Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
Development with a Human Face

Annual Report: 2007

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Programming Scope and Beneficiaries

The present report is intended to demonstrate KAPE's commitment to transparent operational practices. The report is to be distributed to the agency's Advisory Board, donors, stakeholders, and the Provincial Office of Education to comply with requirements outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by KAPE and the Provincial Office of Education,

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Agency Profile
- Date Established: 1999
- National Staff: 38
- Expatriate Advisers: 3
- Cash Receipts FY 07: $689,456
- Primary Schools Served: 241
- Secondary Schools Served: 20
- Districts Served: 6
- Number of Projects: 6

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Youth, and Sport in September 2005. This report covers the 2006/7 academic year, which also coincides with the agency's fiscal year (October 2006 to September 2007). Agency programming remains much the same from last year with six major programs being supported in collaboration with government and a number of donors (see Box 1). When counting technical (though not financial) support to schools, the number of primary schools assisted increased to 241 during the fiscal year though schools receiving both financial and technical support remained the same at 211. Similarly, the number of secondary schools supported increased from 16 to 20, mainly due to the construction of new (but very small) secondary schools/basic education schools by government in existing target areas. Overall, KAPE estimates that target schools include over 100,000 children in all. As funding prospects become somewhat cloudy over the next several years and there is a greater desire within the agency to focus more on quality improvement rather than on expanded coverage, it is expected that the number of supported schools will begin to drop dramatically in coming years.

Programming continued to be focused on six districts in Kampong Cham Province, KAPE'S core programming area, stretching from East to West. Target districts included the following:
- Ponyea Krek
- Tbong Khmum
- Tombae
- Koh Sotin
- Prey Chor
- Batheay

1.2 Programming Content

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Box 1: Currently Supported Programming
- Girls' Education Initiative (GEI)
- OPTIONS: Combating Child Trafficking through Education
- Child Friendly Schools Initiative (CFSI)/(CFSD)
- Child Friendly Schools in Remote Areas Project (CFSRA)
- Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations (ESCUP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)

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The agency provided support to six major projects ranging from Child Friendly School activities to Girls' Education and school feeding during the current reporting period. The line-up of agency programming is summarized in Box 1. One of KAPE's long-standing projects started to undergo a metamorphosis in management structure and approach as UNICEF funding was phased out at the end of the year and the European Union/Ciai began a new project called 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. The ESCUP Program was also extended for 18 months by USAID and will be focusing more intensively on better systematization of Child Friendly Secondary School programming, outreach to Chams and minority groups, and sustaining activities started under ESCUP I. Similarly, funding for CFSRA was extended by Plan International/Cambodia to July 2008. KAPE also undertook a number of research activities that may lead to new programming including a study on micronutrient sprinkles supported by the World Food Program and Cham and migrant children issues, which was funded by Save the Children/Sweden in collaboration with ESCUP/USAID.

The majority of projects supported by KAPE continue to be closely aligned with Government policy to promote Education for All and Child Friendly Schools. In this respect, CFSI/CFSD, CFSRA, and ESCUP all follow a child friendly school programming framework. On the other hand, GEI and OPTIONS focus primarily on inclusive education issues and are more closely aligned with the EFA planning framework of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS). SBP focuses on children's health and nutrition and indirectly supports *Dimension 3: Health, Nutrition, and Safety* of the CFS policy framework.

1.3 Agency Receipts & Donor Support

FY 2007 was a successful year for KAPE with respect to its ability to resource existing programming. Nevertheless, cash funding levels have dropped from an unsustainable peak last year of $865,262 to $689,456 in the current year, which is still high in historical terms. This represents a drop of $175,806 or about 20% in funding, year on year (see Table 1.1). In all, KAPE was able to identify funding support from 12 donors during the fiscal year, which is two more than last year indicating that the agency has been able to diversify its support though this inevitably increases reporting requirements and the need for greater fund management coordination at the same time that the size of the average grant is dropping. KAPE's leading cash donor was UNICEF at $202,829 followed by USAID/World Education

Table 1.1: Agency Receipts by Donor, FY 2007

UNICEF/Swedish Int'l Development Agency	$202,829
USAID/World Education	$164,852
US Dept of Labor/World Education	$116,287
The Asia Foundation (TAF)	$28,000
Room to Read (RtR)	$25,888
Global Fund for Women (GFW)	$5,000
PLAN/International (PI)	$92,075
PLAN (Baseline Survey & HIV Research)	$6,585
Global Fund for Children (GFC)	$13,500
VSO (Baseline Survey)	$2,407
Save the Children/Sweden	$2,900
World Food Program[1]	$1,248,291
World Food Program (Research Project)	$8,937
ICCO (Dutch Matching Funds)	$20,196
Total Receipts (Cash Receipts Only)	**$689,456**
Total Receipts (Cash Receipts & In Kind Support)	**$1,937,747**

($164,852) and the US Dept of Labor/World Education ($116,287). 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 $1,248,291 during the fiscal year. Although VSO has provided some financial support to KAPE in return for agency assistance in the administration of a baseline survey for the Mainstreaming Inclusive Education Program (MIE), it should be noted that VSO also provides considerable support to KAPE in the form of expatriate advisers who work in the agency as volunteers. There are currently three such advisers working in KAPE to help build the capacity of national staff.

There is considerable uncertainty about funding levels for next year since programs currently supported by UNICEF/Sida and the US Dept of Labor will end with no hope for extension in FY08. USAID has agreed to continued support for the highly successful ESCUP Program through to the end of FY08 but with no extension possible for that project after that. UNICEF/Sida indicated that this will be its last year of funding support to CFSI after a six-year run. Both agencies have decided that it is time to let the program go and see how well government can support it on its own. Similarly, the US Dept of Labor has decided not to award a continuation of its programming to KAPE's long-time partner, World Education. Among smaller donors, the Global Fund for Women has ended its support this year with no more extensions possible based on an earlier understanding that the donor would provide three years of support only (FY05, FY06, and FY07). KAPE has been able to identify three new donors who will start support in FY08 including the European Union/Ciai, Terre des Hommes/Holland, and American Jewish World Service (AJWS). These new sources of funding will help to at least partially replace funding lost from other long-standing donors.

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[1] World Food Program provides support *in kind* only to KAPE affiliated primary schools. This support takes the form of rice, canned fish, cooking oil, and salt, valued at $1,248,291 based on a unit cost of $14.50 per child and assistance to 86,089 children during the academic year.

1.4 Financial Disbursements and Costs

The agency's burn rate for the funding provided has been quite high with disbursements during the fiscal year registering $668,598 (see Table 1.2) out of total receipts of $689,456. This indicates a burn rate of 97%, 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 $418,024 or 63% of all funding. Personnel costs for national staff comprised 13% of all outlays, which is in keeping with a strategic goal of keeping personnel costs under 15% of total outlays to maintain the agency's competitive edge in seeking funding. Similarly, direct operational costs were quite reasonable at $30,873 or 5% of total outlays. Costs for Technical Assistance and Consultants amounted to $58,040 or 9% of outlays, reflecting the agency's involvement in several research studies such as stakeholder perceptions of the use of micronutrient sprinkles in schools, educational access for Cham children, and baseline surveys for affiliated donors. Indirect Cost Recovery, which was recently introduced to build institutional sustainability of the agency, registered $14,987 or 2.2% of the funds received.

Table 1.2: Breakdown of Disbursements, FY 2007

Expenditure Category	Amount ($)	%
Personnel (National Staff Only)	$87,187	13.0%
Local Technical Support (Workshops)	$3,063	0.5%
Fringe Costs	$2,010	0.3%
Travel	$50,096	7.5%
Equipment	$4,318	0.6%
Operating Costs	$30,873	5.0%
Grants to Schools and Children	$418,024	63.0%
Consultants	$20,829	3.0%
External Technical Assistance (TA)	$37,211	5.5%
Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR)	$14,987	2.2%
Total Disbursements	**$668,598**	**100%***

*Rounded

2. PROGRAM REPORTS

2.1 Girls' Education Initiative

General Overview: As government has taken over more of the burden for scholarship support and also as donor willingness to continue to support new intakes has diminished, the number of children entering the program has decreased markedly with only 159 receiving scholarships at Grade 7 in 2007, compared to 495 in the previous year. Similarly, streamlining and cost cutting has seen a contraction in the total number of beneficiaries receiving support in the year just ending, particularly with those in the Curriculum Enhancement Program (i.e., life skills for vulnerable girls). In this respect, the program assisted 1,937 beneficiaries (both boys and girls) across all sectors compared with 2,869 in the previous year or a decline of 32% (see Table 2.1). The only sectors that showed an increase in beneficiary levels are at upper secondary school level and in vocational training centers, which reflects the movement of large cohorts admitted to the program earlier through the education system and the program. While these declines are regrettable, they reflect the need to better prioritize support and accommodate the new funding environment. In particular, this means focusing more on existing cohorts than supporting new ones, especially since dropout rates have been increasing among older cohorts due to increased economic penetration of the province.

Box 2: GEI Profile

Donors: US Dept of Labor/World Education, GFC, GFW, RtR, The Asia Foundation
Direct Beneficiaries: 1,937 children
Budget: $204,694 (inclusive of OPTIONS)
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: $93
Sectors Targeted: Primary, Secondary, Vocational
Number of Districts Covered: 5
Target Schools: 20 Secondary Schools, 41 Primary Schools, 2 Vocational Ctrs.

Table 2.1: Change in Program Coverage, 2005-06 & 2006-2007

Domain	Number of Schools/Beneficiaries		% Change
	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Primary Schools	191	191	0%
Lower Secondary Schools	19	19	0%
Upper Secondary Schools	8	8	0%
Curriculum Enhancement Beneficiaries	1,125	351	-69%
Girls' Scholarship Subcomponent (LSS)	1,392	1,175	-16%
Girls' Scholarship Subcomponent (USS)	314	355	+13%
Vocational Training	38	56	+47%
Total Beneficiaries	2,869	1,937	-32%

Interventions and Outcomes:

The primary interventions supported by GEI included life skills for girls at risk at primary level, scholarship support for girls at lower and upper secondary school level, and subsidies for study at local vocational training centers for girls who failed the *Diplome Examination* and were not allowed to continue their studies to Grade 10. The distribution of beneficiaries by intervention is summarized in Table 2.1.

GEI programming at lower secondary school level was this year deeply impacted by a spike in dropout rates. This year, the number of girls dropping out of the program amounted to 24% of all those beginning the year, up from 11% last year (see Table 2.2). The increase in dropout was fueled by more beneficiaries at Grade 8 leaving the system, which is unusual (see below). Nevertheless, Gender parity levels in enrolment in supported schools continued to show major improvements from baseline years with changes of 0.28, 0.37, and 0.45 in Grades 7, 8, and 9, respectively. Overall, only eight schools reported gender parity to be below 0.80, which would be considered rather low in today's environment of greater gender awareness. This figure is down from 84% of schools reporting GPI below 0.80 before the program started.

Table 2.2: Overall Promotion, Drop-out and Failure Rates at Lower Secondary School

Category	Number of Beneficiaries	%
Students at Beginning of Year	*1,199*	*100%*
Promoted	764	64%
Dropped Out	156	24%
Failed	160	13%

Uncertain Futures: Scholarship beneficiaries at a lower secondary school, 2007

At upper secondary school level, another cohort of girls completed the secondary education cycle. Of those starting in the program in 2001, 20% made it through to Grade 12. This compares with a completion rate of 17% for an earlier cohort the year before. Dropout across all cohorts in Grades 10 to 12 was only 6%, down from 19% in the previous year. Failure rate among beneficiaries was 8% but 29% among those taking the nationally set Bac Double Examination failed whereas last year all those that took the examination had passed. GPI changes in enrolment are encouraging with an average GPI of 0.85 at Grade 10 (up from 0.56), 0.75 at Grade 11 (up from 0.56) and 0.72 at Grade 12 (up from 0.45).

A new group of girls numbering 56 signed up for vocational training during the year just ending. 52 girls successfully completed their vocational studies or 93% of those who enrolled. All students participated in

a Safe Migration Workshop and Micro-Enterprise training at the end of the course. All vocational training students were recruited from a cohort, which entered the program in 2003 and included mainly those who failed the *Diplome Examination* at the end of the 2005/6 academic year. There were 85 students in this category, indicating that about 66% of this group opted for vocational training. If one includes another 100 students in this cohort who dropped out in 2005/6, however, the rate of pick-up drops to only 30%, an issue of some concern.

<u>Close-up View</u>: Vocational Training supported by GEI

Rather than set up its own centers, which would be very costly, KAPE supports local training centers operated by Khmer Women's Associations to train beneficiaries. These establishments have welcomed support from KAPE, which has recently been their main source of funding. KAPE advocates with the World Food Program for rice assistance and other forms of support for the centers. Although the centers were originally designed to cater to the needs of young women, they also provide training to young men who have limited educational opportunities.

Beneficiaries engaging in hands-on practice in being a beautician

Sewing is a very traditional skill for Cambodian women but remains popular with both young and old

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<u>Issues in Implementation</u>:

Acceleration in Dropout: The most important problem encountered by GEI this year has been the spike in dropout levels, which greatly exceeds historical levels. Dropout levels have more than doubled since last year, mostly due to a major increase in children leaving school in Grade 8, which is not usual. Program staff members believe that the cause for this accelerated dropout is due to rapid economic development of the eastern side of the province, which has seen a major proliferation in the number of plantations (mainly cassava) as well as factories (mainly for textiles and rubber). These changes have been greatly facilitated by improvements in road infrastructure such as renovation of the National Highway and extensive construction of tertiary roads into remote areas, which facilitates movement of the population. Tracer studies of children dropping out confirm that economic reasons continue to be a major pull on poor children receiving scholarships. The high incidence of marriage as a reason for dropping out, even among girls in Grade 8, suggests that overage enrollment among girls in Grade 8 suggests that overage enrolment in later cohorts is also a major issue.

Need for Career Counseling: Although KAPE has been reasonably successful in keeping most of its scholarship beneficiaries in school, the intrusion of 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. In the academic year just ending, 28% of girls dropped out before even taking the examination while another 26% failed the examination and are barred from continuing onto Grade 10. Thus, 54% of those who made it as

far as Grade 9 (at considerable expense to themselves and the program) simply disappear from the program's radar screen. 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). This analysis suggests the need for GEI to expand its counseling support beyond issues of staying in school but also to intensive counseling about their options in life if they decide to leave school.

Possible Need for Continuing Support at Tertiary Level: Earlier in this report, it was noted that KAPE needed to focus its priorities on assisting existing cohorts rather than supporting new cohorts. This decision has been difficult because the original mandate for the agency as set out in its Statutes is to assist children in the basic education cycle (Grades 1 to 9). This mandate has already been stretched to include beneficiaries at upper secondary school and it is being stretched again as many beneficiaries who leave school at upper secondary school level plead for additional support for further studies. With the support of its Advisory Board, KAPE has taken a strategic decision to explore the possibilities of support for older cohorts at tertiary level. Government has recently made this decision easier by opening up the entrance examination to the Provincial Teacher Training College (PTTC) to students completing Grade 9.[2] The government has also indicated that it would give priority to KAPE scholarship beneficiaries in grading the examination. Thus, this policy will enable an important career path for those leaving school at Grade 9 that links with the need to address teacher shortages in rural areas in the primary school sector.

2.2 OPTIONS: Combating Child Trafficking through Education

General Overview: The OPTIONS Program continues to be closely linked with GEI activities, which it largely helps to fund. While OPTIONS provided a large part of the budgetary support for the Girls' Lower Secondary Education program across the 20 secondary schools supported under GEI, it also provided more focused support to 48 primary schools in the core districts of Batheay and Ponyea Krek Districts. Support at primary school mainly took the form of primary school scholarships, remediation of slow learners, support for school breakfast infrastructure, and life skills. At secondary school level, OPTIONS also provided support for scholarships (lower

> **Box 3: OPTIONS Profile**
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> Donors: US Dept of Labor/World Education
> Direct Beneficiaries: 3,001 (primary only) plus 1,175 at lower secondary (scholarship support), yielding 4,176
> Budget: $116,287
> Unit Cost per Beneficiary: $28
> Sectors Targeted: Primary, Secondary
> Districts Covered: 2 Core Districts
> Target Schools: 20 Secondary Schools, 48 Primary Schools

secondary only, see GEI Section) life skills, girls' support networks, and girls' counselors.

Interventions and Outcomes at Primary Level:

At primary level, OPTIONS provided support to 3,001 children at risk (73% girls) through various interventions that covered primary scholarships, life skills, remediation, and curriculum enhancement (for girls only). Of this number, 528 received multiple interventions in order to maximize impact on dropout and repetition. The identification of children at risk occurs through several means and may include standardized interviews, nominations by community members and teachers, and a review of attendance records. In general, dropout among beneficiaries at primary school level was less than 2% while promotion rates were about 85%. These rates are considerably below the district and provincial averages, which were re-

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[2] The previous teacher recruitment regime required completion of Grade 12, but a new policy to alleviate teacher shortages has allowed entrance to the Provincial Teacher Training College at Grade 9 for a limited period of 2 years, giving a unique window of opportunity to GEI beneficiaries who leave school after Grade 9.

ported to be 13.7% for dropout and 16.5% for repetition (see Table 2.3).

It should also be noted that OPTIONS programming supports a number of vulnerable children from other districts who have been referred by other service providers. In all, 261 children have been referred to KAPE for support through referral networks supported by the program. The majority of these students were referred by the Dept. of Social Affairs and a smaller number by associated social service partners such as Mith Samlanh (Street Friends) and Vulnerable Children's Action Organization (VCAO). The most common social category for referred children is 'families in crisis' but also includes rape victims, street children, and AIDS orphans. The development of a social referral network that links KAPE with children in great need is one of the very important achievements of the OPTIONS Program.

Table 2.3: Summary of Key OPTIONS Interventions and Beneficiary Numbers (Primary Only)

Intervention	No. of Students	Girls	Total Dropout	Female Dropout	Total Repetition	Female Repetition
Primary Scholarships	1,218	772	3%	3%	7%	6%
Remediation	940	458	0.3%	0%	17%	16%
Life Skills (Primary)	1,021	596	1%	1%	--	--
Curric. Enhancement	350	350	1%	1%	--	--
Total	**3,529***	**2,176***	**1.6%**	**1.6%**	**---**	**--**

*Does not account for overlap between interventions.

Interventions and Outcomes at Secondary Level: OPTIONS also provides support activities at secondary school level that not only includes financial support to GEI for scholarships but a n umber of other activities as well. These include the following:

Girls' Support Groups/Girls' Clubs: Activities to provide a social support network for scholarship recipients continued during the year. All female scholarship beneficiaries have been participating in this activity, due mainly to strong support from schools staff. As part of their regular meetings, the clubs foster team building skills and focus heavily on social awareness raising activities in the community that relate to enrolment, domestic violence, and environmental protection. An important development during the year has been the decision to link support groups with counseling services provided by schools (see below). As part of this linkage, students help counselors with follow-up visits when a beneficiary is in danger of dropping out. The visits are not professional but are intended to provide peer support to students to persevere in their studies when adverse conditions at home make such perseverance difficult.

Counseling Services: OPTIONS has continued to provide support to female counselors who have been identified in all target secondary schools. During the reporting period, 287 beneficiaries made use of counseling services. Counselors seek to help beneficiaries deal with issues relating to domestic violence, physical maturation, financial problems, social growing, etc. Schools reported that these counseling sessions convinced 169 students to persevere in their studies. KAPE staff received an opportunity for capacity building support from The Asia Foundation to better develop counseling services for beneficiaries. The three-day seminar discussed basic counseling skills such as listening, establishing a rapport with students, and asking questions. Trainers emphasized that there is a difference between being an adviser and a counselor. KAPE organized echo workshops in target areas for existing counselors. A formal evaluation of counseling services during the year indicated that the majority of schools are doing a good job in providing support to students. Nevertheless, problems were encountered in a small minority of schools that reflect infrequent home visits to consecutively absent students, failure to document activities and the students counseled, and weak communication with other staff in the school. KAPE hopes that constructive dialogue with these schools will help them to improve their counseling standards.

Life Skills Activities: OPTIONS also supports life skills classes at lower secondary school level as a

means to increase the relevance of secondary education for students at risk (see Close-up View below). Because of funding constraints, these study options are only available in three lower secondary schools, mainly in target areas of a related program that seeks to reduce trafficking called OPTIONS. The OPTIONS Program has mainly been responsible for funding these activities this year, but funding may be available from other interested donors next year. Life skills courses are open to all students in selected schools and not just those receiving scholarship assistance. Program staff reported that during the year, 2,501 students (of whom 1,140 were girls) studied life skills topics of a prevocational nature, mainly in Grade 8.

Close-up View: Life Skills Programming under OPTIONS
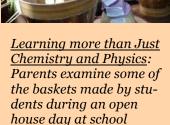

A cooking class

As part of the GEI's effort to empower students, life skills are provided as electives that allow students to pick the topics that appeal to them. Life skill topics include basic computer literacy, sewing, bicycle repair, traditional dance, fish/frog raising, vegetable growing, and cooking. Students are allowed to choose two topics of interest to them during the period November to May. Each course lasts 11 weeks. Life skills activities also foster strong links with communities as many of those teaching the skills elaborated above are recruited from among local people with these special skills. In all, 15 teachers were recruited from communities while three were state teachers.

This year, life skills programming tried to improve its outreach to the community by organizing an open house day for parents where they could see what their children are learning. This helps to demonstrate that the school is making an effort to make the education provided more relevant to local people.

Learning to Supplement Family Food Production: Students examine a fish raising pond at their school, part of life skills programming

Learning more than Just Chemistry and Physics: Parents examine some of the baskets made by students during an open house day at school

A Practical Exercise in Empowerment: Empowering children means letting them make decisions that affect them such as choosing a life skill that they want to learn, as in this group exercise to choose an elective.

Issues in Implementation: The issues in implementation under the OPTIONS Program are very similar to those recounted under GEI and focus on accelerating dropout rates as children move through the education cycle as well as maintaining continuity in educational opportunity as children move from primary school to lower secondary school and beyond. As the OPTIONS Program tries to focus its attention on children in the basic education cycle, the responsibility for monitoring children who complete (or dropout from) lower secondary school falls heavily on allied GEI programming with its problems of declining funds and recurrent budget shortfalls. Thus, many children fall off the radar screen after they finish Grade 9 and it is feared that many of these migrate to Phnom Penh. The OPTIONS Program has tried to work closely with other partners in its alliance such as Street Friends so that these children can be referred to other service providers who can help with safe migration issues.

2.3 Child Friendly School Initiative (CFSI)

General Overview: The Child Friendly School Initiative is one of KAPE's oldest programs and most important technical initiatives. 2007 marks the sixth and final year of UNICEF/Sida support for the CFSI Program. After a six-year run, the conclusion of the project, at least under UNICEF/Sida auspices, is a milestone event. The overall impression among most observers, and especially among those in Ministry, is generally a positive one. If nothing else, the project has been an important catalyst for child friendly school approaches in Cambodia. In thinking back to the pre-CFSI environment, most CFS activities took the form of attendance of international meetings with little systematic follow-up upon return to Cambodia. The original solicitation by KAPE in 2001 to set up a specific program framework dedicated to child friendly school development has led to the emergence of an enduring

> **Box 4: CFSI Profile**
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> Donor: UNICEF/Sida
> Direct Beneficiaries: 28,392 (primary only)
> Budget: $202,829
> Unit Cost per Beneficiary: $7.53
> Sectors Targeted: Primary, Secondary
> Districts Covered: 4 Districts
> Target Schools: 3 Secondary Schools, 97 Primary Schools
> Target Clusters: 24
> School Grants: $68,000
> Secondary School Grants: $12,000

implementation structure that is not only still with us, but also very high profile in character. This includes the establishment of an interdepartmental CFS Steering Committee, the successful development of a menu approach to program implementation based on fixed dimensions, and a well developed body of documentation/training modules describing a wide range of interventions. The tri-partite nature of the project has also demonstrated the advantages of partnerships between government, an international organization, and a local NGO. The CFSI Program has also had significant knock-on effects including the development of new programs that borrow heavily from the experience and earlier work of the program. These include the Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations Program (ESCUP, supported by USAID/World Education), the Child Friendly Schools in Remote Areas Program (CFSRA, supported by Plan International), and most recently, the Child Friendly School Development Project

(CFSD, supported by the European Commission/Ciai). During the reporting period, program management reported that cluster-mediated activities provided direct support to 26,925 children with program costs estimated at $202,829

> **Box 5: Summary of Performance Indicators**
> 1. Number of CFS Classrooms: 564
> 2. Prim Repetition Rate (All Grades): 12.0%
> 3. Prov Repetition Rate (All Grades): 16.5%
> 4. Prim Dropout Rate (All Grades): 3.6%
> 5. Prov Dropout Rate (All Grades): 13.6%

Interventions and Outcomes at Primary Level: In terms of impacts on children, KAPE can only speak for Kampong Cham Province where it has been most intimately involved in field level implementation. However, the data speaks for itself. Both repetition and dropout are significantly below provincial averages (see Box 5), even though target sites mainly comprise rural areas with high levels of poverty and out-migration. Achievement test data suggests improved learning in comparison with non-CFSI sites. Over 560 CFS classrooms have been established entailing significant investments in classroom furniture, materials, and teacher training. Concrete channels for enhanced involvement of parents and community members in their children's education have been developed including home-based remediation, community-based life skills activities, and more participatory school improvement planning. Finally, the physical environments of nearly a hundred schools have been upgraded with respect to school grounds,

Study club in a school library

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library availability, and the availability of water systems.

The program has also been able to provide empirical evidence for changes in learning through systematic research activities each year. Research activities have focused most heavily on SRP implementation but have also taken in general achievement testing using random samples of students. These provisions helped to meet an important requirement laid down by the Sida Advisory Team (SAT) for overall program implementation.

UNICEF's willingness to support block grants to schools has enabled a very stakeholder driven programming framework with local stakeholders determining the kinds of activities that they need and the funding levels for each activity. While some activities are common across all clusters (such as CFS classrooms and scholarships), there has been a growing diversity in activities between sites. Activities requested by clusters include peer support networks, student associations, homework clubs, life skills, remedial support, and others. Monitoring reports indicate high levels of efficiency in the implementation of

A CFSI supported school recently recognized by MoEYS, 2007

activities including dropout among scholarship beneficiaries of less than 5% and high promotion rates among remediated students (87%) (see Table 2.4 below).

Table 2.4: Summary of Major CFSI Interventions, Beneficiary Numbers, and Success Rates (Primary Level Only), 2006-07

Intervention	Total	Girls	Success Rate Data
Primary School Scholarships	2,212	1,134	Total Dropout: 4.1%; Female Dropout: 3.4%
Child Seeking Schools	115	60	Out of 170 out of school children identified, 68% re-enrolled
CFS Classroom Support	22,500	11,250	564 teachers received support; 52% scored 'Very Good' on an internal assessment and 45% scored 'Satisfactory.'
Peer Support Networks	433	206	76% of assisted children passed; Failed: 21%; Dropout: 3%
Homework Clubs	1,035	490	87% of assisted children passed; Failed: 12%; Dropped out: 1%
Life Skills (Prevocational)	587	269	Dropout Rate: 1%; Promotion Rate: 99%
Remediation	1,035	490	Promotion Rate: 87%; Failure Rate: 12%
Curriculum Enhancement for Girls	175	175	Dropout Rate: 0%; Promotion Rate: 98%
Supplementary Learning at Home	300	139	Promotion Rate: 82%: Failure Rate: 17%
Total	**28,392**	**14,213**	

Issues in Implementation:

Maximalist versus Minimalist Learning: One of the primary disappointments among those who first started the CFSI program has been the recent tendency of CFS programming to cater to 'minimalist' learning outcomes. When it first began, KAPE had intended CFSI to be a program that developed models of 'maximal' learning with a strong focus on critical and creative thinking. At that time, there was no thought of developing a nation wide program, but rather to develop models of good practice in the

schools where the conditions were adequate to support such practice. These conditions referred to good school management, motivated teachers (hence the focus on volunteerism), no teacher shortages, and strong support from the District Office of Education. Thus, CFSI started as a 'niche' program focusing primarily on quality issues, not with the intent of being a national program as Child Friendly Schools have now become. This has had major implications for programming, which has seen a movement away from maximal learning to the basics instead (i.e., basic literacy and numeracy). In actual practice, this has meant reformulating many interventions to meet the lowest common denominator rather than developing models of excellence.

The Dangers of Rapid Expansion: The emergence of a less sophisticated program design as CFS programming goes national will also have implications for efforts to achieve a stakeholder driven development model where those participating in planning activities have the potential to make their own informed decisions. In general, the use of menus, grants, and the planning approach currently employed in CFSI was never originally intended to be used in clusters of the sort that are now being pushed into the program as part of the expansion agenda. The emerging danger is that earlier approaches will be diluted to accommodate schools that are not really ready for this kind of program and many believe that this is exactly what is happening. That is, programming is becoming increasingly prescriptive and top down. This is manifested in the low diversity in planning activities being implemented in schools; indeed, everyone appears to be doing exactly the same thing in many clusters, in line with a centrally driven agenda about what child friendliness means. When agendas are centrally driven, there is little scope for stakeholders to internalize what child friendly schools are all about, to think through the relevant issues, and build ownership of the program.

Sustainability: One of the important omissions in CFSI programming has been the failure to focus sufficiently on sustainability. Although the program is well placed to deal with issues of human resource sustainability, material resource sustainability is likely to be more problematic. Partly, this failure stems from the *ad hoc* nature of the funding extensions that were provided by UNICEF to KAPE. In this respect, KAPE has usually had to submit annual proposals each year to UNICEF in order to renew funding. This not only discouraged long-term planning but also distracted program advisers and staff from focusing on program reviews at the end of the year in order to prepare a new proposal against tight deadlines. CFSI will soon be getting additional funding from the European Commission to expand the program into new schools but also to provide a 'sustainability bridge' for the 20 best schools earlier supported under UNICEF/Sida. With assured funding for four years from the EC, KAPE program planners will hopefully have the time and wherewithal to address sustainability of programming in these schools. Because it is a local NGO created by and for the stakeholders in Kampong Cham, the agency will likely always have access to some funds to support the most important activities though at a lower level of intensity, since fund raising for local stakeholders is what local NGOs do. But there are seemingly new possibilities for sustainability as the government moves to Program-based Budgeting (PBB) and hopefully more flexible opportunities for the support of activities than was true under PAP.

2.4 Child Friendly Schools in Remote Areas (CFSRA)

General Overview: The first year of a two-year partnership between PLAN International and KAPE to implement the Child Friendly Schools for Remote Areas (CFSRA) project in Tombae District, Kampong Cham Province was completed in December 2006. After an assessment of the pilot and extended negotiations with PI/C, an agreement to extend the program to July 2008 was finally reached in March 2007. Important recommendations from the assessment included the need for better tracking of indicators and focusing on

> **Box 6: CFSRA Profile**
>
> Donor: Plan International/Cambodia
> Direct Beneficiaries: 3,983
> Budget: $92,075
> Unit Cost per Beneficiary:
> Sectors Targeted: Primary and Secondary
> Districts Covered: 1 District
> Target Schools: 29 Primary Schools
> Target Clusters:

fewer CFS dimensions, although there is the danger that doing so would undermine the holistic approach that makes CFS programming so attractive. In order to address the recommendations from the evaluation, KAPE has incorporated a more systematic indicator tracking system that links up with quarterly reporting. Under the new agreement, KAPE will start to extend its assistance to two secondary schools in the district while continuing support to 29 primary schools. Among the 29 supported schools, 19 are receiving intensive support in both health and educational interventions while an additional ten only receive support for health interventions. The CFSRA project aims to improve quality of and access to basic education through a holistic approach that is highly similar to that employed in CFSI and the ESCUP program.

Interventions and Outcomes: Implementation of interventions during the 2006/7 academic year was somewhat erratic due to an uneven flow of funds and the extended period of negotiation between KAPE and PI/C to finalize a new agreement. The program essentially operated without a formal agreement between the two agencies for the period December 2006 to March 2007. In spite of these difficulties, the project was able to provide technical support to nearly 4,000 children through a number of interventions including scholarships, remedial support, and health referrals. Table 2.5 below summarizes the number of beneficiaries in selected interventions and success rate data for each.

Table 2.5: Student Beneficiaries and Success Rate Data for Key Interventions in CFSRA, 2006/7

Intervention	Total	Female	Success Rate Data
School Mapping	105*	n/a	Only one school was allowed to conduct this activity at the request of PI/C staff.
Scholarships	960	513	96% of at-risk beneficiaries stayed in school
Life Skills	0	0	Suspended at the request of PI/C
Community Teacher Provisions	1,200 (est)	600 (est)	PTR levels dropped in 18 of 19 supported schools
CFS Classroom Refurbishment & Teacher Training	1,000 (est)	500 (est)	40% of observed classrooms met minimum standards for 'satisfactory' performance
Remedial Support for Slow Learners	696	335	86% of failing children in remedial classes were promoted
Disabled children receiving health referrals	22	3	22 children received treatment during the year for ear infections, myopia, and herniated testicle.
Total	**3,983**	**--**	

*Includes children identified in 2005/6

Overall, efficiency indicators across target schools have been most successful in the area of reducing repetition and lowering Pupil Teacher Ratios. In this respect, 64% of target schools reported reducing their rate of repetition against baseline figures in the 2006/7 academic year. Similarly, PTR levels have declined, with accompanying improvements in the quality of classroom learning environments, in 18 of the 19 schools assisted. This has been due largely to the program's support of Community Teachers as an interim measure while negotiations with the Provincial Office of Education occur to increase local intake of candidates for entry to the Provincial Teacher Training College. PI and KAPE have tentatively agreed to support scholarships to locally recruited teacher candidates who will be studying at the PTTC next year. With respect to dropout, there has been some progress but only 40% of schools reported declines against baseline figures. Similarly, gender parity for enrolment targets have only been achieved in slightly more than half of assisted schools, highlighting areas in need of further effort.

Progress against selected performance indicators is summarized below:

o   Pupil Teacher Ratio in target schools declined in 18 out of 19 schools receiving intensive assistance

o Dropout Rates declined in 40% of assisted schools against baseline figures.
o Repetition rates declined in 64% of assisted schools against baseline figures.
o Gender Parity in enrolment was achieved in 53% of assisted schools.
o CFS Classroom Performance Standards: 40% of classrooms achieved standards of 'satisfactory' based on a standardized assessment instrument.

Issues in Implementation:

Continuing Problems with Low Capacity among Core Group Members: The low capacity of staff in Dambae continues to give cause for concern. For example, despite the fact that the core group in Dambae had received training

Workshop participants try out a maths learning game.

on how to deliver a workshop on School Improvement Planning, many still seemed at a loss regarding the sequencing of steps in its implementation. Another area of low capacity among counterparts relates to school director's ability to analyze school efficiency data. This demonstrates that many school directors have no conception of how to calculate even very basic rates of school efficiency (e.g., dropout, promotion, etc.). In future it may be necessary to greatly simplify the graphic display of information provided to participants. In other projects, KAPE is currently experimenting with the development of school performance report cards in which each school receives a very basic statement about its individual performance during the previous academic year. The report card covers information about changes in school efficiency, community engagement, transparency, and other important issues relating to school management.

School Improvement Planning and Prescriptive Development Approaches: KAPE has expressed its concern to PI/C on several occasions that current modes of implementation in the project are highly prescriptive in nature. KAPE presented a stakeholder driven approach for implementation in the project design described in the proposal that relies mainly on a school grant approach. This approach has worked well in other projects implemented by KAPE and gives discretionary authority to stakeholders to select activities that they perceive to be most relevant to their needs or at least to negotiate the selection of activities with the project. Currently, KAPE has been asked to go into schools and tell counterparts what they will be doing according to a predetermined design. This is a very traditional approach to development, which does not promote local ownership (and by extension, sustainability) of the project. It also makes planning exercises such as those described earlier somewhat meaningless since all the major decisions have really already been taken by the project.

Need for a Review of Indicators: About a third of stated performance indicators either have not yet been achieved or have been suspended due to unanticipated changes in programming. The request from PI/C to suspend several activities during the last academic year such as school mapping, community-based life skills, and some others has made it impractical to achieve several stated indicators or about 18% of the total. These changes were largely due to difficulties in the flow of funds, which were resolved following the finalization of an agreement between the two agencies. KAPE will require guidance from PI/C to determine whether these activities can be restored to programming or whether the indicators should be revised (or eliminated).

2.5 Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations (ESCUP)

General Overview: The ESCUP Program has been a rising star among KAPE's programs with an increasingly high profile at Ministry level and major knock on effects as innovative programming gets picked up in other contexts. These innovations include the use of Community Teachers, Bilingual Classroom Assistants for minority groups, cultural life skills, Intermediate Classrooms (ICRs), child to child help networks, and a number of other interventions. ESCUP has also been the first program to start addressing minority issues within the CFS policy context. The program has been lauded by Ministry because it is the first program to systematically address the fundamental problem of teacher shortages in rural and remote areas though a combination of local recruitment and PTTC scholarships combined with an extensive support network for the recruitment of Community Teachers (111 in Kampong Cham alone) as an interim solution. This has made the program intensely popular with the Provincial Office of Education, which can count on a sustained solution to teacher shortages in two major districts where the program is active in 2008. The Ministry is also extremely happy that the program has addressed difficulties relating to language proficiency among the province's Muslim minority in a way that maintains the integrity of national policy but which has been highly effective in integrating young Cham children into the state school system. In all, it is estimated that the program has assisted nearly 22,000 children through a wide array of interventions.

Box 7: ESCUP Profile
Donor: USAID/World Education Direct Beneficiaries: 21,899 Budget: $164,852 Unit Cost per Beneficiary: $7.53 Sectors Targeted: Primary and Secondary Districts Covered: 2 Districts Target Schools: 90 Primary Schools, 7 Lower Secondary Schools Target Clusters: 11

Classroom demonstration in a CFS Classroom

ESCUP has also picked up efforts to extend CFS programming into the lower secondary school sector and has in the process been a leading agent for quality improvement in this sector. The program has been developing key interventions such as the organization of subject classrooms, intensive life skills support such as the support of computer labs and Integrated Pest Management, and the development of Subject Clubs, which allow students to develop particular interests in such areas as Creative Writing, Theatre, and History, depending on their own interests.

Interventions and Outcomes: ESCUP is distinguished from CFSI by its focus on expanding Child Friendly School Approaches to schools that are located in remote areas and/or have large minority populations. In Kampong Cham, minority groups largely refer to Cham populations who are Muslims. Because these schools have an entirely different set of problems than those in more mainstream areas, the program provides useful strategies for promoting CFS for marginalized populations, hence its name. ESCUP uses a non-prescriptive development strategy in a manner similar to that employed by CFSI. Because the program is relatively new, the Activity Menu is somewhat more abbreviated than that used under CFSI but it is expected that this will increase as the program matures. Clusters were given a choice of funding for 42 interventions (up from 25 in Year 1) from which to choose to meet problems and needs that they identified during annual planning exercises. ESCUP distributed $57,666 in grant funds to clusters and $17,632 to lower secondary schools to implement activities that they selected. Program staff provided capacity

building and technical support to local committees to implement the selected activities.

The most dramatic achievements of the ESCUP Program relate to major changes in school efficiency, which is the bottom line for government and donors. In this respect, district offices reported that 81% of supported schools in Tbong Khmum District had reduced repetition rates from a baseline while 67% of supported schools in Ponyea Krek District had done so (see Table 2.6 below). In the area of dropout, 84% of schools in Tbong Khmum reported declines while 57% of schools in Ponyea Krek reported such declines. These are remarkable impacts and have been attributed to the close fit of interventions to perceived needs as defined by stakeholders rather than a centrally set agenda.

Table 2.6: Summary of School Efficiency Impacts in ESCUP Supported Schools, 2007

District	Baseline Year		Current Year		Change		Percentage of Schools Reporting Decline
	Total	*Female*	*Total*	*Female*	*Total*	*Female*	
Repetition Rate Data							
Tbong Khmum	15%	15%	10%	10%	-5%	-5%	81%
Ponyea Krek	19%	18%	15%	14%	-4%	-4%	67%
Dropout Rate Data							
Tbong Khmum	10%	9%	6%	6%	-4%	-3%	84%
Ponyea Krek	8%	7%	5%	5%	-3%	-2%	57%

Impacts of other key interventions, beneficiary numbers, and success rate data are summarized in Table 2.7 below. In all, over 21,899 children in marginalized areas received direct support from the program.

Table 2.7: Student Beneficiaries and Success Rate Data for Key Interventions in ESCUP, 2007

Intervention	Total	Female	Success Rate Data
School Mapping and Re-enrolled Children	333	182	62% of those identified (537) re-enrolled, 76% receiving scholarship support
Scholarships (Primary only)	2,283	1,215	Only 2% of scholarship beneficiaries dropped out during the year; 6% of candidates are of Cham extraction;
Child-to-Child Help Networks	4,817	2,450	73% of all schools reported a decline in failure rates and 70% reported a decline in dropout rates in comparison to baseline levels.
Physically Rehabilitated Children	236	67	
Prevocational/Cultural Life Skills	1,696	1,024	
Community Teacher Provisions	4,880	2,440	122 teachers recruited and trained; 65% of incomplete schools added a grade; 69% of all schools reported a decline in PTR levels.
CFS Classroom Refurbishment & Teacher Training	4,185	2,092	93 teachers recruited and trained plus 25 SRP teachers=118 CFS Teachers;
Remediation for Slow Learners	2,464	1,166	93% Pass Rate
Bilingual Classroom Assistants	994	497	22 BCAs recruited and trained; Repetition rates declined from 23% to 14% in supported classrooms.
Total	**21,889**	**11,133**	

Other Interventions: Another important effort in the ESCUP Program that deserves mention relates to increasing educational relevance in a way that enhances the overall learning environment (e.g., library development, learning corners, etc.). Using an approach where once again, stakeholders set their own priorities with respect to possible interventions, the program was able to support 415 discrete activities of various kinds across the 90 primary schools supported in target areas. These activities and the number of schools implementing them are summarized in Table 2.7 below. Some of the more popular interventions

selected by schools included teacher and peer tutoring, educational exhibitions, pen pal networks, and health protection orientations. In many cases, these activities were mediated by student associations (e.g., peer tutoring, exhibitions, etc.).

Issues in Implementation:

Impact of Secondary School Expansion on Teacher Shortages: As large secondary school construction programs begin to pick up speed, the demand for secondary school teachers is also undergoing a commensurate increase in intensity. Teacher recruitment in this regard is made doubly difficult because most existing secondary school teachers disdain to be posted to the countryside where much of the new construction is occurring and Regional Teacher Training Colleges, which train such teachers, cannot keep up with the demand. A popular recruiting ground to staff the new facilities has been found in neighboring primary schools. The only problem with this approach is that most primary schools in these areas are also suffering from severe teacher shortages themselves. ESCUP believes that these shortages are becoming an invisible crisis in the education system, invisible because few donors seem to be aware of their impact on educational service provision. Because the availability of teachers is linked with almost every aspect of educational improvement, the persistence of these severe shortages undermines most everything that donors do. Because ESCUP has made a huge investment in the local recruitment of teachers for PTTC entry as well as immediate provisioning of Community Teachers to schools with the greatest needs, these shortages have eased (though not disappeared) in many target areas. Indeed, program planners estimate that ESCUP has supplemented teacher numbers by 20% or more in many schools. Thus, ESCUP supported areas make an attractive location from which to raid state teachers who are in turn posted to new secondary schools, thereby diluting program support.

Table 2.7: Activities Designed to Promote Educational Relevance across All Supported Schools

Activity	No. of Schools Implementing
1. Life Skill/Cultural Life Skills	22
2. Linguistic-based Interventions	20
3. Presence of library facilities	27
4. Rotating Libraries	5
5. Learning Corners	44
6. Teacher Tutoring	71
7. Peer Tutoring	58
8. Field Trips	7
9. Pen Pal Networks	46
10. Market Simulations	3
11. Health Protection Orientations*	56
12. Educational Exhibitions	56
Total	**415**

Success Story: Using Student Associations as a Vehicle for Change

One of tomorrow's leaders

Kranhyoung Primary School is located in Ponyea Krek District. In a survey conducted by KAPE in 2001, the survey team concluded that the school appeared to be a hopeless example of bad school management with barren school grounds, litter everywhere, and filthy classrooms. When the ESCUP program began in 2005, the old school director retired and was replaced by a teacher who had been promoted through the ranks. The new director has seized on the idea of Student Associations as a means to increase local ownership of the school. With support from ESCUP, he has done a remarkable job in transforming the school, both inside and out, by using the older students as a vehicle for change. The association formed at Kranhyoung has been blessed by a number of enthusiastic young leaders who wear red armbands. The activities carried out by the school's association have not only led to a better school environment, but have also provided students with an opportunity to learn leadership skills and build their self-confidence.

Mission accomplished.

Cooperation is fun.

2.7 School Breakfast Program & Take Home Rations

General Overview: In an *aide memoire* between MoEYS and the World Food Program in 2001, KAPE was named as one of 3 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 86,000 children in 180 primary

Box 8: SBP and THR Profile
Donor: World Food Program
Direct Beneficiaries (SBP): 86,089/Girls: 41,063
Direct Beneficiaries (Take Home Rations): 5,704/ Girls: 4,209
SBP Budget: In kind (rice, canned fish, cooking oil, and salt); Cash Value estimated at $1,127,000
Unit Cost per Beneficiary: $14.50
Sectors Targeted: Primary
Districts Covered: 4 Districts
Target Schools: 180 Primary Schools

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. In some areas, children also receive micronutrient packets to supplement vitamin and mineral intake as part of a pilot that KAPE is assisting WFP to trial (see below).

Food support is provided to schools in areas designated by WFP as food insecure with large numbers of children at risk of dropping out of school, particularly girls. KAPE assists in the implementation of this project by training community committees in their role in preparing the food; supporting the construction of stoves, the provision of cooking utensils and sanitary materials; and in distributing and monitoring of food aid. The program experienced some difficulties this year due the interruption of food supplies from WFP in January and February 2007. This is an unusual occurrence. 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. WFP has moved to extend SBP programming in the future and has entered into negotiations with all partners to issue new agreements. In addition, all partners have been cooperating to consolidate target sites requiring some school sites along the national highway to be phased out.

Other Interventions: Because of its close working relationship with the agency, the World Food Program has also designated KAPE as the implementer of its take home rice rations program, which is targeted at poor families with young children who may drop out of school. KAPE has helped to identify these children as part of its primary school scholarship activities where young children at risk are identified by local committees for scholarship aid. In addition to support for uniforms, stationery supplies, and copy books that is provided as part of other donor support, WFP has used KAPE as the conduit to also provide 15 kg of rice each month to 5,704 scholarship beneficiaries as an added incentive to keep children enrolled.

2.8 Agency Consultancies

In addition to its regular programming, KAPE was also selected as the agency to undertake a number of short-term consultancies in the basic education sector. Two of these involved baseline data collection for current donors and partners, namely VSO (for its Mainstreaming Inclusive Education Program) and Plan International (for its health

Box 9: Agency Consultancies
o VSO Baseline Survey
o Plan International Baseline Survey
o Optimizing Stakeholder Perceptions of Micronutrient Sprinkles in School Feeding
o Educational Access for Cham & Migrant Children

and education programming). Another consultancy involved a research study contracted by World Food Program to assess the satisfaction of local stakeholders (e.g., parents, children, and communities) with the introduction of micronutrient sprinkles in the School Breakfast Program. Recommendations from this study found stakeholder perceptions of adding micronutrient packages to the school breakfast program to

be generally positive by stakeholder that included children, parents and school members. A final study was funded by Save the Children/Sweden as part of its expanding interest in providing support to minority and migrant children. The study received considerable technical support from ESCUP/USAID in its execution and has provided many insights into how the Chams perceive their role in society and how they perceive themselves. The study will greatly facilitate suitable evolution in programming, particularly with respect to the growing role of Islamic Schools in the education sector.

3 CONC LUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

3.1 General Concerns

Many of the concerns raised in last year's report still apply. This refers to the overextended nature of agency support in an environment where donor interests are shifting. While receipts for FY07 were still high by historical standards, they nevertheless registered a 20% decline from last year's truly unsustainable levels. This situation will worsen in FY08 as support from UNICEF/Sida and the US Dept of Labor will not be available though new donors have been identified in the person of the European Commission, Plan International/Australia, and Terre des Hommes/Holland. Pulling back agency support could, however, be a blessing in disguise requiring a strategic change in direction that focuses more on consolidation and the development of high quality educational models. Such a direction actually fits with the agency's original intention when starting the CFSI Program, which changed course abruptly when government and donors pushed agency programming in a hurried expansion of CFS support, which necessitated lowering quality and focusing on the lowest common denominator. Moving back to an increased focus on quality issues rather than expansion, therefore, fits with a majority view within the agency and such a direction is being considered for inclusion in the development of the agency's strategic plan by program managers.

3.2 Balancing Agency Goals and Donor Interests

One of the aspects of KAPE's support for educational development that it is most proud of is the stakeholder driven nature of much of its programming. Over the years, agency personnel have developed high expertise in helping local stakeholders to conduct objective based planning, to prioritize needs, and to administer program grants in a way that meet the needs that stakeholders themselves identify. Funding received from donors such as UNICEF/Sida and USAID have in particular promoted this kind of stakeholder driven development. There is growing concern, however, that new programming is not followed this evolutionary pattern and that implementation approaches are becoming more prescriptive and donor driven. To a large extent this reflects the desire of some donors to link financial support with the pre-identification of activities for budgeting and financial reporting purposes. While these concerns are understandable, they nevertheless promote prescriptive development approaches, which in turn undermine stakeholder ownership and sustainability. KAPE hopes that it will be able to negotiate with donors so that some middle ground can be found which ensures non-prescriptive development but which also addresses donor concerns for financial reporting. Such middle ground could include the identification of core activities (implemented by all) but also provisions for discretionary activities identified by stakeholders.

3.3 Provincial versus Regional Programming

Another area where KAPE has been having extended internal deliberations relates to whether it should continue to focus on programming in Kampong Cham Province only, as per its original mandate when it was established by local stakeholders, or whether it should expand its support to new provinces in the region. Participation in the ESCUP Program has already resulted in the fielding of KAPE staff to the provinces of Mondulkiri and Kratie as part of ESCUP's integrated program structure where the identity of individual agencies is merged. The advantage of moving towards more regional programming is that it increases the strategic relevance of KAPE as a development agent but the danger is that it could dilute the agency's mandate to help communities in Kampong Cham. Internal discussions are continuing in this regard.