

Educational Needs Assessment Relating to Cham Children



**Prepared by: Kampuchean Action for
Primary Education**

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1. Purpose of the Study

- To review status of educational access to state schools of two vulnerable groups:
 - Cham Children
 - Migrant Children

Note: The current presentation will focus primarily on the Chams



Research Questions

Primary Question

- To what extent do Cham children receive educational services and what factors affect this access?



Research Methods

- Review of secondary data sources
- Primary data collection
 - Focus group discussions with Cham community members
 - One-on-one interviews with Cham community and Islamic Schools
- Sample Size
 - Community: N=80
 - Islamic Schools: N=10

2. Policy Context

The Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth, & Sport places a strong value on minority education for indigenous groups

However, the Cham or Khmer Islam community are not considered an indigenous ethnic group, having migrated to Cambodia about 400 years ago





About the Law on Nationality

- In the past, minority groups could declare their ethnicity on National Id Cards
- Under current law, all must declare their nationality (& ethnicity) to be 'Khmer'
- This equates being Cambodian with being Khmer
- Many legal observers have argued that nationality and ethnicity are different
- That is, it is possible to be Cambodian and Cham at the same time, but not Khmer and Cham.



Policy in Actual Practice

- The Cambodian Government in actual practice has been highly flexible in enforcing policy
- Cooperation between NGOs and Government has been very strong
- Government has done little to stop or interfere with the construction of Islamic Schools
- The Prime Minister has issued a decree allowing Cham girls to wear their scarves to school

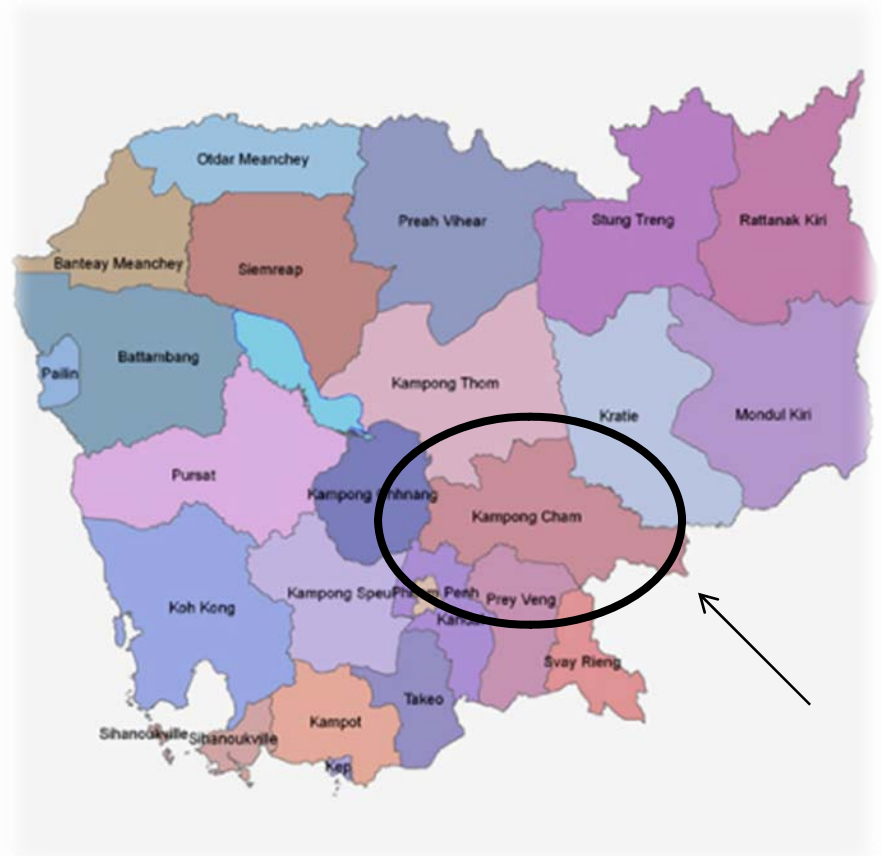


Policy in the State Schools

- Instruction in the Cham language is strictly prohibited
- Instruction on Islam is also prohibited in state schools
- Curriculum focuses on multi-culture

3. Situational Context

- There are an estimated 500,000 Chams in Cambodia (Pop: 13 million)
- About 28% live in Kampong Cham Province, making it the province with the highest concentration of Cham population
- Kampong Cham was the primary site for the current investigation



Nat'l vs Provincial Performance in Education Sector



- National Dropout at Primary: 10.6%
- Provincial Dropout at Primary: 13.7%

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- National Repetition at Primary: 12.8%
 - Provincial Repetition at Primary: 16.5%



Educational Performance Ranking of 16 Districts

- Researchers ranked each of the 16 districts in the province by 6 indicators including:
 - Total Net Enrolment
 - Female Net Enrolment
 - Total Repetition Rate
 - Female Repetition Rate
 - Total Dropout Rate
 - Female Dropout Rate



Worst Performing Districts

District	Times appearing among Worst 5 Districts	Big Cham Population	Annual Migration
Dambae	6	Yes	0.5%
Krouchma	4	Yes	2.8%
Memot	4	Yes	1.1%
StTrong	4	Yes	2.8%
Prey Chor	2	No	6.0%

The Cham and Khmer Communities

- Chams tend to live in their own villages but close to ethnic Khmer villages
- Both communities use the state schools making them ethnically heterogeneous
- This makes bilingual language instruction problematic, even if it were allowed



Training Bilingual Classroom Assistants



The Cham and Khmer Communities (cont.)

- Both communities live in harmony, but the insular nature of Cham communities feeds latent suspicion among Khmers and vice versa



4. KEY FINDINGS

The Chams: A Non-minority

- Officially, Chams are known as *Khmer Islam*, implying that Chams are Khmer
- Use of the term Cham is not allowed in official documents
- Chams are not officially an ethnic minority though they have different language, customs, religion, and history.



What do the Chams think?

How different are
Cham people and
Khmer people?

Not very different	39%
Somewhat different	58%
Very different	4%

N=80



What do the Chams think?

How would you prefer people to call you with respect to your cultural background?

Cham	3%
Cambodian	0%
Khmer Islam	92%
Khmer	0%
Other	5%

N=80



What do the Chams think?

When you are at home, what language do you speak with your family?

Khmer	2%
Cham	89%
Both equally	9%

How would you describe the people who live in your village?

All Cham	64%
All Khmer	1%
Mixed	35%



What do the Chams think?

How important do you think it is for your children to learn about Islam at school?

Very Important	80%
Important	20%
Not so important	0%

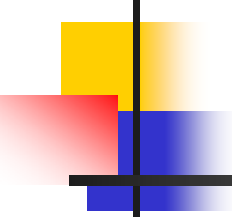
How important is it for your children to learn Cham language at school?

Very important	69%
Important	31%
Not so important	0%



Language Proficiency among Young Cham Children

Proficiency Level Description	Grade 1	Grade 2
Nearly all understand Khmer Language instruction very well	36%	54%
Some understand Khmer Language Instruction well	32%	25%
Most can understand Khmer a little bit but not very well	32%	21%
Most cannot understand Khmer well at all	0%	0%



Cham Language Proficiency among State Teachers

If your children attend a state school, are teachers there able to communicate in Cham language?

Yes, they all can.	16%
Some can	16%
Very few can	11%
None can	58%

N=80

Cham Representation in the State School System

Intake at Teacher Training College

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005*
Total	241	222	283	119	280
Cham	0%	0%	0.3%	0.8%	3.8%

Prevalence of Cham Teachers in 2 Cham Districts

	State Teachers	% Cham	Locally Recruited CT	% Cham
Total	443	1.1%	71	21%

About Islamic Schools

- 23,665 children studying in 86 schools
- Average enrolment: 206
- % Less than 5 yrs old: 40%
- % started with foreign funds: 60%
- Highest average education of *tuan*: 7.6 yrs
- Schools that never meet with POE: 40%
- Most frequently taught subject: Koranic Studies



A class in an Islamic School



Competition with State Schools

About what percentage of your students also attend state schools?

All of them do	40%
Most of them do	20%
About half of them do	30%
Less than half do	10%
None of them do	0%

N=10



Competition with State Schools

Most commonly cited reasons by Islamic School Managers for attending their schools

State not responsive in terms of curriculum

Students want to study Arabic/Malay

School hours more flexible

State school is too far

Children are separated by sex**



4. Conclusions

General

- Study findings present a complex picture about the role of Chams in society
- Chams want to be seen as blending into mainstream society but nevertheless see themselves as distinct from Khmers
- There is little evidence of radicalism in the Cham community (in Kg Cham) at the present time, but recent events in the region have heightened sensitivities and the possibility of sectarian conflict is real



The Primary Research Question

- In terms of the Primary Research Question, Cham children appear to attend both state schools and Islamic Schools in large numbers; but . . .
 - There is an incipient dissatisfaction in the community with responsiveness to cultural needs (mainly language and religion)
 - Young Cham children face obstacles due to low proficiency in Khmer language and low representation of Cham-speaking teachers in the state education system
 - For whatever reason, districts with high Cham populations appear to have low educational efficiency



Trends of Concern

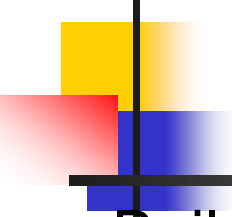
- Cham families are increasingly defecting from the state school system.
- Increasing defection of Chams from state schools threatens the nation-building function of the education system
- State schools are limited in their response because of constraints imposed by central policy about language and minority status
- A parallel school system is emerging over which the state has shown little inclination to control

5. Follow-up Since the Study

- A small pilot outreach project has started called Minority Outreach in Education or MORE (2008)
- Has a 4-year time frame and focuses exclusively on Cham issues and educational access



Programmatic Areas

- 
- Building a bridge between Islamic Schools and State Schools (e.g., incentive systems such as grants, state sponsored opportunities for capacity development)
 - Language proficiency and Multi-cultural Education topics in PTTC Curriculum (extracurricular)
 - Sensitization of State Schools to Cultural Expectations (School Grants)
 - Affirmative Action in PTTC Recruitment
 - Sustained funding of Bilingual Ed Interventions acceptable to MoEYS (e.g., Bilingual Classroom Assistants who translate from Khmer into Cham)