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دبي العطاء
Dubai Cares

Progress Report for Ten Sous School in Cambodia



Supported by:



مدرسة جيمس جويرا الابتدائية
GEMS JUMEIRAH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Summary:

This report covers the developments at the Ten Sous school over the past 12 months. The school construction was very successful and in mid-February there was a 'soft-launch' of the school, leading up to the start of the new academic year when the official school inauguration will take place; the start of the new academic year will be in January 2022. The partner recruited and trained three local community members to teach at the school. Since the school opened after the official government teacher allocation period by the Provincial Office of Education, it was too late in the academic year for the partner to process the paperwork to the relevant authorities to request government teachers; it was therefore not possible for the government to allocate teachers at the Ten Sous school this year. Government teachers will be allocated to the school at the start of the new academic year.

The students started their lessons in mid-February and showed enthusiasm and happiness to be at school. Unfortunately, however, due to another spike in Covid-19 cases in Cambodia, all schools closed on the 21st of March. To mitigate disruptions to education the partner re-launched their takeaway distance education programme so that the children could continue to engage with their education.

The Ten Sous school has catered for Grades 1 to 2 this academic year, as the students are currently at this academic level since they had not received a formal education before the establishment of the school. In January, for the new academic year the school will cater for Grades 1 to 3 as the students have gained the skills to progress to a higher grade. The school will cater for an additional grade each academic year (up to Grade 6, the final primary grade in Cambodia) in line with student progression.

Towards the end of August, Covid-19 case numbers began to drop significantly and the rollout of the Sinovac vaccine nationwide allowed provincial governments to cautiously proceed with school reopenings in September; indeed, the majority of adults in the communities have now been vaccinated against Covid-19. As a result, the majority of the schools reopened in September 2021.



Ten Sous School's Updates:

The first 6 months at Ten Sous school

The Ten Sous School is community-owned; the community donated the land for the school and local volunteers helped the partner to build the school, encouraging their responsibility for the school from day one. All building works were completed in February and The Ten Sous School 'soft launched' this month. With the help of the School Support Committee (SSC), three community members were recruited to teach at the school. Since 50% of the community cannot speak the national



language Khmer and instead speak the local dialect Charai, community teachers are vital to teach in the children's mother tongue, offering students a unique point of entry into the Khmer-only national education system. The Provincial Office of Education will allocate government teachers to the school to teach alongside community teachers in January 2022 at the start of the new academic year.

Prior to school openings, our Education Officers (EOs) provided pre-service bespoke training to community teachers in line with innovative, child-centred teaching methodologies, this also includes inclusive education and child protection and safeguarding training. The EOs then visit each school monthly to monitor the development and continually support and train the teachers. The EOs liaised with the SSC and local community to enrol students and at the end of March we recorded that 64 students (25 girls) had enrolled, with a student average monthly attendance of 96%; we were delighted with this as it reflected the community's strong appetite and culture for education and their commitment to sending their children to school.



Teaching children during school closures:

Unfortunately, due to another spike in Covid-19 cases in Cambodia, all schools closed on the 21st of March. To mitigate disruptions to education the partner re-launched their takeaway distance education programme so children remain engaged in their education. In the regions we work in Cambodia, only 15% of households have access to a phone, meaning virtual education resources are not viable. Instead, community teachers received training on how to deliver

socially distanced lessons e.g. through socially distanced games. The community teachers travelled from house to house to distribute supplementary work that focused on Mathematics and Khmer subjects to build essential reading, writing and speaking skills.

During the school closures, training was successfully provided to the teachers to gain the necessary skills to provide targeted, individual student support to ensure that all students return to and stay in school when they reopen, particularly those most at risk of marginalisation, exclusion and under achievements to aid their attendance, retention and learning. At the Ten Sous School:

- 44 students (21 girls and 23 boys) participated in the takeaway education programmes in August. The enrolment rates remained consistent from May to August.

Supporting communities during the COVID-19 pandemic

During school closures, Covid-19 awareness messaging was presented to the community and the WASH facilities at the schools were made available to the whole community to help minimise the spread of Covid-19.

The teachers received training to reinforce key COVID-19 messaging through posters and awareness sessions, focused on promoting social distancing, handwashing and providing reliable information about the virus. Teachers were trained on how the virus is transmitted, how to know if a child is ill, and the procedures to isolate a child who presents symptoms.





Supporting students to return to school

An enrolment campaign was run in September, to inform parents of the day their school was reopening, and to encourage them to send their children back to school. Parents were reassured that the school handwashing stations have passed World Health Organisation standards and that all necessary safety equipment such as soap, disinfectant and hand sanitiser have been distributed to the schools to help their children to return to school safely. Additionally, the adults in the community were informed that the school WASH facilities would only be available to the community outside of the school opening hours.

Once the Cambodian government permitted the school to reopen, 56 students (23 girls) returned to the Ten Sous School in October - a 87.5% retention rate from our March 2021 enrolment, demonstrating the success of the takeaway education programme in supporting children to continue their education. This is especially reassuring as, like the majority of the communities served in Cambodia, the Ten Sous School's community relies heavily on farming to generate an income. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant economic challenges, and our Education Officers have recognised that some children are facing an increased pressure to support their families on the farms and fields instead of engaging in education. We are pleased that the community is continuing to support its children to receive a quality education, despite the additional challenges presented by Covid-19.

In a typical year, as each school becomes more established, student enrolment is expected to increase. Without the impact of school closures, 80 students were expected to be enrolled by the end of Year 1. Unfortunately, lengthy 6-month school closures and the impacts of Covid-19 on the community have made this difficult to attain. In order to increase the enrolment figures at the Ten Sous School in the new academic year, the plan is to hold a large enrolment campaign in January, holding meetings with the community, going door-to-door, and encouraging new children, who have now turned primary school age to enrol.



September - December

Between September and the end of the academic year, the learning focus at the Ten Sous School has been Khmer and Mathematics, raising the children's key numeracy and literacy skills and filling in the learning gaps created by the school closures. The Ten Sous School initially catered for Grades 1 to 2 this academic year as students were at this academic level, having never previously received a formal education. We are pleased to

report that in the new academic year, beginning January 2022, the school will also cater for Grade 3 as the students have gained the required skills to progress to higher grades, despite the pandemic. Additionally, science and social science lessons will be introduced into the curriculum.

Supporting The Ten Sous School Until School Transition

A core tenet of the model is sustainability. A transition strategy is in place through which the school will transition into government and community ownership. This is a planned and staged transition which takes place over a 5 to 7 year period; transition only occurs when there is confidence in the government and community's ability to maintain the school and provide quality education. At the end of Year 1 at the Ten Sous School, crucial development has been achieved. Through ongoing training, the School Support Committee will become increasingly involved in the governance of the schools, and in time, take ownership when the school transitions into the national education system. At the same time, the partner will continue to work in partnership with the government throughout the life of the school, gradually transitioning operational and financial responsibilities for the school to the government.

We believe in the meaningful empowerment of communities, to not just participate in the programme, but to assume leadership in it. The school transition model addresses both the issue of dependency on international aid, and the aim to empower by integrating schools into the national sector with a locally-led, government-funded approach. Through this, the Ten Sous School will be safeguarded for future generations of students and sustainability promoted.

On behalf of the children of the Ten Sous School, Dubai Cares and the partner would like to convey their heartfelt thanks to GEMS Jumeirah Primary School and their students for your invaluable ongoing support and helping them protect their communities now and for the future.



Additional Pictures:



Students back in the classroom after the national lockdown (Sept 21)



Students helping the community teacher to put banners up to decorate the classroom (Sept 21)