

LESSONS LEARNED SEMINAR OF ESCUP
(Extracted from Reasmeay Kampuchea, issued on 19 June 2008)



The Lessons Learned Seminar of the Educational Support to Children in Underserved Population project (ESCUP), Supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by AIR and World Education, was conducted on 17 June 2008 at Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh. The seminar was honorably presided by His Excellency Im Sethy, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport.

During his speech, Mr. Kurt Bredenburg, the Chief of Party of ESCUP highlighted that the project has been implemented in 4 provinces including Kompong Cham, Kratie Mundulkiri and Ratanakiri. The project is highly regarded by the District Office of Education (DOE) and school teachers. During the third year of its implementation, in co-operation with the above project partners, ESCUP has accomplished some major achievements. Mr. Bredenberg explained that one of the key interventions by ESCUP, aimed at reducing reduce drop out rates, has been the introduction of upper grade levels in incomplete schools. ESCUP has supplied these schools with the Intermediate Classrooms (ICRs) that are temporary classrooms for students who previously could not continue their study into the higher grades in primary school (e.g. grades 3 or 4). Classrooms have also been constructed in remote areas where children have never previously had access to school.

His Excellency Im Sethy, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport said that the timing of this seminar has been fortuitous because the Ministry had recently promulgated its national CFS Policy, based on a review of government supported pilots. His Excellency agreed that the tools developed through the USAID funded ESCUP project have proved very useful in helping the Ministry to further promote the expansion of CFS programming. He also mentioned that during the last couple of years, he has had the opportunity to visit several schools receiving material and technical assistance from ESCUP and these schools have shown positive changes since the implementation of ESCUP supported interventions.

As a conclusion to his remarks, His Excellency expressed that he was very pleased to see that ESCUP has incorporated many principles outlined in the Child Friendly School Policy leading to a child friendly educational context where both Cambodia children and those from the minority communities can learn together in the same school.