

Executive Summary Evaluation 9+2 Teacher Supply Support Programme

The Teacher Supply Support Programme was implemented in Otdar Meanchey province (North Western Cambodia) from 2005 to 2010. The overall purpose of the programme was to reduce teacher shortages, absenteeism and turn-over at underserved primary schools in remote villages. The programme was executed and implemented by the 'Basic Education and Teacher Training Project' (BETT) of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and the Belgian Development Agency (BTC).

Recognizing the drawbacks of posting teachers from outside the province in remote areas of Otdar Meanchey (especially with regard to teacher absenteeism and turnover), the programme aimed to increase the pool of locally-recruited teachers. In an environment where few teacher candidates were available because of a lack of students with a grade 9 certificate (the minimum requirement for admittance to the teacher training college), this was achieved by

- seeking out teacher candidates at the villages where they were needed (in collaboration with the Provincial Office of Education);
- supporting them academically so that they would be able to gain the qualifications needed for admittance to the teacher training college, pass the entrance exams and graduate as teachers;
- providing them with material support to offset the costs incurred by families who chose to send a son or daughter to the teacher training college;
- working with the Provincial Office of Education to ensure that the newly graduated teachers would be posted in their own villages or communes.

Considering the many risks associated with the approach taken, the programme has been remarkably successful in limiting the number of participants that dropped out of the programme and in ensuring that all graduating teachers returned to their own communes to teach. The programme increased the pool of local teachers and, at the schools where they were deployed, had a significant impact on the reduction of teacher shortages (and, subsequently, teacher absenteeism and turnover).

Factors that contributed to the achievements of the programme include

- the selection of underserved villages;
- the selection of teacher candidates at village meetings;
- the selection of candidates that would not be able to become teachers without additional (academic) support;
- academic support in order to gain admittance to the teacher training college;
- continued academic support while studying at the teacher training college in order to ensure graduation;
- contracts with the families of the teacher candidates ensuring they would return to their villages;
- close cooperation with the Provincial and District Offices of Education.

The programme's rationale revolved around training up those potential teacher candidates who did not initially qualify. Where this was respected, and teachers were selected from

their own villages to teach in their own villages, the programme has had the best possible effectiveness. However, as more potential teacher candidates (grade 9 certificate holders) became available in the province, the programme lost its relevance and its effectiveness decreased.

It should be noted that the material support was relatively expensive, but according to the graduates, did not contribute to their success nor to the failure of those who did not graduate. Since the academic support was deemed essential, efficiency could in principle be increased by allocating more budget to it in order to further increase its quality.

The approach of the programme deserves to be replicated but will only be valid if at least the following conditions apply:

- There is a shortage of local teachers.
- There is a shortage of teacher candidates who, without additional support, are eligible for admission to teacher training facilities.
- There is a reasonable chance that with extra academic support the supported candidates can graduate.
- There are sufficient places at the teacher training facilities so that underqualified supported candidates do not take away teacher training opportunities from those who do qualify for them without support.
- The ministry of education can afford to have the additional teachers on its payroll.
- There is a reasonable chance that graduates will indeed return to their own communities to teach and continue to teach for a number of years.