

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### A. Background and Context

#### 1. Introduction

1. The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) will contribute, through its policy loan and investment project, to reducing the exclusion from primary and secondary education of ethnic minorities in Cambodia. This population is generally poor and found in remote provinces in the northeast of Cambodia. This Indigenous Peoples' Development Plan (IPDP)<sup>1</sup> focuses on the specific interventions aimed to improve the welfare of this population. It is consistent with the Government's Education Strategic Plan (ESP), draws on the programs proposed in the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP), and includes assistance under the ESDP, as well as from other funding agencies.

#### 2. Ethnic Minority People in Cambodia

2. Cambodia is relatively homogenous in ethnic terms, with over 95 percent of the population Khmer, and speaking Khmer as their mother language. The remaining 5 percent comprises (i) ethnic minority people largely located in the highlands in the northeast; and (ii) other ethnic minorities, including Chams (Muslims, for whom Khmer is the mother language), Chinese, Vietnamese, and Lao. The Chinese and Vietnamese total nearly 4 percent of the non-Khmer population. Cham people are found mostly in urban areas and along waterways, and are integrated with the Khmer community. Ethnic Chinese live in urban areas, and are also integrated. Both groups have established schools, offering special language and religious instruction. Ethnic Vietnamese are less well-integrated and have historically suffered discrimination. Many live on houseboats and have an itinerant lifestyle, dependent on fishing for their livelihoods. Vietnamese children have more difficulty registering at local schools.

3. Education participation and attainment indicators in the highland areas are very poor in comparison with national averages. Most schools attended by highland minority children do not offer the full cycle of six primary grades, and participation and retention rates are low. Secondary schooling is only present in provincial towns, and the enrolment of such schools is almost exclusively the children of ethnic Khmer residents of these provinces. A recent national literacy survey assessed literacy rates within these general ethnic classifications, and found that adults from highland minorities had much lower literate and semiliterate proportions than the ethnic Khmer. None of the females sampled from highland minorities were found to be functionally literate, and only 14.3 percent were classified as being semiliterate.

**Table A11: Literacy Rates for Khmer and Ethnic Minorities**

Minority	Male			Female		
	Illiterate	Semi-Literate	Literate	Illiterate	Semi-Literate	Literate
Khmer	23.2%	28.0%	48.8%	44.1%	26.0%	29.0%
Highland Minorities	76.3%	18.4%	5.3%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%

Source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and UNESCO. Report on the Assessment of the Functional Literacy Levels of the Adult Population in Cambodia, 2000.

<sup>1</sup> While indigenous peoples is the term used by the Asian Development Bank, ethnic minorities is the term used in Cambodia.

4. Cambodia officially recognizes the ethnic diversity of its people. Article 32 of the 1993 Constitution guarantees equality to all citizens: “Cambodian citizens shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy the same rights, freedom and duties regardless of their race, color, sex, language, beliefs, religions, political tendencies, birth origin, social status, resources and any position.” Cambodian citizens include the indigenous hill tribes (collectively known as Khmer Loeu) as well as Cham, and long-time resident Vietnamese and Chinese. The Government does not have detailed policies for ethnic and other minorities. Its draft policy for highland development confirms minorities’ constitutional rights, and defines broad goals for development of the remote regions.

5. Khmer is the only official language and script of Cambodia. Recently, scholars and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) have developed writing systems for the indigenous languages of Phnong, Kreung-Brao, and Tampuan. These scripts are being used to develop instructional materials for nonformal literacy programs, but they are currently not used in instruction in public schools and have not been widely adopted.

### **3. Ethnic Minorities Covered by the Plan**

6. The highland ethnic minorities are the focus of the IPDP. They number between 100,000 and 150,000 in total, comprising just over 1 percent of Cambodia’s population of around 11.6 million. These minorities form the majority of the population in the provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, and most of the remainder are found in the provinces of Kratie, Preah Vihear, and Steung Treng. Ethnic minorities are a clearly defined target group for the Government’s ESP, which focuses on improving the coverage of basic education to underserved populations.

7. There is significant evidence that language and ethnicity are access barriers to education. Review of education policy, including the work done to prepare the ESP, and an Asian Development Bank (ADB) review of the education needs of ethnic minorities, suggest a number of policy options for attaining equitable access, including (i) development of primary educational material and teacher training that consider language differences; (ii) review and adaptation of school admission policies, and appropriate regulation to avoid formal and informal forms of discrimination; (iii) an extensive information program to promote the values of education, especially at the primary level, linked to affirmative action to train teachers from minority ethnic groups; and (iv) the piloting of new school models, including mobile schools, revised curricula based on minority languages in the early years, flexible school calendars, and selective boarding provision. Several priority action plans proposed in the ESSP will also play an important role by channeling funds to schools with poor students, thus making education more affordable for the poorest families in Cambodia, including ethnic minority students.

## **B. The Action Plan**

### **1. Objective**

8. The Government recognizes that although indigenous peoples constitute a mere 1 percent of the total population, special measures are necessary to address their low education levels. An objective of the ESP, with support from the ESDP, is therefore to take measures to address the low social and educational indicators of the indigenous peoples concentrated in the northeast.

## **2. Development Activities**

9. Measures to improve access of ethnic minority students to primary and secondary education comprise

- (i) targeting ethnic minorities when prioritizing facilities subprojects;
- (ii) prioritizing ethnic minority boys and girls in the award of targeted assistance programs;
- (iii) formulating mechanisms to increase the supply of ethnic minority teachers from underserved remote areas;
- (iv) formulating redeployment incentives to increase the provision of teachers to such areas, including the provision of incentives as proposed in the Government's ESSP; and
- (v) promoting multigrade teaching in small village schools to enable the completion of the full primary cycle in places where single-grade teaching is not viable.

10. The reduction of the cost of schooling, by eliminating start-of-year fees, will be particularly beneficial to ethnic minority families whose incomes tend to be lower than the national average; this measure is expected to improve indigenous peoples' participation in basic education.

11. The Government is also committed to include measures that will improve the curriculum of ethnic minority children, as part of comprehensive reform of the curriculum and textbook system. This will be supported by capacity building for curriculum and instruction, that will be part of the Government's ESP/ESSP. The Pedagogical Research Department will continue the process of reviewing its policy framework for curriculum, and will consider options for the instructional transition from mother language to Khmer.

12. As a consequence of the ESDP's support for measures to increase deconcentration of responsibility and resources for service delivery to provinces and districts, and the provision of operational budgets to all schools, children's participation and schools in remote ethnic minority areas will be improved. The ESP supports, through its modalities outlined in the ESSP, more participation at all levels at the design stage, and by decentralizing budgets and introducing information-education-communication strategies, more participation at the grassroots level in local prioritization and implementation. Such measures will result in greater inclusiveness of ethnic minority people.

## **3. Implementation of the IPDP**

13. The IPDP will be implemented within the context of the ESP; no special line items are needed for administrative arrangements within the support provided by the ESDP, or through other priority action program (PAP) in the ESSP. For the investment project, special consideration will be given to the need for targeting ethnic minority communities when selection criteria are developed.

14. The Government will promote the participation of ethnic minorities in determining what is best for their development in the education sector. Their involvement will include an assessment of constraints that may reduce benefits accruing to indigenous people under the IPDP. The Government will seek assistance for further capacity building for indigenous people, to enable them play a greater role in future education planning, and an assessment of the role of NGOs as intermediaries with minority groups.

15. Selected NGOs with experience with indigenous peoples in Cambodia and other countries will be involved in selected curriculum, materials, and training program design activities. The NGOs will bring knowledge of ethnic minorities into mainstream development work.

16. The IPDP will be implemented through (i) the five provincial governments with significant numbers of ethnic minorities, (ii) two of the MOEYS line departments (Pedagogical Research Department, in the case of curriculum policy, and the Teacher Training Department in the case of the reform of teacher training to include multigrade teaching), and (iii) Stung Treung Teacher Training College (as the most likely candidate institution for the development and delivery of special programs for the ethnic minority teachers). It will also involve NGOs in the area of language transition issues, instructional materials development, and school attendance incentives.

17. MOEYS and ADB will supervise IPDP implementation and assess its effectiveness during the course of regularly scheduled joint missions. Annual sector reviews will ensure that all elements of the IPDP are implemented in accordance with the program agreement. In the fourth year of the ESDP, a dedicated evaluation study will be commissioned on the contribution of the ESDP and its IPDP in addressing the needs of ethnic minorities.

#### **4. Implementation Schedule**

18. The implementation schedule will be embedded in the detailed program schedule to be developed. The following targets are indicative, and subject to discussion with Government:

- (i) **By the end of year 1** of the ESDP, activities will have resulted in inclusion of ethnic minorities in facilities subprojects, prioritization of ethnic minority students in the award of targeted assistance programs; mechanisms formulated to increase the supply of ethnic minority teachers in underserved, remote, ethnic minority areas; and redeployment incentives agreed to increase the provision of teachers to such areas.
- (ii) **By the end of year 2** of the ESDP, reduction of the cost of schooling will have resulted in improved participation of ethnic minorities in basic education. Policy dialogue on the language of instruction issue will have resulted in new policies for ethnic minority areas. Schools in ethnic minority communities will have increased spending power as a result of the provision of operational budgets.
- (iii) **By the end of year 3** of the ESDP, the new curriculum framework will have been established, and will have addressed ethnic minorities' concerns. Facilities will have been constructed in ethnic minority communities.
- (iv) **By the end of year 4** of the ESDP, shifting to multigrade teaching in small village schools will have been operationalized.