

## Education

Based on our work and experiences in providing education services to Cambodian children, we view the following issues as priorities in Cambodia's education sector:

1. Improving teacher motivation
2. Promoting increased net enrolment and survival rates **for all children**
3. **Promote education for children with disabilities**

To ensure that all Cambodian children and youth have equal opportunity to quality education, teacher qualifications and professionalism must be improved, with special attention paid to paying teachers a fair living salary and disbursing salaries on time. According to the *Valuing Teachers* research study<sup>1</sup>, the low salary is the greatest demotivating factor for teachers. Action on this issue is crucial to reducing the practice of informal schools fees.

NGOs are concerned that the RGC's goal of 'Education for All' and NSDP target of 100% completion for grade 9 students will not be met by 2010. The goal and target will not be reached without an explicit priority focus on disabled children in the NSDP and the Education Strategic Plan and an increase in the net enrolment and survival rates. In 2006/2007, only 52.50% of students entering grade 1 had enrolled grade 6 of primary school.

When children do not enrol or leave school before completing a basic education, their future opportunities are limited. Children who do not enroll or who drop out early are more likely to be from disadvantaged groups, e.g. children with disabilities, those living in remote areas, and the very poor. The burden of these children is worsened when they are asked for informal payments by teachers whose salaries are low and/or who receive full paid or partial payments infrequently.

Action is needed immediately in the areas of teacher recruitment, training and compensation, and school accessibility. The delivery of quality education requires well-trained, properly-resourced and motivated teachers in all provinces, particularly rural and remote areas.

To promote education for disabled children in all schools, action is needed on disseminating and most importantly enforcing the Policy for Education of Disabled Children, by all education stakeholders. Specific Indicators and targets for 2009/10 should be agreed on in order to measure the progress of disabled children in: A) Enhancing enrollment, B) Improved teacher training to meet the needs of disabled **children in education, and C) improved quality of education for disabled children.**

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<sup>1</sup> NEP, November 2008.