



© UNICEF Cambodia/2015/Charles Fox

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND GOVERNANCE

UNICEF Country Programme 2016-2018

Situation

Cambodia has experienced significant economic progress in recent years. Since 2011, the country has seen average annual growth of 7 per cent in its Gross Domestic Product and is transitioning into middle-income status.

Economic growth has reduced poverty in Cambodia from 47.2 per cent in 2007 to 18.6 per cent in 2012 (World Bank, 2014). However, it has brought with it a host of economic and social disparities and inequities. About 3 million of the total population of 15.3 million Cambodians continue to live in poverty, while another 8.1 million live just above the poverty line; 90 per cent of these people live in rural areas.

Growing up amid inequities can deprive children of a fair chance in life, and in the worst cases, can threaten their very survival. Poverty is not just about measuring income; children from poor households often miss out on basic social services because they cannot go to school, visit a doctor or receive an adequate diet, all of which have huge impacts on their survival and development.

Social protection ensures access to social services for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families, including those in remote areas, those from ethnic minorities, and those affected by disability. However, social protection in Cambodia has limited coverage and is highly fragmented, with multiple small programmes often being driven by external development partners.

Key Partners in Social Inclusion and Governance

UNICEF's main government partners are the: Cambodian National Council for Children; Council for Agricultural and Rural Development; Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Planning; National Committee for Democratic Development; National Institute of Statistics; Parliamentary Committees of the National Assembly; and the Supreme National Economic Council.

Other key partners include: provincial administrations; civil society organizations; research institutions; and UN agencies.

Through the Social Inclusion and Governance programme, UNICEF works to prioritize children's rights and equity in social sector policies, plans, budgets and public discussions to improve all children's access to quality social services. UNICEF also works to remove obstacles that prevent children from reaching social services by supporting key government reforms that promote equitable social service delivery: Public Finance Management Reform, Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform, and Public Administrative Reform.

What is social protection?

Social protection is a set of public actions designed to increase access to social services such as health, education and nutrition, by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It is usually given in the form of income or in-kind support and ensures a minimum standard of living for those in need. UNICEF's work to support national social protection system building does not explicitly target children alone, but is implemented with a focus on the best interests of the child.

The Social Inclusion and Governance programme addresses Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



1 Promoting Equity in Public Expenditure for Children

According to the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, child poverty rate stood at 23 per cent in 2013—higher than the 19 per cent for adult members of the population. In 2010, a study conducted to analyse people's deprivation levels in five dimensions of basic rights—health, nutrition, water, sanitation and housing—found that 67 per cent of children under the age of 5 were deprived in at least two dimensions, and 40 per cent in at least three dimensions.

Children facing poverty and with limited access to social services are deprived of the opportunity to fully develop during their formative years. This can have a lifelong impact on children and create a cycle of poverty that is passed down from one generation to the next. Equitable budget expenditure can ensure that all children have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential and contribute to the growth and development of the whole society.

In recent years, the Royal Government of Cambodia has continued to increase efforts for equitable public budget expenditure in social sectors. The newly initiated programme-based budgeting, which requires ministries to develop separate budgets for specific programme areas, such as primary school education and nutrition, is one such effort. The Government's transition to programme-based budgeting is expected to improve accountability and budget expenditure for children at national and sub-national levels.

UNICEF works with the Government to support social sector ministries to formulate, execute and monitor programme-based budgeting, with a focus on



© UNICEF Cambodia/2013

equitable budget expenditure for children—ensuring that more budget is allocated to children's issues and that it prioritizes spending on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

What we do

- Provide guidance and technical assistance to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) to support social sector ministries to develop programme-based budgets
- Support Parliamentary Committees of the National Assembly and civil society to strengthen their knowledge on social sector budgeting
- Generate evidence on the economic benefits of investing in children

2 Strengthening Social Protection Systems for the Most Vulnerable

Financial barriers are one of the major obstacles preventing poor and vulnerable people from accessing social services in Cambodia. According to the 2014 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, over 40 per cent of children who dropped out of school mentioned poverty or economic hardship as the main reason for discontinuing their education.

While social protection programmes offered by government and non-government partners do exist, interventions are fragmented, and limited coordination often results in not being able to reach the poorest and most vulnerable families and children. The 'ID-Poor' programme—a tool for analysing and targeting social protection programmes—has enabled the Government to improve plans, but requires strengthening to focus on multi-dimensional poverty, not only levels of income, as well as inclusion of children and adults with disabilities.

Since 2015, MEF has been a leader in formulating a new social protection policy framework that brings together all government social protection work under one policy document. This new social protection policy framework aims to strengthen coordination efforts among relevant ministries to deliver and provide social

protection. UNICEF is working with the Government to ensure that guidelines designed under this policy framework focus on the needs of the most vulnerable women and children.

What we do

- Support the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development and MEF to develop a costed national social protection strategy that is child-centred and focuses on the poorest and most vulnerable families and individuals
- Support to develop a social protection monitoring and evaluation system to improve coordination among ministries
- Support the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and other social ministries to improve the design and implementation of social protection programmes for vulnerable children
- Support the Ministry of Planning and the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development to strengthen the existing social protection targeting tool to better identify the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations



3

Generating Quality Data and Evidence for Children

Cambodia has a wealth of socio-economic data and information recorded in commune databases, administrative data and national household surveys. However, there is a dearth of disaggregated data to capture the situation for different genders and age groups. Utilization of data to inform planning and budgeting is also limited.

In some cases, especially in rural areas, data quality also remains a concern. Limited knowledge or capacity of local administrators makes it difficult to systematically collect and analyse information.

UNICEF works to increase the capacity of government and non-government institutions to generate and use quality data and evidence, and monitor the situation of women and children to inform policy making, planning and budgeting at national and sub-national levels.

What we do

- Provide technical support to the Ministry of Planning to monitor the progress of the current National Strategic Development Plan (2014–2018) and generate evidence for developing the next strategic development plan
- Provide training and technical assistance to the Ministry of Planning, MEF and social ministries for results-based planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Support the Government to integrate multi-dimensional child poverty analysis into national planning systems and to use the data to inform planning and policy decisions

4

Empowering Sub-National Administrations to Improve Service Delivery

After a pilot phase in 1996, Cambodia has undertaken the Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D) reform to transfer the functions and resources for planning and delivering social services from central ministries to sub-national administrations, that is, the province, district and commune levels. The D&D reform provides opportunities for the Government and local authorities to better prioritize and provide social services for vulnerable populations. For women and children, this translates to more resources and better access to social services, social protection and other services that address their needs.

However, the D&D reform process has not yet fully transferred functions and resources to sub-national administrations. Technical and institutional capacities of both national and sub-national administrators need to be strengthened to effectively restructure authority for improved service delivery.

Under the D&D reform, UNICEF works closely with provincial and district administrations to develop child-centred investment plans and budgets with a focus on equity—to benefit the most vulnerable children.

What we do

- Support the Government to provide clear guidance to sub-national administrations to include vulnerable populations in the planning and budgeting process and to use multiple data sources
- Support provincial administrations to conduct an equity-focused situation analysis on children to strengthen data generation, analysis and monitoring of child well-being
- Provide technical assistance to the National Committee for Democratic Development Secretariat to develop and implement a database to support the implementation and monitoring of social accountability plans



5

Supporting Children with Disabilities

According to the 2013 Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey, more than 300,000 people in Cambodia live with a disability. Of these people, approximately 32,000—or roughly 11 per cent of the population with disability—are children aged 0 to 14. However, the World Bank and the World Health Organization estimate that 15 per cent of the world’s population have disabilities. Applied to Cambodia’s population, this equates to more than 2 million people with disability, of which more than 1.4 million are under the age of 30.

Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and excluded in society. Social perception that disability is inability prevents many children with disabilities from accessing basic education, which affects their economic and livelihood opportunities later in life. Common attitudes towards disability that rest on pity, unworthiness and incapacity also cause children with disabilities to develop low self-esteem and reduce their participation in society. Negative perceptions often held by social service providers also prevent children with disabilities from accessing services, when they are available.

The lack of access to appropriate, quality and affordable disability-support services has a significant impact on the well-being and participation of persons with disabilities in Cambodia. Expenditure on social services related to disability in Cambodia is unaccounted for in national budgets. While some disability-support services do exist, they are primarily focused on physical disabilities and are insufficient.

UNICEF works to include children with disabilities in all areas of its work to ensure equitable opportunities for every child. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF works with the Government and district and commune level authorities to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in national and sub-national policies and plans. At the community level, UNICEF works closely



© UNICEF Cambodia/2013/Bona Khoy

with non-governmental partners and communities to provide disability-support services for children with disabilities and their families.

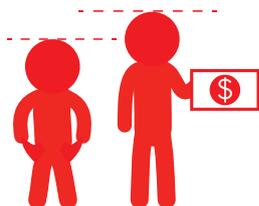
What we do

- Train sub-national authorities, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, on disability-inclusive local governance practices
- Collaborate with civil society organizations to enhance access for children with disabilities to social services
- Support the National Institute of Statistics to ensure the inclusion of core questions on disability in the 2018 Census, as well as in other national surveys and databases
- Address negative social norms around disabilities through an awareness campaign—informed by evidence and research—promoting the rights of children with disabilities and targeting key decision makers and the general public

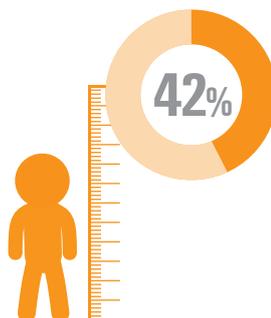
Estimated Budget Required for the SIG Programme

1,734,000 US\$	1,734,000 US\$	1,732,000 US\$	5,200,000 US\$
2016	2017	2018	Total

Fast Facts: Social Inclusion and Governance



Children from poor households are two times more likely to be **stunted** (short for their age) than children from rich households.



42 per cent of children from the poorest households are **chronically malnourished**.¹



More than 40 per cent of out-of-school children aged 7-17 said **economic difficulties keep them from going to school**.²



Families affected by **disability** are likely to spend six times more on health services than families not affected by disability, and four times more on transport costs to reach health services.



Government **budget allocation** for MoEYS is 12.1% of the total budget in 2016, and for MoH 7.8%*. These figures are lower than the international benchmarks of 20% and 15% respectively.

¹ Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014

³ Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, 2010

* Education and health sector budget allocations are higher than this taking into account budget allocations for other ministries in relation to those two sectors

² Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2014

⁴ Abuja Declaration, 2001

unicef

UNICEF CAMBODIA

No11, Street 75, Sangkat Sraschark
P.O. Box 176, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: +855 23 426 214
Fax: +855 23 426 284
Email: phnompenh@unicef.org
Website: www.unicef.org.kh

Get connected:



facebook.com/unicefcambodia

twitter.com/unicefcambodia



youtube.com/unicefcambodia



[@unicefcambodia](https://instagram.com/unicefcambodia)