



# LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM





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### Photo Captions

Cover: 'It's time to enrol for school!' Students during an enrolment campaign.

Page 2: SSC members watch students demonstrate science experiments.

Page 5: SSC members visit another education NGO for fresh ideas and inspiration for school development.

Page 8: 'Let's pledge to send our children to school!' A mother and SSC member speaks at an education awareness campaign.

Page 9: The SSC, teachers and the school Principal draw up the annual School Development Work Plan.

Back cover: Community members contribute plants and landscaping materials, and take pride in the school environment.

# ORGANISING FOR THIS LIFE

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“THIS LIFE I HAVE NO HOPE. NEXT LIFE, I WOULD LIKE TO BE A DOCTOR”

Rin Sokun, age 13

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Today only 35 per cent of Cambodian children make it to Grade 7. Of the students who do enroll in lower secondary school, 22 per cent drop out before completing a full basic education in Grade 9. Although the enrolment rate in primary schools in Cambodia is considered satisfactory at 96.4 per cent<sup>1</sup>, completing school is a rare privilege for the lucky few. Many Cambodian children have begun dreaming about their next life—not this life.

One reason for the low access to and quality of education is lack of community involvement in secondary schools. The destruction of school buildings and murder of educated citizens during Pol Pot’s totalitarian regime over three decades ago continues to riddle Cambodia with educational problems today. The short-term pressures of poverty make it difficult for many families to commit to the longer-term goal of a basic education for all of their children, and poverty drives the opportunity costs of education higher as children age and their potential to contribute to family income increases. In addition, teacher salaries are miserly, and schools are badly under-resourced.

TLC believes that Cambodian communities are experts in their own development, and that education is key. The Lower Secondary School Development Program (LSSDP) is TLC’s response to the structural problem of low access to and low quality of education at the lower secondary level. Using the tools of community organising and group decision-making, the LSSDP helps community members develop the skills to identify their shared needs and to envision realistic solutions to educational priorities. At the conclusion of the three-year program, communities are empowered to participate in the education process and to collaboratively design strategies for school development. In addition, communities that are empowered to value education are more able to support children through the challenges of completing a basic education.

1 Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Education Statistics and Indicators 2011.



# LSSDP GOAL & AIMS

The LSSDP is a 3-year, community-driven model for school development. The LSSDP places community organising tools in the hands of communities in the short-term, thereby creating conditions for longer-term improvements in access to and quality of education in public lower secondary schools. By working closely with a School Support Committee

(SSC), a government-mandated group of parents, teachers, and influential people in the community, the LSSDP supports the Cambodian Government's education development policies at the grassroots level and aligns with the rights-based Child Friendly Schools framework.

## GOAL

For communities to be involved in school development so that access to and quality of secondary education in Cambodia is increased

## AIMS

1. To build the capacity of a School Support Committee over 3 years, to work with their school community to develop and implement an annual school development plan
2. To provide support and resources over 3 years, that respond to school community priorities
3. To promote the good practice of the LSSDP and seek opportunities for growth of the program

## ACTIVITIES

- Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA)
- SSC training and practice
- Learning opportunities and events
- SSC Operations
- Providing teaching and learning materials
- Collaboration Fund
- Partner projects
- Technical support
- Growing SSC networks
- Presenting at conferences
- Writing for publications
- Growing LSSDP networks
- Advocating for strong education policies



## SSC CAPACITY BUILDING

The LSSDP supports SSC members to learn the skills they need to drive the annual school development plan process (see next section). To do this, the LSSDP provides a training package covering 5 core areas that the SSC will practice throughout the program. SSCs receive training in each of these areas once per year:

- **Participatory Rural Appraisal Tools**  
How to use PRA tools to gather data from the community about the current educational challenges, root causes, and priorities.
- **The School Development Work Plan**  
Developing a realistic annual school development work plan which responds to community priorities and outlines resources, responsibilities and timeframes.
- **Effective Communication**  
Communicating within the team, with the community, with the district and provincial offices of education, and with donors.
- **Fundraising**  
Ethics and accountability, fundraising within the community, and writing proposals for external donors.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**  
Monitoring progress and evaluating the progress of activities in the annual School Development Work Plan.
- **Additional Training**  
Topics such as Personal Development, Child Rights, or Teaching strategies.

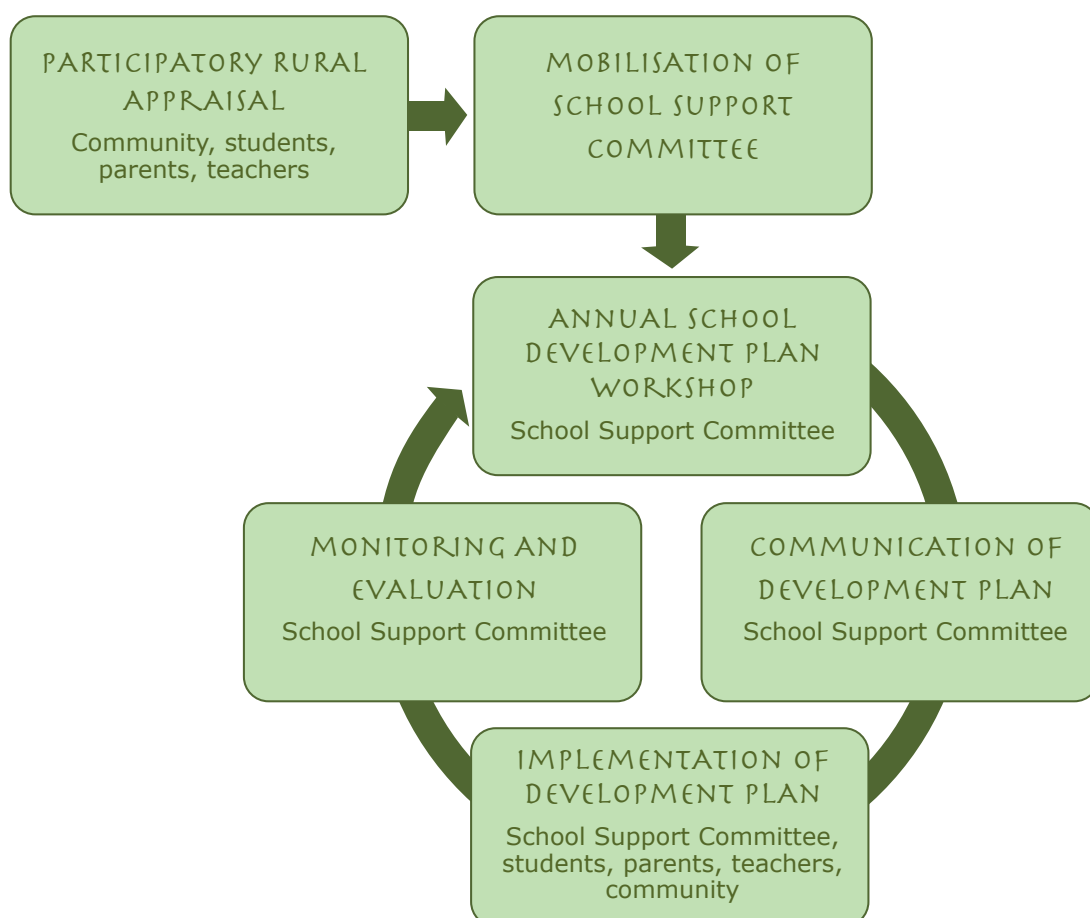
# THE ANNUAL PROGRAM CYCLE

The LSSDP uses Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools at the beginning of each school year to engage community members in identifying major education problems, root causes, and possible solutions. Part of the process is to look for common priorities amongst groups of teachers, students and community members.

The SSC comes together in a 3-day workshop to discuss the priorities identified by their community, and devise realistic and achievable solutions that are listed as activities in the annual School Development Work Plan. For each activity, the SSC identifies a timeframe, people responsible,

and the resources needed. The SSC also decides whether funding can be raised by the community themselves, requested from the District or Provincial Office of Education, or requested from TLC or other donors.

The SSC then implements the School Development Work Plan over the course of the year. TLC may help to provide the funding, facilities, resources, advice, or training necessary, in some cases through partnerships with other organisations. The final step in the process is an Evaluation Meeting, where the SSC reflects on the achievements of the past year, and begins to plan for the next.



# SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT WORKPLAN

School development within the LSSDP is needs based, and therefore school development activities are particular to each school. The essence of the LSSDP is to put educational problem solving tools in the hands of the school community, represented by the SSC. This leaves the objectives of the LSSDP open to a diversity of outcomes determined by the community and creates sustainable solutions beyond the three-year lifespan of the program. Year one work plans tend to focus on building the

infrastructure needed for a safe school that the community can take pride in. By Year 3, work plans tend to focus more on activities such as purchasing teaching materials, or starting school gardens. SSCs first consider what the community is able to contribute to each activity. Further funding or resources then come from a variety of sources, including government support, TLC, or other donors.

## SAMPLE YEAR 3 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN

ACTIVITY	OWNER/ PERSON RESPONSIBLE	RESOURCES			INDICATORS	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	TIMING
		LABOUR	MATERIALS	FUNDS			
Create a vegetable garden	Principal	agriculture teacher	agriculture materials	agriculture NGO	70% will be completed in March 2014	SSC, community members	10 Oct to 15 Apr 2014
Conduct a village meeting to strengthen enrollment and discuss the value of education	SSC, teachers	Village chief, community members SSC, School principal	flip chart paper, markers, A4 paper	Program Budget (Ministry of Education) and commune funds.	80% will be completed at the beginning of February 2013	Students, parents, SSC members	15 Jan to 02 Feb 2013
Scholarships for poor and outstanding students	Principal	Principal	small proposal	Supporting NGO and TLC	70% will be completed at the end of April 2013	Community members, local authorities, teachers, students	3 Mar to 29 Apr 2013
Fill the land at the school entry way (to prevent flooding and make space for the garden)	SSC Member	SSC, teachers, students	soil	Supporting NGO and TLC	100% will be completed at the end of May 2013	Community members, local authorities, SSC members	25 Apr to 25 May 2013





## SSC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Strong, supportive relationships between SSCs and the LSSDP team ensure that capacity building is a collaborative and creative process that includes practical learning opportunities as well as formal training. In addition to the core training, SSCs participate in the following learning activities:

- A **School Exchange Visit** to learn about strategies for management and community and student engagement from the SSC of another lower secondary school.
- **Monthly meetings** and an **End of Year Evaluation Meeting** covering administration but also team building and reflection exercises.
- An **Enrollment Campaign** led by the SSC to encourage parents to enroll their children in school
- An **Education Awareness Campaign** led by the SSC to encourage discussion of the value of education in the community and to address current issues such as migration, or high drop out rates among girls.





## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The LSSDP's second aim involves responding to needs identified by the SSC with technical advice, funding and encouragement. To provide this support, the LSSDP:

- **Provides teaching and learning resources** to meet annual shortfalls identified by teachers and the school Principal.
- **Encourages action in the community** that promotes the importance of education.
- **Encourages relationships with the District and Provincial Offices of Education** to build the capacity of the SSC to follow government policy, source funding and resources, and self-advocate for their community's education needs.
- **Administers the Collaboration Fund** that recognises the volunteer commitment of community members, by matching contributions of time and resources with small funds for sustainable grassroots school development activities.
- **Facilitates connections with donors** to locate funding for larger-budget activities prioritised in the School Development Work Plan, such as construction of toilet blocks, libraries, or new classrooms.

# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE LSSDP

Because the LSSDP aims for community-ownership of school development, activities vary depending on the priorities identified by each community and their SSC. As a result, there are a number of flexible ways to support the LSSDP.



## SUPPORT A FULL LSSDP IN ONE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The cost of a full LSSDP in one school is US\$56,000 over 3 years. This covers the delivery of core program activities. Funding a full LSSDP cycle results in a school community that is better prepared to value education and to continue improving educational opportunities for its children into the future. An annual budget breakdown by activity is available on request.



## PARTNER TO SUPPORT A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

TLC is looking to build a network of supporters that SSCs can call on when large construction or infrastructure needs are identified in School Development Work Plans. For example, a previous LSSDP SSC prioritised the construction of new teacher's accommodation, as part of a strategy for attracting skilled teachers to the rural school. This project was funded through a partnership between the SSC and a private donor, with administrative support and guidance from TLC.



## CONTACT US

For further information about the LSSDP and how you can support the program please email: [contact@thislifecambodia.org](mailto:contact@thislifecambodia.org) or visit: [www.thislifecambodia.org](http://www.thislifecambodia.org)





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