

Inclusive Education for Cambodian children who are blind or deaf

Cambodia – Krousar Thmey

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The project offers extra classes for children with visual or hearing impairments to enable them to attend mainstream schools. During the extra lessons students are prepared to follow regular classes by making use of special learning materials in Braille and sign language. The project also created the Khmer Braille and is currently working on further development of Khmer Sign Language.

QUOTE

“When I learned that I was not the only blind girl, I understood my disability was not a fatality. This idea gave me the enthusiasm and the strength to persevere.”

—Sinat, program’s beneficiary

FACTS & FIGURES

- 997 deaf or blind students benefitted of the education program in 2014.
- The annual budget in 2014 was slightly over \$1 million.
- 83% of the participants passed the high school exam successfully in 2014.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

At the beginning of the 1990s, Cambodia did not have a proper education system, and consequently many children were left aside, especially disabled children – including the blind and deaf. Being excluded from school led to their marginalization during their adult life. This isolation was further strengthened by the lack of learning tools dedicated to blind or deaf children, such as Braille or local Sign Language. These children needed appropriate assistance.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the extra lessons at the Krousar Thmey special schools is to ensure the children with visual and hearing impairments can follow regular classroom lessons. To this end, new learning materials and differentiated pedagogy are used to present the various topics in an appropriate way. For instance,

blind children need learning materials in 3D to understand the functioning of the human body or to read a map. Furthermore, they need to practice a lot reading English or Khmer Braille before being able to read fluently and then learn as other children. For deaf children, Krousar Thmey has developed many visual documents using colors, pictures, and schemes to learn how to read, how to sign, and how to explain some topics. Every class has pictures and banners on the walls in order to stimulate the students' visual memory potential as much as possible.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The program has always been meant to be managed by the government in the long term. Consequently, the schools follow the official Cambodian school program, use the official textbooks, and collaborate closely with public schools. To ensure this coherence, Krousar Thmey representatives meet regularly with the Ministry of Education, which helps to facilitate the transfer of the management of the schools by 2020. The project regards the government as the only institution able to fulfil the mandate of the program because the costs to detect all deaf or blind children throughout the country and to provide them with an education are too high for a non-profit organization.

Photo: Yes

CONTACT

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