



Innovative Practices Issue 2: Community Teachers

EDUCATIONAL
SUPPORT TO
CHILDREN OF
UNDERSERVED
POPULATIONS
(ESCUP)

June 2008

ESCUP Facts

- 3 ½ year duration period:
April 2005 – September 2008
- Partners:
American Institutes for Research (AIR),
World Education,
Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE),
CARE
- Works in four provinces:
Kampong Cham, Monduliri,
Ratanakiri, and Kratie
- Works in three technical areas: Teacher Education,
Access and Quality, and
School-Community Partnerships

For more information:

- www.equip123.net/equip1/escup
- Adela Mizrachi, Project Manager, amizrachi@air.org
- Kurt Bredenberg, Chief of Party, kurtb.worlded@online.com.kh



Innovative practices series:

- Child-to-Child Networks - **Issue 1**
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- Intermediate Classrooms - **Issue 3**
- Integrated Pest Management - **Issue 4**
- School Mapping - **Issue 5**

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Community Teachers

The EQUIP1 Cambodia Educational Support to Children in Underserved Populations (ESCUP) Program is a USAID-funded initiative designed to improve access to a basic education of quality to marginal groups in Cambodia - namely, ethnic minority children, girls, disabled children, and the poor. Unfortunately, rural districts throughout Cambodia suffer from a severe shortage of qualified teachers. This leads to large class sizes and double-shift teaching arrangements that diminish the quality of education. In response, ESCUP has trained and placed over 200 Community Teachers in target schools. This popular intervention has not only lowered pupil-teacher ratios and corresponded with dramatic reductions in drop out and repetition in ESCUP-supported schools, but has also involved local women and minorities in their communities' education.

Training and posting Community Teachers is seen as a practical way of dealing with the

issue of teacher shortages and a pleasant alternative to the unpopular and often dysfunctional double-shift teaching arrangements prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) or the quality-diminishing practice of combining classes. Community Teachers working in their own communities have an understanding of, and connection to, the children, families and culture. This is particularly important in the context of ethnic minority communities. This intervention is a milestone in Cambodia as it marks the first time that community-recruited teachers have ever been deployed to state schools on a large scale.

Methodology

Community members who volunteer to become Community Teachers in target areas first go through a 10-day training developed by ESCUP in consultation with Provincial and



Community Teachers

Community Teachers are selected by community members and have the following characteristics:

- Have at least 9 years of basic education
- Express an interest in working with children
- Make a commitment to work up to 4 hours a day during regular school hours
- Can be any age with preference for female and ethnic minority candidates



District Education Officers. This training includes a core of content from the MoEYS training program and demonstration lessons (with children) carried out by an outstanding teacher. Follow-up workshops with Community Teachers occur every two months at the district level to check on teachers' progress. Follow-up workshops present an opportunity for sharing experiences, identifying strengths and achievements, and discussing ways in which the program can be improved. Observations in follow-up workshops and in Community Teacher-run classrooms revealed that most teachers were coping well, working in organized, attractive and disciplined classes, and happy in their job. Many had shown resourcefulness in creating attractive and interesting learning environments in their classrooms. ESCUP has also observed that Community Teachers are responsive to student needs and tend to be more punctual than certified teachers. The reason for this may lie partly in the fact that they are local residents and thus far more accountable to local communities than teachers who travel daily from other places. It

is also the case that, as opposed to many state-certified teachers paid by the government, Community Teachers receive their pay on schedule through the ESCUP program.

Impact

The use of Community Teachers has been beneficial for children and communities. Target districts that have successfully posted Community Teachers have witnessed reductions in drop out and repetition. At least 90% of Community Teachers complete a full year of teaching. A large proportion of newly recruited Community Teachers are women (51%) and minorities (24%), which helps raise the overall proportion of teachers from these groups. Attrition rates are high, with 140 of the 233 Community Teachers placed at the beginning of the 2006/2007 school year continuing on to the 2007/2008 school year. The major reason for this is their replacement by Provincial Teacher Training College (PTTC) graduates, proving that using Community Teachers has been a tremendously successful temporary solution to teacher shortages in rural Cambodia.