

CAMBODIA



# Education for All

## Annual Project Impact Report

Reporting Period:  
July 2019 - June 2020



It starts with equal

## Thank you for your support

Communities in Cambodia's northeast provinces of Ratanak Kiri and Mondul Kiri face deep poverty and geographic isolation. Many of the indigenous population in the region have little or no command of the national language, Khmer, and are, therefore, excluded from the state school system. As a result, the region experiences some of the lowest school enrolment and retention rates in the country.

Since 2002, CARE Cambodia has helped children from remote ethnic groups in Cambodia go to school and learn in their native language for the first time. Thanks to your generosity 7,245 children were given that opportunity this year, even in the midst of a global pandemic.

CARE also worked with disabled focused organisations and involved 72 boys and 71 girls with a disability in project activities.

The project has gained wide recognition for its effectiveness in creating equal learning opportunities for ethnic minority children, especially girls. CARE has handed over the project to the Cambodian government's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to ensure the long-term sustainability of the program.

Together, we're giving children the chance for a much brighter future.

## Quick facts



**64% of the population in Ratanak Kiri province is from an ethnic minority group.**



**87% of students in Ratanak Kiri (most of them girls) drop out after finishing primary school.**



**Secondary school enrolments are among the lowest in the country – 35% in Ratanak Kiri and 40% in Mondul Kiri.**



# What you've helped achieve this reporting period

## July 2019 – June 2020

### Supporting Cambodian children to continue learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

CARE Australia is monitoring and responding to COVID-19 around the world — pivoting projects to include teaching vulnerable people the best ways to protect themselves from disease, and taking extra precautions to reduce the risk of spreading infection for, and from, our own staff and partners.

In March 2020, MoEYS announced a nation-wide school closure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, vital activities could not be completed, so the final stage of the project has been extended into 2021.

As an immediate response, CARE worked closely with UNICEF and the MoEYS Special Education Department and Provincial Offices of Education in Ratanak Kiri, Mondul Kiri and Kratie to produce Multilingual Education Radio Programs for preschool and primary school

students so they could continue learning despite being unable to physically attend school.

The radio programs have been broadcast in the Kreung, Tampuen and Phnong languages, providing educational and vital health messages to 4,723 children (including 2,099 girls).

The need to use technology for distance learning emphasised the gap between those who can afford it and those who cannot. Radios and learning materials were distributed to children in the most marginalised groups and to those with limited or no access to distance education; and teachers and parents were supported to assist their children's learning at home.

CARE was one of four international non-governmental organisations who received a Letter of Appreciation from the MoEYS for our contribution to continuous learning during the pandemic.



## Providing technical support to the Cambodian Government to help implement multilingual education nation-wide

Thanks to your support, CARE worked with the Cambodian government to develop a second Multilingual Education Action Plan, which will further embed Multilingual Education (MLE) in Cambodian schools, nation-wide.

The project is now in the final stages, after a handover of the MLE program to the Cambodian government — who will now take ownership of MLE and continue rolling the program out across the country.

CARE's role in the development of the action plan influenced three key milestones:

- the expansion of the MLE program to the Jarai ethnic community in five provinces;
- MoEYS' approval of the Jarai language as the sixth official language used in schools;
- helping to ensure the quality and sustainability of the MLE teaching workforce by institutionalising the teacher training system in Regional Teacher Training College.

In August 2019, the MoEYS approved the Multilingual Education Action Plan, which aims to train 127 pre-school and 253 primary school teachers by 2023. It was launched on 3 January 2020 in Kampong Cham province

with 127 participants, including senior officials, teachers, school directors, community elders and parents from the five north-eastern provinces; as well as NGO staff and CARE staff.

From June 2019 until January 2020, CARE also provided technical guidance to the Education Research Council of the MoEYS on a study into the feasibility of including Jarai language into the MLE program, and standardising MLE preschools.

Thanks to your support, CARE co-organised a joint-conference on Inclusion, Mobility and Multilingual Education: Role of Language in Education and Development in September 2019. CARE and UNICEF supported seven government officials (including two women) and one representative from the indigenous alliance to participate in global discussions on shared achievements arising out of multi-lingual education, and to highlight the importance of addressing language barriers. The conference was a success in bringing together senior policymakers and experts from across the Asia-Pacific, including 18 Ministers and Deputy Ministers from 15 countries.

The Consultative Workshop with the MoEYS on the establishment of Stung Treng Centre of Expertise was delayed due to COVID-19. With the generosity donors, CARE was able to get a no-cost extension for these activities to be completed in 2021.



## CASE STUDY

# A lesson of hope

In scenes that were mirrored across the globe in March 2020, there was little choice but to close Cambodian schools in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus.

With the unprecedented virus taking hold across the world, the Cambodian government and the MoEYS made the joint decision to close schools across the country. Children and communities world-wide have battled the challenges of distance learning, but for children living in some of the poorest and most remote regions, the challenges have been even greater.

Five-year-old Ben lives in the Phnong ethnic community and has been isolated from her school, teachers and friends during the pandemic, but thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, she has been able to continue learning during the crisis.

CARE and UNICEF worked closely with Cambodian officials and the provinces to create a cost-effective way to provide distance learning for preschool and primary school students, via with radio broadcasts in Kreung, Tampuan and Phnong languages. We have also been

able to distribute additional basic learning materials to children, their parents and their teachers.

Ben was one of 127 girls (from a total of 246 students) who was grateful to be given a radio and be able to continue learning during the year.

“I got this radio so I will be listening to the teacher’s lessons on the radio program in the Phnong language from 4pm to 5pm to improve my knowledge. My parents also help me at home,” she says.

Through the radio programs, Cambodian children and their families have a vital channel of information on ways to prevent the spread of the disease, and share in information about masks and hand sanitisers which will protect their community.

In a time of such uncertainty, access to information has been like a beacon of hope for families who have been isolated during the pandemic — keeping children connected with their teachers and their learning.





If you would like more information about this project and how you can be involved, please contact:

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**Australian  
Aid** 



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