



Briefing Note - Positive Discipline in Schools

In line with Cambodia's Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) policy, the CFS Manual on Preventing Violence Against Children (2008) was produced to increase awareness at schools and among stakeholders about the causes and consequences of different types of violence in schools. The manual lists responsibilities of school directors, teachers, students, parents or guardians as well as local authorities in preventing violence against children.

Despite the existence of this manual and the fact that corporal punishment is explicitly prohibited in Cambodian schools¹, Cambodian teachers remain commonly reported perpetrators of physical violence.² Simultaneously, no training material and tools have previously been developed as part of the CFS approach to assist teachers in building healthy relationships, model nonviolent attitudes and behaviours and contribute to a broader positive school environment, which in turn lowers the risk of school violence.



*Using positive learning techniques, study motivation has increased among most students.
Por Preuk Primary School, Chhuk District, Kampot Province. Cambodia. December 2016 ©Fani Llaurado/Unicef*

To this end, the MoEYS with support from UNICEF has worked to develop an in-service teacher training package on positive discipline, aimed to foster secure, child-friendly and non-violent relationships between teachers and their students, drawing from national and international experiences and best practices. The package and tools focus on effective ways to manage classrooms, resolve conflicts non-violently and create positive student-teacher relationships so that students feel comfortable talking with teachers about violence-related issues.

¹ See Art. 35 of the Education Law 2007 and Article 12 of the Sub-Decree on the Teachers Professional Code

² A 2014 UNICEF Violence Against Children (VAC) Survey found that teachers were the most common perpetrators of childhood physical violence outside of home settings among females and males aged 13 to 17 and 18 to 24 who experienced physical violence, with male teachers cited more often than female teachers across all groups.



The package includes: a revised and updated CFS manual on Preventing Violence Against Children as well as three accompanying tool books on Positive Discipline and Effective Classroom Management: 1) A Guide for Facilitators;³ 2) A Tool Book for Senior School Leaders,⁴ and; 3) A Tool Book for Primary School Teachers.

In July 2015, District Training and Monitoring Team members from three targeted provinces⁵ were introduced to the Guide for Facilitators via a one week training in Phnom Penh, provided by the MoEYS and UNICEF. These DTMT members subsequently provided training on Positive Discipline and Effective Classroom Management to school directors and teachers in their respective provinces. In 2015, the in-service teacher training package on positive discipline was piloted in 12 primary schools across the three target provinces. In 2016, the programme was replicated and scaled to reach over 170 primary schools across the same target provinces.



Yai Chann, male teacher, 31 years old, teaching Grade 5: after implementing the skills learned at the Positive discipline program at schools, the participation and motivation of the students in the classes have increased. Students are more interested in learning and asking their questions in class. Por Preuk Primary School, Chhuk District, Kampot Province. Cambodia. December 2016.

As part of this initiative, the MoEYS and UNICEF have also worked with the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) to conduct a KAP survey on Disciplinary Methods to help establish a baseline to measure the impact of the training package.⁶ With this baseline established, a second KAP survey was conducted in 2016, one year after the positive discipline training so as to help determine impact. Preliminary results suggest positive behavior change from teachers away from corporal punishment and improved learning environments, as reported by students.

With these results, the MoEYS and UNICEF will look to expand the trainings further, reaching additional primary schools in 2017 with eventual plans to have positive discipline integrated into pre-service teacher training.

³ This Guide is designed primarily for District Training and Monitoring Teams as a tool book for those providing training to school leaders and school teachers.

⁴ This Guide is primarily designed for school directors as well as others in school leadership positions.

⁵ Prey Veng, Kampot and Battambang.

⁶ A second control group was also part of the KAP survey.