
- Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations (ESCUP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)

1.2 Programming Content

The fiscal year just ending has been one of major transition for KAPE. Although the agency continued to support five major programs in FY08 (see Box 1), several of these have ended or been changed in significant ways. In this respect, KAPE’s long-standing Child Friendly School Initiative, the first CFS pilot program in Cambodia, completed a metamorphosis in management structure and approach, as UNICEF funding was phased out at the end of FY07 and the European Union/Ciai began a new project called the Child Friendly Schools Development Project (CFSD). This new project is similar in its broad outlines to CFSI but will be focusing more closely on efforts to achieve sustained outputs for the work started under UNICEF funding.

Similarly, the highly successful Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations Program (ESCUP) came to an end at the end of the year, though it will continue under a new management structure and name in FY09 (see below). The ESCUP Program has emerged as a very well-known program in Cambodia with key innovations in addressing teacher shortages, life skills needs, and a stakeholder-driven development approach that contrasts sharply with most other program models in Cambodia.

In addition, KAPE and Plan International came to a mutual agreement to discontinue collaboration on the Child Friendly Schools in Remote Areas Project (CFSRA) with a final hand over in management occurring in July 2008. The Girls’ Education Initiative (GEI), one of KAPE’s oldest programs, continued its important work during the fiscal year, but without the support of the OPTIONS program, which ended in FY07, as the US Dept. of Labor unexpectedly shifted funding from World Education, a key partner agency for KAPE, to Winrock International. This has presented a major challenge to program managers (see Section 2.1). The School Breakfast Program, another long-standing program implemented in collaboration with the World Food Program, also

underwent a major contraction and temporary suspension in March 2008 due to the global food crisis. Happily, the program was re-started as the fiscal year ended. Thus, the year just ending has been one of some turbulence and change.

1.3 New Programming

In spite of the many changes that have occurred during the last year and against the backdrop of the global financial crisis, KAPE has been active in developing new programming, which will come on line in FY09 and help stabilize its funding situation. This includes discussions with World Education and USAID to start a new program called *Schools for Life* (SfL), which will continue the important work started under ESCUP. The new program will also continue to receive full support from USAID. As its name suggests, SfL will intensify the focus on life skills programming. The SfL Program will also see a major increase in KAPE’s project profile as World Education shifts control of all former ESCUP field offices in Kratie and Monduliri to KAPE management. This will fulfill a major strategic goal mapped out by the agency’s management to turn KAPE from an agency with a one-province focus to one with a regional focus. The SfL Program will, therefore, emerge as the biggest program that KAPE has ever supported.

In addition, KAPE has been having active and positive discussions with other potential donors including Irish Aid and Save the Children/Sweden. In this respect, Irish Aid has agreed to support a new program to be called *Schools for Excellence* while Save the Children/Sweden has agreed to start another new program called *Minority Outreach in Education* (MORE) that carries forward recommendations from a research report on outreach to Cham children that was funded by SCS in 2007. Both new projects will begin in FY09. In a related development, KAPE has begun discussions with Save the Children Australia to provide assistance in developing a design document for their *Rewrite the Future Program*, which will also begin in FY09. KAPE is hopeful that the development of this program framework may present an opportunity for closer collaboration with SCA, which has an interest in expanding its educational programming in Kampong Cham. Finally, KAPE has applied for partnership status with a new donor called SIDO, which has an interest in supporting Child Friendly Schools programming, an area where KAPE has great expertise. Following the approval of a partnership application, KAPE will be able to submit a funding proposal to SIDO to expand its long-term CFS programming in Kampong Cham Province.

1.4 Agency Receipts and Donor Support

In spite of a difficult funding environment characterized by considerable transition in programming, FY 2008 was still a relatively successful year for KAPE with respect to its ability to resource existing programming. Nevertheless, total cash receipt levels have dropped slightly from \$689,456 during the last year to \$625,067 in the current year. This represents a drop of \$64,389 or about 9% in funding, year on year (see Table 1.1), mainly due to the cessation in support from the US Dept. of Labor. Nevertheless, this

Table 1.1: Agency Receipts by Donor, FY 2008

1. World Education/USAID	\$229,429
2. Ciai/European Union	\$129,541
3. Plan International/Cambodia	\$86,839
4. Terre des Hommes	\$40,908
5. Andy Hill Fund & Private Donations	\$38,200
6. Plan International/Australia	\$34,466
7. Room to Read	\$23,373
8. American Jewish World Service	\$20,000
9. UNICEF	\$3,260
10. The Asia Foundation	\$2,120
11. World Food Program (in-kind support) ¹	\$1,473,957
12. VSO (in-kind support)	\$24,000
13. Unrestricted Donations/Retained Earnings	\$16,931
Total Receipts (Cash Receipts Only)	\$625,067
Balance Forward from Previous Year	\$28,571
Subtotal (Cash Only)	\$653,638
Total Receipts (Cash Receipts & In Kind Support)	\$2,151,595

¹ Based on the calculation of 61,467 beneficiaries in the School Breakfast Program x \$14/child = \$860,538 plus 1,226.838 metric tons of rice for take home rations x \$500/ton = \$613,413

decline was tempered by more intensified private fund raising efforts and a large personal donation from Mr. Andy Hill of Goldman Sachs who contributed \$35,000 to be used by the Girls’ Education Initiative for scholarship support over a three-year period. In all, KAPE was able to maintain funding support from 12 major donors during the fiscal year, which is about the same as last year.

KAPE's leading cash donor was USAID/World Education at \$229,429 followed by European Union/Ciai (\$129,541) and Plan International (\$86,839). In terms of both cash and in-kind donors, World Food Program continues to be KAPE’s largest donor with total support from WFP reaching approximately \$1,473,957 during the fiscal year. This support enables KAPE to provide food support to over 61,000 children each year. Another key in-kind donor is Volunteers Serving Overseas (VSO), which provides technical assistance to KAPE in the form of experienced advisers who are placed with the agency for a period of one to two years. In 2008, VSO provided three full-time advisers to help KAPE build its management and technical capacity. One of these advisers was provided to the agency with full funding support from VSO.

1.5 Financial Disbursements and Costs

The agency’s burn rate for the funding provided has been quite high with disbursements during the fiscal year registering \$627,463 (see Table 1.2) out of total receipts (and balance forward totals) of \$653,638. This indicates a burn rate of about 96%, which suggests high absorption of resources

and efficient penetration of target areas. In keeping with an agency philosophy that puts beneficiaries first, Grants to Schools and Children were the leading disbursement category at \$336,914 or 54% of all funding. Personnel costs for national staff comprised 22% of all outlays, which represents a significant increase from last year’s expenditure share of 15%. Because personnel is a fixed cost,

Table 1.2: Breakdown of Disbursements, FY 2008

Expenditure Category	\$	%
Personnel (National Staff Only)	\$135,445	22%
Local Technical Support (Workshops)	\$21,705	3%
Fringe Costs	\$11,560	2%
Travel	\$42,834	7%
Equipment	\$5,093	1%
Operating Costs	\$26,156	4%
Grants to Schools and Children	\$336,914	54%
Consultants	\$0	0%
External Technical Assistance (TA)	\$21,885	3%
Other Costs	\$2,020	0.5%
Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR)	\$23,851	4%
Total Disbursements	\$627,463	~100%

*Rounded

the shrinking pie effect has pushed these costs to a higher proportion of total expenditures, which is a trend of some concern. Historically, KAPE has been able to keep its personnel costs to 15% or less of total expenditure. Expenditures for direct operational costs were quite reasonable at \$26,156 or 4% of total outlays. This represents a decline of 1% over last year’s outlays, reflecting cost cutting measures during the year. Costs for Technical Assistance and Consultants amounted to \$21,885 or 3% of outlays, which does not include in-kind support from VSO for the adviser who is assisting KAPE’s Management Group to improve general management and administration as well as provide technical support to Child Friendly School programming. Indirect Cost Recovery, which was introduced in 2005 to build institutional sustainability of the agency, registered \$23,851 or 4% of the funds received. It should be noted in this regard that not all donors allow these charges, particularly among the smaller foundations providing support to the agency.

2. PROGRAM REPORTS

2.1 Girls' Education Initiative

2.1.1 General Overview:

Due to the loss of funding from the US Department of Labor, the Girls' Education Initiative has entered a period of disequilibrium, which reflects significant commitments to beneficiaries against a declining funding pool. The loss of funding from DoL has resulted in a reduction to the program's funding base by more than 50%. FY08 has, therefore, seen strenuous efforts to adjust to the new funding environment by streamlining life skills programming (as well as reducing costs) and reluctantly shifting the priority for scholarship assistance from support of new intakes at lower secondary school level to continuing a commitment to long-term beneficiaries who have opted to move to upper secondary school level or vocational training. As a result, support for beneficiaries at lower secondary school level has dropped precipitously from previous levels. In this respect, the program registered a 45% drop in beneficiary numbers at lower secondary school level (see Table 2.1). This was reflected in the smallest intake at Grade 7 in the program's history (only 145 students), which compares with a historical average of 396, since start-up. To be sure, the number of supported lower secondary schools increased slightly as some target primary schools became basic education schools with a Grade 7 attached to it.² In contrast, beneficiary numbers at upper secondary school level have moderately increased by 21% as large cohorts from lower secondary school level move through the system.

Box 2: GEI Profile

Donors: Terre des Hommes, American Jewish World Service, Room to Read, The Asia Foundation, Private Donations
Direct Beneficiaries: 3,431
Budget: \$86,401
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: \$25
Sectors Targeted: Primary, Secondary, Vocational
Number of Districts Covered: 5
Target Schools: Primary (18); Secondary (21); Total (39)
Start Date: 2000
End Date: Open-ended

The GEI program has also intensified its cooperation with the ESCUP Program and has begun co-funding support for scholarship beneficiaries completing Grade 12 to enter the Provincial Teacher Training College with continued scholarship support. Upon completing two years of study at the PTTC, these graduates will be allowed to return to their home villages and provide excellent role models to other children.

Table 2.1: Change in Program Coverage, FY07 & FY08

Sector/Program	Number of Schools/Beneficiaries		% Change
	2006-07	2007-08	
Primary Schools	19	18	-5%
Lower Secondary Schools	19	21	+11%
Upper Secondary Schools	8	8	0%
Curriculum Enhancement & General Life Skills Beneficiaries	351	2,287	551%
Girls' Scholarship Subcomponent (LSS)	1,175	645	-45%
Girls' Scholarship Subcomponent (USS)	355	431	+21%
Vocational Training	56	50	-11%
Provincial Teacher Training College Scholarships	0	18	--
Total Beneficiaries	2,155	3,431	+59%

² The introduction of Basic Education Schools is a new Ministry policy in which primary schools successively add grade levels at lower secondary school so that they eventually provide educational services from Grades 1 to 9. This policy is one of the Ministry's key strategies to expand access to lower secondary school and achieve universal access to a basic education, defined as Grades 1 to 9.

2.1.2 Interventions and Outcomes:

Educational Context: The bulk of GEI programming continues to be focused on the provision of scholarship support for vulnerable children in Grades 7 to 9. This reflects the need to address high dropout rates at secondary school level, where, according to national statistics, net enrolment drops from 93% at primary to only 35% at lower secondary and 12% at upper secondary. In addition, dropout rates tend to be very high in this sector and ranges between 21 and 23% across all grades, compared with only 12% at primary school level. The program also works with local training centers to provide support for vocational training for those scholarship recipients who are unable to move to upper secondary school (either due to having failed the national examination or financial hardship).

Life Skills Programming: Experience shows that the material support of a scholarship is not enough to keep all girls enrolled. To address this, GEI also runs life skills activities targeted at children at risk in primary and secondary school to keep them interested and engaged in school. The scholarship program also includes counseling to support especially vulnerable students and girls’ clubs at the secondary school level for peer support. Scholarship students receive free tutoring to take the National *Diplome* Examination (Grade 9) and the *Bac Double* Examination (Grade 12), which are highly competitive national examinations. Mandatory parent orientations ensure that parents and guardians are involved and supportive of their students, and Local Scholarship Management Committees (LSMCs) include community members in the decision-making and management of scholarship programs.

Changes in Dropout, Failure, and Promotion: Key impacts for 2008 have shown some improvement since the previous year. In this respect, dropout among beneficiaries declined from 24% to 18% and promotion rates increased from 64% to 69% (see Table 2.2). Failure rates have remained constant at 13%. Factory employment continues to be the leading cause of dropout and accounted for 45% of dropout at lower secondary school level and 39% at upper secondary school level. This historical pattern demonstrates the opportunity costs of staying in school, particularly among older children whose labor value is great.

Supplementary Activities to Support Core Programming: GEI continued to support supplementary activities that enhance core programming that revolves around scholarship assistance. For example, three new schools established Peer Support Groups for GEI scholarship beneficiaries, with a total of 64 participating students (53 girls). This is the fourth year that schools are implementing this extra-curricular activity to enhance the national curriculum. The objective of the activity is to improve the understanding of social problems that affect girls and other vulnerable students. Program planners developed a module to raise awareness of social issues of relevance in the communities in the target areas. These include issues of child labor, health & hygiene and domestic abuse. GEI also continued to build the local capacity of local implementers such as Local Scholarship

Table 2.2: Overall Promotion, Drop-out and Failure Rates at Secondary School, FY 08 & FY07

Category	Number of Beneficiaries	% FY08	% FY07
<i>Students at Beginning of Year</i>	1,076	100%	100%
Promoted	742	69%	64%
Dropped Out	194	18%	24%
Failed	140	13%	13%



Changing Girls’ Lives: Scholarship distribution to new Grade 7 students and working with savings groups.

Management Committees (local counterparts who actually implement the scholarship programs), Commune EFA Committees (CEFACs), and Girls' Counselors at school level. Counselors are trained teachers and members from the LSMC, who offer counseling to assist students encountering personal difficulties. The counselors try to encourage students and solve problems for students who have high absence rates or problems in the family.

A brand new innovation introduced by the program refers to the establishment of *Savings Groups*. These groups focus on students who graduate from vocational training courses supported by KAPE. The three groups are now in operation and are beginning to build their customer base and earn some profit. The original loan of \$500 is expected to be paid back in monthly installments by October 2011. All groups have been able pay back \$15.00 to \$ 20.00 and still have money leftover as profit. GEI staff do not plan to use the returned money for further groups, but will rather spend the money on the original three groups of girls to build their capacity around advertising and management and provide additional loans for expanding their business (see Case Study below).

Program Spotlight: Girls' Savings Group



TdH Adviser gets measured by local Savings Group

After graduating from GEI's vocational training program in May 2008, this girls' sewing group was given a microloan of \$500 to start a small tailoring business in their village. Only a few months after opening shop, the four girls are already making over \$150 per week (\$37.50 each), which is about twice as much as they could make going out to the fields to plant rice each day. Now the group is looking into finding a new location for their shop, closer to the main road where they can attract more business. Innovative programming such as this is helping to provide sustained solutions to poverty and dangerous urban migration in Kampong Cham Province

2.1.3 Issues in Implementation:

Funding Shortfalls:

KAPE programs rely completely on donor funding. Since the close of the OPTIONS program in 2006/2007, the Girls' Education Initiative has struggled to find new avenues of funding to support all of its scholarship students. With help from donors such as AJWS and TDH/NL, KAPE was able to support all of its existing beneficiaries this year. Staff had to prioritize programs and find ways to cut costs such as eliminating primary school scholarships, limiting intake at Grade 10 among existing beneficiaries (which was a very painful process), and reducing intake dramatically in Grade 7. Despite recommitment from TDH/NL and AJWS, as well as new funds from private individuals, the program has had to make even more adjustments for the next year, 2008/2009. Life skills programming will be reduced and the re-evaluation of scholarship students at Grade 10 will become even more strenuous in order to limit upper secondary school intake (where unit costs tend to be higher).

GEI sees the decrease in donor funding as having two main causes. First, general donor fatigue is inevitable in a scholarship program because it is an ongoing, long-term investment into a country's future that doesn't have a foreseeable end. Though KAPE hopes that the Cambodian government will eventually take responsibility for secondary school scholarships, a full takeover is not yet envisioned in the next 5-10 years. Also, more currently, it seems that donor funding has been tightening in response to the global economic downturn. This makes it even more difficult for KAPE to procure funds for on-going programs like scholarships.

In response to these issues, GEI staff plan to meet to re-prioritize programs and develop a plan to scale back to only the most important and impactful interventions in 2009/2010. KAPE as a whole is also exploring the potential to interest more private individuals in sponsoring scholarship students via online methods.

Need for Career Counseling

Although KAPE has been reasonably successful in keeping most of its scholarship beneficiaries in school, the national *Diplome* Examination at Grade 9 means that a large number of girls who fail the examination are literally pushed out of the system. Most of these students have few options for bettering themselves other than a very dangerous one of migrating to urban areas to seek employment, mainly in the garment factories at best while many fall into the commercial sex trade and other hazardous forms of work. While those dropping out are offered the option of continued support for vocational studies in local training centers, only about a third of students follow up on this opportunity.

Just this year, the Cambodian government lowered the legal working age from 18 to 15, which affects KAPE's scholarship program because the opportunity cost for going to school is much higher for girls of legal working age. Even before this legal change, the entry into womanhood happens very early in Cambodia and pressures to enter the work force as young women become intense when girls reach the age of 15 or 16. The additional legitimization of teenage workers by the government will make it even more difficult to help girls stay in school. Finally, this is compounded by the rampant inflation and increases in cost-of-living throughout Cambodia which has severely affected poor rural families who are not able to earn enough on agriculture to survive. All these forces make it nearly impossible for certain girls to resist entering the work force.

Economic development in the province has meant that many of KAPE's target districts in Kampong Cham possess a wide array of plantations and factories that hire young workers. Factories, in particular, provide a particularly attractive alternative to school. Not only will families save on the cost of schooling, and not only will children earn income, but factories make work very convenient by sending trucks to take workers to and from their homes.

The decision to leave school among these young women in order to enter the work force often happens with little counseling support or even accurate information about what their career path options are. This includes information about vocational training, safe migration, or recent opportunities within the state school system to open teacher recruitment to individuals with only a Grade 9 education (as opposed to Grade 12 as per earlier requirements).

In light of all these issues, The GEI team hopes to redouble efforts to educate girls about their choices post-graduation, or should they choose to drop out. Unfortunately, staff and budgets are stretched thin this year on existing initiatives, but the GEI team has come up with a few specific measures that it will consider carefully:

- Become involved in a new contract from Winrock International, which is being funded by the US Department of Labor in order to reduce the worst forms of child labor in target provinces, which include Kampong Cham. Unfortunately, this project appears to be more than one year behind schedule in terms of start-up of activities in Kampong Cham Province. Also, it will not address students of legal working age (now 15), and will only address the most dangerous forms of labor.
- Involve vocational training graduates and savings group members in parent and student orientations so that families are aware of the alternatives to factory and/or plantation work.
- Work directly with local factories to create more flexible contracts that allow students to work for half the day and attend school for half the day. Current contracts require individuals to work the whole day in order to receive payment.

2.2 Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations (ESCUP)

2.2.1 General Overview

ESCUP continued to be a flagship program for KAPE due to its size and capacity for innovative programming. ESCUP is a USAID funded initiative designed to improve access to a basic education of quality for marginal groups in Cambodia—namely, ethnic minority children, girls, disabled children, and the poor. ESCUP interventions are implemented in four large adjacent provinces in eastern Cambodia: Kampong Cham, Kratie, Monduliri, and most recently, Ratanakiri. KAPE was responsible for all implementation in Kampong Cham, which had the largest concentration of target schools (90 out of 167 primary schools). KAPE was also responsible for fielding technical implementation teams in Kratie and Monduliri Provinces who worked in cooperation with World Education. The program’s technical approach includes (i) using cluster and secondary school grants as a means of resourcing schools, (ii) using activity menus in the development of school improvement plans, and (iii) utilizing local committees such as Local Cluster School Committees (LCSCs) to implement activities on the ground. Overall, the program seeks to promote the government’s recent adoption of Child Friendly Schools (CFS) as a front line strategy to improve quality in the basic education sector (i.e., Grades 1-9).

2.2.2 Interventions and Outcomes

Student Census: One of the things promised, as part of the extension submission to USAID for ESCUP II was to conduct a student census that counted beneficiaries receiving key interventions in a way, which eliminated double counting (i.e., when one child received more than one intervention). This census took place at the end of the 2007/8 academic year and surveyed 15 major interventions implemented through support from ESCUP.³ The survey found that 19,599 children were receiving one or more direct interventions from the program out of the 37,000 primary school children enrolled or about 53% of the total (see Table 2.3). This does not include children who also benefited from the provision of toilets, wells, libraries, and other interventions where benefits are more difficult to quantify (since an entire school can benefit from them). If these children were included, the total number of beneficiaries would be even higher. Rather, these 53% comprise the most vulnerable children who received health care support, subsidies to cover the direct costs of education (e.g., scholarships), children with special learning needs (e.g., remedial support), children with no access to education (e.g., Intermediate Classrooms), and

Box 3: ESCUP Profile

Donor: USAID/World Education
Direct Beneficiaries: 19,599
Budget: \$229,429
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: \$11.71
Sectors Targeted: Primary & Secondary
Districts Covered: 3 Districts
Target Schools: 90 Primary Schools, 7 Lower Secondary Schools
Target Clusters: 11
Program Start Date: April 2005
Program End Date: Sept 2008

Table 2.3: Student Beneficiaries at Primary Level (Kampong Cham Only), Year 3

Intervention	Number of Beneficiaries	
1. Primary Scholarships	2,536	
2. Village-based Remediation	1,772	
3. Home-based Remediation	57	
4. Community-based Life Skills	1,445	
5. Cultural Life Skills	270	
6. Agrarian Life Skills (IPM)	396	
7. CFS Classroom Environments	9,673	
8. Health Referrals	169	
9. Bilingual Classroom Assistants	1,036	
10. Supplementary Khmer Language (SKL)	0	
11. Peer Tutoring (Child to Child)	3,505	
12. Homework Clubs (Child to Child)	2,492	
13. Intermediate Classroom Provision (ICR)	2,232	
14. Community Teacher Provision	3,076	
15. Student Associations	437	
Children Receiving at Least 1 Intervention	12,902	66%
Children Receiving at Least 2 Interventions	4,778	24%
Children Receiving at Least 3 Interventions	1,371	7%
Children Receiving at Least 4 Interventions	548	3%
Total Children Receiving Direct Interventions	19,599	100%

³ These 15 interventions do not include the School Breakfast Program (supported by World Food Program in ESCUP sites) either because it is believed that its ubiquity in Kampong Cham would skew the results of the census. Over 37,000 children benefit from SBP alone in ESCUP target sites.

others.

Scholarship Success Story: Lost Potential Regained for Soeun Srey Maap



Maap in her new uniform now enrolled at school

Maap is an 11-year old girl living in Da Commune of Kampong Cham. Her father went to find work in Thailand and her mother died some time ago when she was very young. As a result, she never knew her mother and does not even know her name. Maap is an orphan who was taken in by some neighbors who are also farmers like her parents. They asked her father to leave Maap with them so that she could help them take care of their farm animals. Each day, she takes care of the younger children in the household and watches five cows in the afternoon. While in the fields, she saw other children going to school everyday and was curious but did not dare to ask whether she could go to school too.

At the beginning this school year, the local community in Maap’s village did a mapping exercise to find children who were not yet in school. The community elders and the school director have used their influence to convince Maap’s guardians to enroll her in the local school, known as Tuol Vihear Primary School. Now, Maap is enrolled in Grade 1 and has received a new blouse and skirt, shoes, and study materials as part of ESCUP’s scholarship support programming that is implemented directly by schools and communities. School is a new experience for Maap, but she says she is happy to be learning to read and write like the other children in her village though she does not know what the future will hold in store for her.

The program also sought to employ a strategy in ensuring that the most vulnerable children received multiple interventions, as it is believed that this maximizes the likelihood that they will stay in school or be promoted. In this respect, it was reported that 24% of the beneficiaries registered by the census had received two interventions, while 7% had received three interventions, and another 3% had received four interventions. Thus, 34% of those identified in the census had received at least two interventions or more, thereby suggesting that the program was successful in a strategy of providing multiple interventions. It is further believed that this strategy is at least in part responsible for the large reductions in dropout and repetition reported during the year (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5).

Repetition Rate Reduction: Primary schools reported a continuing decline in rates of student repetition across all grades.

The overall change in repetition rate in target schools was nearly -10% against the baseline figure (see Table 2.4). In this respect, repetition had declined from 18% to 8% for the current and final year of program implementation. In addition, the number of individual schools reporting a reduction in repetition rate from the baseline registered 86%, a major achievement. This is attributed primarily to reduc-



Finally, Materials that Don’t Collect Dust!: A science teacher works with students during a micro-teaching session that utilizes recently provided equipment and new teaching methodologies.

tions in class sizes due to the introduction of Community Teachers, village-based remediation for children with special learning needs, peer tutoring and child help networks (see pictures below), homework clubs, and teacher training.

Table 2.4: Changes in Student Repetition, 2007/08

District	Baseline Year				Current Year				Change				% of Schools Reporting Decline
	Total	%	Female	%	Total	%	Female	%	Total	%	Female	%	
Tbong Khmum	2,628	15	1,183	15	1,223	8	592	8	-1,405	-7	-591	-7	81%
Ponyea Krek	3,928	19	1,733	18	1,933	10	905	10	-1,995	-9	-828	-8	91%
Total	6,556	18	2,916	16	3,156	8	1,497	8	-3,400	-10	-1,419	-8	86%

Dropout Rate Reduction: Dropout rate levels also registered a significant decline against baseline levels with an overall change from baseline of -6% (-5% for girls), which continues a pattern seen in previous years (see Table 2.5). This represents a reduction of more than 50% since the baseline year. In all, a total of 79% of schools reported a decline in dropout. It is believed that the interventions that have had the most impact on reductions on dropout continue to be lowering Pupil Teacher Ratios through the introduction of Community Teachers; reducing the distance to school by providing Intermediate Classrooms and adding grades to incomplete schools (again through the provision of Community Teachers); and scholarship support.

Table 2.5: Changes in Student Dropout, 2007/08

District	Baseline Year				Current Year				Change				% of Schools Reporting Decline
	Total	%	Female	%	Total	%	Female	%	Total	%	Female	%	
Tbong Khmum	1,686	10	739	9	790	5	387	5	-1,916	-5	352	-4	81%
Ponyea Krek	1537	8	678	7	502	3	264	3	-1,035	-5	414	-4	77%
	3,223	9	1,417	8	1,292	3	651	3	-2,951	-6	766	-5	79%

How ESCUP Promotes Moral Development Through Child-to-Child Help Networks



Increasing Educational Relevance: In keeping with the increased focus on life skills programming, ESCUP set a very high target for school coverage and doubled the hoped for performance standard from 25% of schools offering life skills courses last year to the present 50% coverage target at both primary and secondary school. Life skills activities this year included wide range of programming such as rice cultivation, vegetable gardening, fish raising, frog raising, as well as *community-based life skills* activities taught by community members such as hair cutting, traditional music, cooking, sewing, and others. Another life skills category took in *cultural life skills*, which places an emphasis on learning traditional cultural practices such as fish net weaving, traditional medicine, traditional music, and others. Cultural life skills activities help to promote school outreach to minority groups as a means to enhance enrolment and attendance.

According to compiled school reports, the number of schools providing life skills courses reached 36 schools this year or about 38% of all supported schools at both primary and secondary school level (see Table 2.6). Although this represents nearly 40% coverage, it still falls short of the desired target by a margin of 12%. Nevertheless, program personnel have reported a great deal of enthusiasm among schools for IPM topics this year, particularly fish-ponds. For a one-time investment of as little as \$100, schools can raise as much as 20 kilograms of fish in a three month period, which they can then sell to replenish stocks.

Table 2.6: Schools Providing Local Life Skills Provisions, 2007/8

Sector	Total Assisted Schools	Schools Providing LLSP	As a % of All Schools
Primary Level	91	29	32%
Secondary School Level	7	7	100%
All Schools	98	36	38%

Success Story: A Life Skills Bonanza at Chi Manh School



Children at Chi Manh School harvest the fish in their pond

School-community activities have been exemplary at Chi Manh Primary School in Krek District, Kampong Cham Province. The school has organized several IPM activities including fish raising and vegetable gardens that have been led by students and teachers. When it came time to harvest the fish and vegetables, the school invited community members to join in the fun at a Field Day ceremony in which students made presentations about what they had been doing and what they had learned (see picture below).

During the Field Day observances, community members had an opportunity to examine gardens and the fishpond. Parents were amazed that such a little fishpond could produce so many fish in so little time. This has stimulated sentiment in the community to replicate the activity at home with the help of their children to supplement local food production and improve protein in the diet. These extra knock-on effects in the community had been hoped for and are now being realized.



The fruits of our labor: Fish to be sold at market to replenish fish stocks and ensure sustainability



Student Presentations: A group leader makes a presentation to classmates on IPM



Amazing: Community members examine a prolific IPM Garden

2.2.3 Issues in Implementation

There are several key lessons learned under the ESCUP Program that will prove to be very useful for future programming.

Diversifying Interventions according to School Capacity and Links with Governance Issues: Selective implementation and the use of school governance criteria in development has been an important lesson learned under the current USAID-AIR-World Education partnership. Different localities are not the same in their receptivity to development initiatives or their ability to utilize funds with professional integrity. Professionalism and good management practices among school directors and teachers are often lacking, which invite serious risks for development investment. In this regard, current programming has not adequately distinguished between schools with strong management capacity, those with medium levels of management capacity, and those that are dysfunctional due to the low integrity of the individuals that manage them. Schools in the latter category should be passed over for assistance unless the local education authority can make changes in personnel to reduce the risks involved with assistance. Schools in the other two categories should receive modulated forms of assistance that are commensurate with their management capacity.

The Need for a Flexible Project Design: A flexible project design allows local stakeholders to develop their own programming content based on their own perceived needs. Under the current USAID-funded Program, local stakeholders received extensive technical support for needs analysis and objective-based planning that enabled them to determine what they needed to change in their schools/communities and how they might effect these changes. When development is stakeholder driven in this way, it ensures local ownership and engagement in programming, which in turn increases the likelihood for sustainability.

Using Stakeholder-driven Program Models: The use of open-ended grants and activity menus has gone hand-in-hand with stakeholder-driven development themes described earlier. The open-ended nature of the grants provided by the program empowers stakeholders and allows them to drive the development process. To be sure, programming grant funds is a negotiated process so that issues relating to government policy and donor interests can

Success Story: Development Means Giving People Choices



Many of the young people from the Cham community who have worked as Bilingual Classroom Assistants have become interested in teaching as a profession. ESCUP has encouraged BCAs to pursue their interests in teaching by applying for entry to the Provincial Teacher Training College and has advocated for them with local officials so

that their names can be placed on a priority consideration list. Ni Rawkeia is one of several BCAs in Kampong Cham to pass the PTTC Entrance Examination and is now enrolled at the PTTC as a Year 1 student. Although she completed Grade 9 at Kbal O Junior High School in Kampong Cham, she subsequently dropped out of school because it was too far and unsafe to travel to the nearest lycee.

In 2006, Rawkeiya was recruited by her local community to work as a Bilingual Classroom Assistant with support from ESCUP. She has worked for a year assisting young Cham children who do not speak Khmer as their first language in state schools. She worked successfully in this role throughout the 2006/07 school year at the elementary school where she had herself spent the first six years of her own schooling. In 2007, Rawkeiya took advantage of the new Ministry 9+2 recruitment policy that allows students who have only studied to Grade 9 to apply for PTTC entry. The policy is designed to help remote areas to address severe teacher shortages in local schools. Rawkeiyah is now studying to be a teacher at Kampong Cham PTTC and receives scholarship support from the ESCUP Program. As well as her PTTC studies, she also spends her evenings studying English and computers. Once she has completed her studies she, like other ESCUP supported PTTC students, will return to her own commune to teach.

also be interjected into planning activities, mainly through awareness raising that is an integral part of capacity building activities. The use of Activity Menus, which cross-reference possible interventions to common problems, greatly helps to ensure that there is some structure in the planning process that echoes national policy themes such as children’s rights, improved educational efficiency (e.g., reducing dropout), and the needs of underserved groups. Activity menus also address certain challenges in promoting stakeholder-driven development that arise from the limited exposure of local stakeholders to different ways of doing things and years of conditioning that discourages proactive management processes. Indeed, it should be noted that this conditioning, which underlies many of the dysfunctional behavior patterns at local level is not easily reversed. Often it requires two or more years of intensive capacity building for self-determination practices to firmly take root.

2.3 Child Friendly Schools in Remote Areas

2.3.1 General Overview

KAPE concluded its involvement in the implementation of the CFSRA project in July 2008, with a hand over of the program back to Plan International occurring at the end of the school year with the submission of a Final Report to the donor. The implementation for this project will now be the responsibility of Plan International personnel.

2.3.3 Interventions and Outcomes

The CFSRA project can be described as a reasonably successful project in many respects. It has achieved or nearly achieved over 80% of stated performance standards agreed with the donor; it is highly consistent with national policy (e.g., National Plan for EFA and Child Friendly School Policy) and, therefore, serves and promotes a national agenda; and it is popular with local education officials both at district and provincial level. Nevertheless, there have been issues in the project’s design and implementation that have been discussed with the donor on numerous occasions (see below) and which need to be improved. A wide range of activities were implemented in the 29 primary schools and two secondary schools participating in the program including life skills education, scholarships, remediation, student counseling, library development, and teacher training among many others.

In general, about 82% of indicators were fully or partially achieved during the last two years of implementation. Some indicators, while achieved during 2006/7, have not yet been reported for 2007/8 because schools had not yet closed officially at the time of the handover. Indicators in this status refer in particular to performance standards relating to annual dropout and repetition rates and it will be very important for the succeeding implementation team to follow up on the collection of this information when schools begin to report the Ministry (usually in August-September).

Among the 82% of achieved indicators, 57% were fully achieved while 25% were nearly so or nevertheless reported significant progress but targets were too ambitious (see Table 2.7). About 18% of the indicators stated for the program were either suspended, not achieved, or are still pending. These indicators refer to standards that relate to issues that were never resolved by KAPE and PIC. These include the use of school grants to schools instead of the top-down implementation

Box 4: CFSRA Profile

Donor: Plan International/Cambodia
Direct Beneficiaries: 3,983
Budget: \$86,839
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: \$21.80
Sectors Targeted: Primary & Secondary
Districts Covered: 1 District
Target Schools: 29 Primary Schools and 2 secondary schools
Target Clusters:
Start Date: December 2005
End Date: July 2008



Life skills courses for young boys in progress

approach that has been used by the project since its inception, addressing minority issues based on research compiled by KAPE, and the use of program funds for health referrals for children in great need of treatment. These are matters that will need to be taken up by Plan International staff following the handover of project management.

Table 2.7: Summary of Indicator Status

Indicator Status	Definition	Number of Indicators in This Category	%
Achieved	The standard has been fully achieved	16	57%
Partially Achieved	Impressive results have been achieved but it is premature to expect achievement at this stage or standards were too ambitious	7	25%
Suspended/Pending/Not Achieved	Activities have been suspended at the request of PIC/Lack of funds raised by KAPE from its own resources/Performance standard missed by a considerable margin	5	18%
Total		28	100%

2.3.3 Issues in Implementation

Need to Move Away from Prescriptive Programming Model: There are a number of operational characteristics that can be attributed to the CFSRA project that need to be improved. One of the main criticisms of the CRSRA project, for example, is that it has been nearly completely devoid of innovation. Nearly every single intervention used in the project has been developed in other more dynamic programming supported by KAPE and transplanted into the CFSRA context. This includes remedial interventions, scholarships, teacher training methodologies, girls’ counselors, subject classrooms, community-based life skills activities, community teachers, and PTTC scholarships, among others.

Although it is true that Plan International selected KAPE as the implementer of this project in order to benefit from its other programming supported by other experienced donors such as UNICEF, it is still a basic expectation of any project that it be able to promote innovation. The CFSRA project has not been able to pass this test. In the view of the advisers that work in the project, one of the primary reasons why the project has not been able to generate its own innovation is due to the fact that it uses a budget-driven, top-down, and prescriptive development design that simply does not accommodate free thought, creativity, or flexible response. The multi-year impasse on negotiations between KAPE and PIC to introduce school grants into the project is a classic example of how the current project design has not been able to demonstrate flexibility in its response to issues of importance. Thus, a major issue for those implementing the project in the future will be to review the project design in order to determine whether changes can be made that can better accommodate a more flexible mode of implementation and that will better promote dynamism and innovation.



Peer counseling session

2.4 Child Friendly School Development Project

2.4.1 General Overview

The CFSD Project is implemented jointly in two provinces. KAPE is responsible for implementation in four districts in Kampong Cham Province while Ciai, an Italian NGO, is responsible for implementation in Phnom Penh. The CFSD Project is the follow-on of the original CFS pilot that KAPE had developed in collaboration with MoEYS and UNICEF. CFSD focuses on putting all target schools on a three-year development cycle, leading to sustained inputs at the conclusion of assistance. Altogether, KAPE is supporting 50 schools in Kampong Cham Province through this project, which benefits almost 27,000 children (see Table 2.8)

Box 4: CFSD Profile

Donor: European Union/Ciai
Direct Beneficiaries: 26,906
Budget: \$129,541
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: \$4.81
Sectors Targeted: Primary Level
Districts Covered: 4 Districts
Target Schools: 50 Primary Schools
Start Date: July 2007
End Date: December 2010

Table 2.8: Beneficiaries and Coverage under the CFSD Project, 2008

Beneficiaries	KAPE	CIAI	Overall total
Schools	50	30	80
Teachers			
Total	754	525	1,279
Female	399	324	723
Students			
Total	26,906	17,853	44,759
Female	12,388	8,347	20,735

2.4.2 Interventions and Outcomes

The project seeks to improve the quality of education through the Child Friendly School policy framework developed by the MoEYS. Activities implemented through these six dimensions are summarized below:

Access - improved access, attendance and retention: One of the key activities implemented under this dimension is school mapping. Under this activity, children who are out of school are identified through community surveys and encouraged to enroll. The provision of scholarship support is used as an incentive to get these children into school and keep them there. The scholarship provides them with necessary items for school including exercise books, pens, paper, rulers, shoes, schoolbag, and other direct costs of schooling. Under its scholarship programming, KAPE supported 1,250 children in the 2007/8 school year in CFSD target areas.



Improving Educational Quality: The CFSD Project provides opportunities for continuing professional development for all teachers in target schools. To date, 593 teachers have received training from the project in CFS classroom techniques. Training topics include classroom management, use of portfolios, effective teaching and learning and the production of teaching aids. In addition, the CFSD Project supports village-based remedial support for children with special learning needs. This is done through the establishment of small learning groups in local villages where such children can receive additional tutoring. This activity focuses on children in the lowest grades where

Helping the Most Vulnerable: Scholarship Distribution to poor children

repetition rates tend to be the highest. As part of the implementation of this activity, remedial teachers are trained in skills for teaching slow learners. These village-based groupings of children receive materials for study such as letter and number cards, story-books, and other materials designed to facilitate learning in small groups. In all, 1,151 children with special learning needs received assistance through this activity (see Table 2.9)

Table 2.9: Village-based Remedial Groups

District	Total teachers trained:	Female teachers:	Total number of groups	Total number of students	Female students
Koh Sotin	20	9	20	395	179
PreyChor	32	25	32	597	277
Tbang Khmoum	5	3	5	100	51
Ponhea Krek	3	1	3	59	27
Total	60	38	60	1,151	534

Another quality-focused intervention supported in target schools included Market Simulations. This is an integrated activity, which provides a platform, related to Life Skills topics, where students can see the practical relevance of the more formal subjects they study at school - e.g., mathematics, social skills. Children have to calculate the cost of producing the product or service they study in their Life Skills class. When they set up their stall in the "market" they use token "money" to buy and sell products and services. Then, they calculate how much "money" they have made (or lost). Putting learning in a relevant context in this way makes children more interested in school and hence contributes to the quality of education. It is also an opportunity for parents and the broader community to participate in an activity in the school.

Health Awareness Raising: The CFSD Project also sought to raise the profile of health in classrooms. In this respect, all Child-Friendly classrooms contain a "maturation corner" where children can be weighed and measured at regular intervals and where their height and weight is recorded on a chart. Parents and visitors can see the progress of children's physical development. There is also a "hygiene corner" with water, soap, combs and a mirror. Children are encouraged to wash their hands and tidy themselves up after playing at break time. They also learn about topical health issues. During training, teachers are shown how to incorporate these issues into their normal classes.

Community and Parental Engagement: CFSD activities under this Dimension of the CFS Framework aim to engage parents and other community members positively in the operation of the school by inviting parents to discuss the progress of their children, by providing school events (speech days, open days, etc) to which parents and others can be invited. It also aims to give children themselves a voice in school operations. CFSD programming actively sought out community engagement through several activities including school mapping and scholarship distribution discussed above, as well as life skills provisions where the teacher is a community member. Community members who have a skill that they are prepared to pass on to schoolchildren volunteer to train small groups during 10-12 weekly sessions between January and June each year. Skills training includes topics such as sewing, traditional music, hair cutting, and other topics chosen by students. Total number of students who received life skills training during year was about 1,260.



Learning from the Community: Children study traditional music with a community member

2.4.3 Issues in Implementation

Maintaining a Unitary Program in Different Implementation Contexts: One of the important challenges facing project management has been the need to maintain a unitary programming structure in an implementation environment that includes both rural and urban schools. Although there are many similarities in the development approaches employed by Ciai and KAPE, the fact that the implementation context of each agency is quite different has necessitated some subtle and some not so subtle differences in implementation methodology within the two main target sites. The contextual differences that the project needs to consider in this regard include (i) urban-rural differences and the associated implications of different school sizes (i.e., rural schools tend to be much smaller); (ii) the identification of appropriate delivery systems for channeling development assistance (e.g., cluster or individual school); and (iii) the availability of human resources. In this regard, program managers have sought to maintain considerable flexibility in project design to accommodate the very different needs in urban and rural schools. For example, programming in rural Kampong Cham has relied heavily on the cluster school structure, which is well-suited to channeling resources in places where human resources are scarce and schools tend to be smaller and spread farther apart. Programming in Phnom Penh, however, has found it easier to use the individual school as the primary management unit in planning and implementation.

Attrition of CFS Classroom Teachers: Program planners continue to be concerned about the attrition of CFS teachers in the program. The teaching force in target schools is highly fluid and there appear to be major changes in the personnel make-up of teachers each year. Teachers are continually transferring in and out of schools, a process that has been exacerbated recently by the need to recruit secondary school teachers from primary schools. This situation means that each year, as many as a quarter of the teachers in any given school may change, which is quite disruptive to the continuity of capacity-building activities. While it is certain that those teachers moving to other institutions will be able to use what they have learned from the program in their new posts, these statistics demonstrate the chaotic movement of personnel within the education system. It also underlines the difficulty of programs such as CFSD to work with a stable pool of teachers over a multi-year period to develop their capacity.

2.5 School Breakfast and Take-Home Ration Program

2.5.1 General Overview

In an *aide memoire* between MoEYS and the World Food Program in 2001, KAPE was named as one of three partner agencies (along with EQIP/WB and UNICEF) to assist the World Food Program in pilot testing breakfast programs in Cambodia. Since the completion of the pilot phase of the School Breakfast Program at that time, KAPE has helped WFP to expand this program in Kampong Cham Province where it is now reaching over 60,000 children in 157 primary schools. This activity serves a variety of purposes including improving children's nutrition, stopping morning hunger, and increasing attendance rates. Food provided by the World Food Program (WFP) is prepared in the form of hot meals that consist of rice soup and fish each morning. School vegetable gardens cultivated by schools and communities help to ensure that vegetables are also included in the mix.

Box 8: SBP and THR Profile

Donor: World Food Program
Direct Beneficiaries (SBP): 61,467/Girls: 29,474
Direct Beneficiaries (Take Home Rations): 4,500/ Girls: 3,551
SBP Budget: In kind (rice, canned fish, cooking oil, and salt); Cash Value estimated at \$1,473,957
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: \$22.34
Sectors Targeted: Primary
Districts Covered: 5 Districts
Target Schools: 157 Primary Schools

In more recent years, WFP has used the means-tested scholarship program implemented by KAPE as a mechanism through which to distribute take home rations to vulnerable children, particularly girls. These rations consist of rice, oil, and other important food stuffs needed by poor families. Scholarship beneficiaries are selected under rigorous conditions to determine levels of income,

debt, and need. During the current year, such assistance was extended to 4,500 children who are the poorest of the poor.

2.5.2 Scope and Outcomes

Due to the global food crisis, the School Breakfast Program experienced many difficulties during the year. As a cost-saving measure, the number of assisted schools was reduced from 180 in 2007 to 157, or a reduction of 23 schools. This contraction in coverage reversed a historical trend of expanding coverage (see Table 2.10). The schools that were phased out were mainly those along the national highway (where poverty issues are less severe) and those where the school management showed low levels of competence and good governance. In spite of these measures, it was still necessary to suspend programming in schools in March 2008 when the price of a kilogram of rice ballooned to over 3,000 riels per kilogram (about \$0.75). A global call for assistance by World Food Program enabled breakfasts to resume at the end of the school year with the expectation that there will be continued support in the 2008/9 school year. The cessation of school breakfasts did appear to impact negatively on attendance and dropout levels, indicating (by its absence) that this support is having positive effect.



Synergies in Programming: A Cham Bilingual Classroom Assistant serves breakfast to both Cham and Khmer children

Table 2.10: Change in Coverage in the School Breakfast Program, 2004/5 to 2007/8

School Year	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Food (Metric Tons)
2004/5	154	55,000	1,458.45
2005/6	160	64,000	2,257.93
2006/7	180	83,400	2,008.50
2007/8	157	61,400	2,464.07

The provision of take-home rations has also been affected by the global food crisis. In this respect beneficiary numbers have dropped from a high of 5,704 in 2007 to 4,500 in 2008, as mentioned earlier.

In a move to increase ownership of the program, WFP has begun to issue formal agreements to implementing partners including KAPE and the Government. Under the most recent agreements signed, WFP has asked the Government to assume more responsibility for reporting and monitoring, shifting a role once performed by KAPE to the Government.

2.5.3 Issues in Implementation

Governance Issues and Monitoring Capability: One of the main worries in the implementation of the School Breakfast Program has been KAPE’s ability to provide adequate monitoring support for the program. Because the implementation of SBP is governed by high expectations for cost-sharing, KAPE has agreed to cover all costs for staffing, travel, and equipment, as these pertain to its mandate for oversight. Unfortunately, KAPE has only been able raise funding for one program monitor to oversee 157 schools. By shifting the responsibility of data entry and reporting to the Provincial Office of Education, WFP had hoped to ease the burden on KAPE to some degree. Although KAPE personnel reported 80 school visits during the school year, there were a number of reported incidents of corruption and misuse of WFP food stuffs.

POE Ability to Meet Its Mandate: As noted above, WFP has shifted responsibility for reporting and data entry with respect to food use to the Provincial Office of Education. Unfortunately, the

POE has not fulfilled this expectation and has shifted the responsibility for reporting back to KAPE. This issue is still being discussed with WFP and Government to find a satisfactory resolution.

2.6 Agency Consultancies and Special Events

KAPE did not undertake many consultancies during 2008. There were, however, two research projects that the agency was contracted to undertake. One of these was a situational analysis in Dambae District for a project called REACH that is to be implemented by Plan International. KAPE engaged Ms. Jessica Daniel to do this research in collaboration with various members of the Girls' Education Initiative section. The research yielded a fascinating report that looked not only at school efficiency variables but also life attitudes and motivation of children who are both in and out of school. The research found many children do not think about their futures and generally tend to think of educational success in very broad and vague terms. This suggested that not all children have a well-developed understanding of *how* school can help them, though they believe that it *will somehow*. There were many similar insights to understanding children's behavior regarding school participation that moved beyond the more usual analyses of economic factors.

KAPE was also commissioned by UNICEF to assist the National EFA Secretariat to complete the National EFA Mid-decade Assessment Report for the period 2001 to 2005. The Ministry specifically requested the assistance of KAPE in this undertaking since the agency had earlier helped the National EFA Secretariat to draft the EFA National Plan in 2003. The completed report covering all EFA sectors was completed and submitted to the Ministry in August 2008.

Finally, KAPE was honored with a visit from British MP Angus MacNeil who came to Cambodia for two weeks in September 2008 to volunteer with the international development charity VSO. Angus MacNeil is the only Scottish MP taking part in VSO's Project *PolVol*, which will see eleven MPs from the UK spending time volunteering their skills in the developing world and trying to solve problems collectively. During his stay in Kampong Cham, Mr. MacNeil was able to spend a day with KAPE staff and visited Prey Chor Primary School where he observed teachers in a workshop learning how to produce teaching aids. He also visited some scholarship recipients supported by KAPE in their village to get a better understanding of the reality facing Cambodian families with respect to the education of their children. Mr. MacNeil promised to advocate for both the poor and educational improvement in Cambodia upon his return to the United Kingdom.



Angus MacNeil (on the right), Member of Parliament, Visiting with KAPE managers and advisers.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

3.1 General Concerns

The steady contraction in funding levels since 2006 has generated some anxiety among agency planners, particularly as the world enters an era of global financial crisis. Although the number of donors assisting KAPE has actually been increasing, the new projects that they support tend to be smaller. That is, what is of most concern about recent changes is that large institutional donors are becoming fewer in number. Since 2005, long-standing agreements with large institutional donors such as UNICEF and the US Department of Labor have come to an end, leaving one large institutional donor (USAID) and a fair number of small to medium-sized donors to take up the slack. Since smaller projects are less able to absorb institutional costs for fixed expenditures (e.g., director salaries, staff development, etc.), risk levels for the continuation adequate institutional support have increased. This is particularly so since USAID has not yet indicated its future planning with respect to a continued role in the education sector. Although USAID and other donors have demonstrated much satisfaction with the quality of KAPE programming so far, the difficult global financial environment in general has cast a long shadow across future involvement in the education sector.

3.2 Future Directions

In spite of the uncertainties described above, KAPE has been growing in strength in terms of its own internal governance and planning. In this regard, KAPE has re-structured its Board so that there is increased involvement in agency oversight. The agency also fulfilled a major goal to formally establish a presence in provinces outside of Kampong Cham. With the recent fielding of KAPE staff under ESCUP in Kratie and Mondulhiri Provinces, it has come a long way towards realizing this goal. In addition, the agency has overhauled its financial systems to improve accountability and oversight, upgraded much of its equipment, and improved its personnel practices including the reform of the staff appraisal system. In addition, the agency has revised its website and hopes to mount a vigorous campaign to start fund raising over the internet. Moreover, much of its programming continues to demonstrate innovation and creative thinking, while programs that have not been able to meet internal standards have been phased out. The number of donors interested in working with KAPE seems promising and the agency still hopes that it will be possible to establish a long-term relationship with USAID, which actually helped to create the agency through its support of the CAPE Project.

Agency managers are also considering plans to diversify the agency into a number of semi-independent divisions, though this would be a very long-term goal. A project implementation arm rooted in Kampong Cham would continue to be the primary focus of the agency, but there is hope that KAPE could formalize its involvement in educational research by setting up a separate division with offices in Phnom Penh. The creation of such a division would not only help to stabilize agency income for the benefit of its grassroots programming but also continue to feed innovative program development and maintain its reputation for cutting edge projects.