

**Report on the Qualitative Assessment of  
Community Action for Child Rights (Seth Koma)  
Programme (Part I)**

**and**

**An Assessment of the Collaboration between  
Seth Koma and Seila  
for UNICEF CAMBODIA (Part II)**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CACR	Community Action for Child Rights
CAP	Commune Action Plan
CARERE	Cambodia Reconciliation and Rehabilitation Project
CASD	Community Action for Social Development
CBCP	Community Based Child Protection Programme
CDC	Commune Development Committee
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CNSP	Children in Need for Special Protection
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFT	District Facilitation Team
DIW	District Integration Workshop
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DOE	District Office of Education
DoLA	Department of Local Administration
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
ECCD	Early Childcare and Development
ECCD-SGD	Early Childhood Survival, Growth and Development
EMT	Education Monitoring Team
Excom	Executive Committee
IO	International Organisation
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
LAMCS	Law on Administration and Management of Communes and Sangkats
LDF	Local Development Fund
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
NCSC	National Council for Support to Communes/Sangkats
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NST	National Support Team
PFT	Provincial Facilitation Team
PIF	Provincial Investment Fund
PLG	Partnership for Local Governance
POLA	Provincial Office of Local Administration
PRASAC	Programme d'Appui au Secteur Agricole au Cambodge (European Union)
PRD	Provincial Rural Development
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committee
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SKCC	Seth Koma Coordinating Committee
SKWG	Seth Koma Working Group
STF	Seila Task Force
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollars
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VAP	Village Action Plan
VCCT	Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although the two objectives in this study are quite distinct in many ways and accordingly, are dealt with in separate parts, there are a number of fundamental issues that have been raised by the two studies that affect the activities of the Seth Koma programme and, to some extent, core UNICEF activities. It is this overlap that raises questions concerning the future direction of the programmes. Undoubtedly there is a great need to streamline the programme within the new local governance framework but general uncertainty as to the real effect of the evolving institutional changes makes it difficult to draw any definitive conclusions or recommendations. Nevertheless, we have attempted to identify the major elements affecting the continued implementation of the programme.

The Seth Koma programme has successfully given communities a chance to drive their own development, emphasising the participation of women and children. Village Development Committees and Village Action Plans have proved to be important tools for the transfer of ownership to the village level and are considered to be two of the programme's main strengths. Seth Koma has also begun to collaborate with other departments within UNICEF and other organisations to ensure that the programme forms part of an overall development context. Nevertheless, more efforts are needed to keep the villagers informed, particularly in terms of the status of their VAP, in order to ensure continued and increased participation. Village level ownership could also be increased by transferring more power to this level or providing further training, aimed notably at those with lower levels of education. It is also essential that UNICEF increases collaboration between its own departments in terms of planning and monitoring, not only so that it acts as an example to other smaller organisations and to the government, but also to streamline service delivery and community education.

Village based activities are important as they often influence how villagers perceive the programme. Overall, health related activities have been particularly successful, notably education on birth spacing and child weighing and measuring activities, and improvements in health have been noted almost across the board. Furthermore, some villagers suggested that this has been the result of training in agricultural methods and provision of seeds, which has increased the nutritional status of those involved. Nevertheless, not all activities prompt the same level of enthusiasm and are not sufficiently tailored to the daily realities of village life. This is an important area to consider, as it will have a substantial impact on how the programme is perceived in the future.

It is worth noting that Seth Koma has been making concerted efforts to counter the lack of participation by the poor and vulnerable in the programme, including asking villagers to define and identify vulnerable groups and determine how they can be included in activities. Nevertheless, programme staff recognise that changing village level attitudes towards the poor and most vulnerable is a slow process but it is a first step in getting representatives of these groups to participate in decision-making bodies such as the VDCs. It is also worth noting that the programme is ongoing (very likely until at least 2005). This means that lessons can be learnt from what has happened so far and adjustments can be made to correct them and improve on the programme in the future.

Overall, collaboration between Seila and Seth Koma has so far produced positive results, with Seth Koma integrating village level needs and priorities into the commune level planning process and thus into Seila's overall goal of decentralisation and deconcentration. Furthermore, this integration places Seth Koma within an overall development context rather than being a stand-alone project –

the need for which has been identified by stakeholders at all levels. Nevertheless, there is a need for UNICEF to ensure that its planning schedule fits more neatly in the new decentralised planning framework, although at this stage, without formal regulations in place, this remains a difficult task. There is also a need to formalise dialogue between Seth Koma and Seila in order to ensure comprehensive coordination at all levels. This process has already started with the formal agreement made between the two programmes but requires further attention.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the Seth Koma programme is a unique, large-scale government operation, which is among the first of its kind in this country. Despite the fact that areas for improvement have been identified during this assessment, overall, the programme is making excellent progress towards its objectives and has shown itself able to incorporate lessons learnt during the process into its overall strategies.

**A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF  
COMMUNITY ACTION FOR CHILD RIGHTS (SETH KOMA) PROGRAMME  
(PART I)  
AND  
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SETH KOMA AND  
SEILA  
FOR UNICEF CAMBODIA (PART II)**

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

**I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE<sup>1</sup>**

In the increasingly complex and interdependent world of the new millennium, women and men will be expected to be creative, confident and flexible problem solvers. There is growing consensus that the foundations of such human capacity are laid before birth and in the early years of an individual's life, and that societies that make the essential investments early in children's lives are the ones that make greater progress in terms of human development. It is now clearly understood that social and economic development and optimal child development occur in societies where women have a voice in decision-making, access to resources, legal protection and respect.

UNICEF's global response to this perspective has been to have comprehensive, integrated programmes for Early Childcare and Development and Early Childhood Survival, Growth and Development. The programmes strive to be child-centred, family-focused, community-based and gender-sensitive. In Cambodia, UNICEF's Community Action for Social Development Programme was part of a five-year cooperation plan (1996-2000) between UNICEF and the Royal Government of Cambodia, developed as part of this global response. In 2000, UNICEF and the RGC decided to continue the CASD programme for a second five-year period, to be operational between 2001 and 2005. In this second phase, CASD's title was changed to Community Action for Child Rights, better known as Seth Koma (a Khmer term meaning child rights). Despite the change of name, Seth Koma's main areas of intervention have remained the same.

**Specific Activities undertaken by Seth Koma:**

- Building capacity for improved community social development
- Various initiatives in community education
- Projects supporting water, sanitation, food and environment
- Projects supporting health, hygiene, nutrition and caring practices
- Creation of income/economic opportunities
- Awareness and protection of vulnerable groups
- Enhancing collaboration with government institutions, the Seila programme and others

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from ToR

- Enabling programme ownership among key stakeholders

It is increasingly obvious that in order to ensure the programme's success, further collaboration with the RGC and other UNICEF programmes is necessary. One of Seth Koma's special features is its emerging relationship with Seila. Since 1997, Seth Koma has been working closely with the Seila Programme in selected communes. Seila provides a standard framework for decentralised planning and financing of local development to the commune level, particularly in areas of physical infrastructure such as roads and irrigation canals, while Seth Koma brings community participation into the process, and focuses mainly on social sector development including health, nutrition, education, literacy, and sanitation. In 2001, UNICEF decided to revise its planning process so the village plans they develop are presented in such a way that they can fit into the Seila commune planning process supported by Local Development Funds. This cooperation between the two programmes has steadily grown, from only two communes in 1997 to 30 communes in 2001. With the expansion of Seila in 2002, UNICEF and Seila now work together in five provinces: Odar Meanchey, Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Kompong Speu and Svay Rieng.

It is now important for the two programmes to examine how effective their collaboration has become from the viewpoint of stakeholders.

## **II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this report is two-fold: firstly to provide a qualitative, consultative review of the implementation of the Seth Koma programme (Part I) and secondly, to assess the collaboration between Seth Koma and Seila, focusing on the extent to which Seth Koma enhances community participation in local planning and adds social sector activities to local development plans (Part II).

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

The provinces of Odar Meanchey, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng were chosen for the purposes of this assessment because of the varying lengths of association between Seth Koma and Seila in these provinces, in order to assess the different stages in their collaboration. In Odar Meanchey, both programmes started at the same time. In Prey Veng, Seth Koma has been working for a number of years while the Seila programme was only launched in 2000. In Svay Rieng, Seila programme activities have only just begun.

The consultancy took place between 20 May 2002 and 28 June 2002 and was conducted in three main stages:

1. Existing documentation was reviewed and preliminary consultations were conducted with Seth Koma programme coordinators, in order to develop a detailed workplan and schedule for fieldwork<sup>2</sup>. Government counterparts from the Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs, the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Planning were nominated by

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for detailed workplan

Seth Koma to work alongside the assessment team. Districts, communes and villages to be assessed were chosen in consultation with Seth Koma provincial representatives.<sup>3</sup>

2. Stakeholder interviews were conducted in all three provinces using question guides developed by assessment team leaders under the supervision of the consultants. Interviews were carried out using focus group discussions and individual interviews with stakeholders including: villagers involved in the Seth Koma programme, VDC members, RGC staff at the national, provincial, district, commune and village level, staff from other UNICEF sector programmes (Health and Education) and Seila technical staff. After initial interviews were conducted in Prey Veng, question guidelines were revised and some small adjustments were made<sup>4</sup>.

3. Findings from interviews were analysed and the report was compiled.

It should be noted that a number of factors hindered the research process, including: villagers not being available to speak with the assessment team due to work commitments; potential interviewees expressing concern as to how the information was to be used, and in Odar Meanchey, some areas were difficult to access due to poor road conditions as a result of the rainy season.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for details of areas covered by the assessment and interviewees

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C for an example of question guidelines for commune, district and provincial level Seth Koma staff.

## **PART I<sup>5</sup>**

### **QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY ACTION FOR CHILD RIGHTS (SETH KOMA) PROGRAMME**

#### **OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE**

The objective of this section is to provide a qualitative, consultative overview of the implementation of the Seth Koma programme in the three provinces chosen. The study addresses the extent to which current activities and methods of implementation suit the programme's strategies and objectives, i.e. which activities contribute the most and which contribute the least to these goals. It also identifies the programme's main achievements over the past six years and what villagers and other direct stakeholders perceive as the greatest opportunities and difficulties influencing these achievements.

Based on the findings of this study, the main lessons to be learned for existing programme areas are identified and potential new areas of expansion are explored. This includes looking at conflicting and complementary stakeholder perspectives concerning Seth Koma's programming methods, looking at ways to reduce potential conflicts and enhance complementary perspectives. Recommendations for programme adjustments in terms of strategy and objectives are needed, from the viewpoint of major stakeholders, for the Seth Koma Mid-Term Review.

The study went through the following processes:

- Reviewing and analysing current modalities for collaboration between Seth Koma and key stakeholders. Determining to what extent stakeholders understand Seth Koma's strategies and objectives.
- Identifying and analysing stakeholders' perspectives on Seth Koma's long-term activities in relation to its strategy and objectives. Examining which components are thought to achieve the stated goals and objectives and those which are considered to be unimportant or ineffective.
- Identifying what major stakeholders perceive to be necessary adjustments for Seth Koma in terms of strategy and objectives.
- Identifying and reporting on conflicting or complementary views of major stakeholders regarding Seth Koma's programming methods.
- Identifying potential opportunities for reducing conflicts and enhancing the complementarities.
- Determining how well current activities and methods of implementation fit the strategy and objectives of the programme.
- Determining which activities contribute most and which contribute least to the programme's goals.
- Identifying the programme's main achievements over the past six years.

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<sup>5</sup> All the information in Part I has been drawn from interviews with stakeholders and therefore reflects their opinions. Recommendations have been drafted based on these findings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all stakeholders or staff involved.

- Determining what villagers and other direct stakeholders perceive as the greatest opportunities and difficulties influencing these achievements.

The qualitative assessment of the Seth Koma programme (Part I) is divided into two sections (broken down by province), corresponding to the Seth Koma programme's two sub-projects. Section 1 deals with the process aspect of the programme and looks primarily at the decentralisation of community empowerment. Together with stakeholders, the following were identified as the main areas to be reviewed<sup>6</sup>:

- Objectives and strategies
- Collaboration with other programmes and organisations
- Election and functioning of VDCs
- VAPs
- Monitoring
- UNICEF support
- Collaboration within UNICEF
- Functioning of Seth Koma working groups
- National Support Team

Section 2 of Part I examines Seth Koma's village-based activities which are divided into the following categories:

- Health, hygiene, nutrition and caring practices
- Water, sanitation, food and environment
- Economic opportunities and protection of vulnerable groups
- Community childcare and education

For each section, the main findings have been summarised, highlighting the key similarities and differences in perspectives between provinces and stakeholders. Recommendations for future review are then made for each section. A summary of interview results for each province (again divided by section) can be found in Appendix D.

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<sup>6</sup> These areas arose from discussions with stakeholders. However, it is worth noting that not all issues arose in each province.

## **PART I - SECTION 1**

### **DECENTRALISATION FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (PROCESS)**

As stated by Seth Koma staff and agreed by most major stakeholders, the Seth Koma process is as, if not more, important than the results of the individual activities at village level. Seth Koma gives communities a chance to drive their own development through processes which emphasise the participation of women and children in the improvement of their own living conditions. Through capacity building and support, communities are encouraged to develop Village Action Plans that promote the rights of women and children. The village action planning process is a powerful tool for community empowerment, which, if institutionalised, would enable communities to continue determining the priorities and methods of implementation for the development of their villages even if the Seth Koma programme were to be phased out.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

The objectives and strategies of the Seth Koma programme are generally well understood by all stakeholders, from the national level to individual villagers. There is general recognition of the importance of women's and children's rights, and the programme's strength lies its ability to promote their realisation at the village level. This can be seen in the fall in malnutrition rates among women and in particular, children, during the programme's lifetime, which stakeholders have attributed to capacity building at village, enabling villagers (particularly women) to contribute to and benefit from the development process.

Furthermore, the strategies and objectives of the Seth Koma programme are generally perceived as being realistic. Nevertheless, the programme does need to be considered as part of the overall development context, not as an isolated programme. By collaborating with other organisations or programmes it can contribute to the common goal of reducing poverty and improving the living conditions of women and children.

From discussions with VDCs and other villagers, it seems that, among them, there is a nascent awareness of the importance of promoting the rights of women and children and they are interested in exploring the topic further. Higher-level working groups have noted that in some areas (Prey Veng and Svay Rieng) villagers lack a broad understanding of the concepts involved but they are keen to learn more. In Svay Rieng, the provincial working group noted that at the village level, traditional attitudes can still act as a barrier: older villagers still holding the belief that, because of their age, children are not entitled to the same rights as adults.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- Communities' recognition of and women's and children's rights is crucial to the programme's success. Given the level of interest in and the importance of rights' issues to the programme, it is recommended that follow-up training sessions be held in those villages where interest is expressed. Training at the village level needs to be closely monitored, as the current "trickle-down" system of province level staff

training district-level staff, who train commune-level staff, who in turn train villagers, has resulted in information being lost and a corresponding deterioration in the quality of training provided.

### **COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES AND ORGANISATIONS**

Seth Koma collaborates with a number of other programmes and organisations in order to increase the programme's impact and to meet development needs identified during the village action planning process that do not fall under Seth Koma's mandate. These include an Integrated Pest Management programme for agriculture, Seila for roads and other infrastructure and the World Food Programme for school feeding. Currently, there is no formal system of dialogue between Seth Koma and other organisations. Collaboration occurs when Seth Koma identifies an opportunity, and convenes a meeting to discuss potential areas of co-operation.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- In order to fully achieve the programme's objectives, stakeholders acknowledge that collaboration with other programmes and organisations working in the same areas is desirable. It is therefore recommended that Seth Koma looks into the possibility of setting up a regular forum for discussion with other programmes and organisations in order to coordinate and share the planning process at both provincial or district levels. Such a forum would provide an opportunity for villagers' priorities and needs to be shared with different organisations, helping them to make their interventions more effective, and pre-planning could be coordinated before the district integration workshops. For recommendations regarding collaboration with the Seila programme, see Part II.

### **ELECTION AND FUNCTIONING OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES**

VDCs are considered as the most important tool for the establishment of VAPs and form the focal point for village development activity. Stakeholders feel that in general, VDCs have been an effective means of decentralising development and ensuring participation by communities in the development of their own villages. It therefore follows that, to a large extent, the development of each village depends on the VDC members. For example, it has been noted that development in villages where VDC members have low levels of education or have little time to devote to their VDC responsibilities tends to proceed at a slower rate than in villages where VDC members are better educated and have more time to devote to the programme.

Furthermore, stakeholders across the board cited limited educational levels of VDC members as one of the principle barriers to effective implementation of the programme. Although VDC members are required to be literate, this does not guarantee that they are able to carry out their duties. Many VDC members are unable to contribute initiative or ideas to help develop their VAPs and many encounter difficulties in carrying out their assigned tasks. In some cases, this has meant that some members have become discouraged and resigned. If this member is then replaced by a new member, capacity building has to start from the beginning again.

Moreover, VDC members receive limited support and very little encouragement in carrying out their duties from Seth Koma. They are expected to perform a variety of tasks and contribute a significant amount of their time to the development of their village, in many cases without recognition or any kind of incentive. Furthermore, poverty remains a significant constraint to full participation in VDC responsibilities. Requiring VDC members to be literate already prevents a large proportion of the poorest villagers from participating in the committees and those that are elected are often unable to be fully active in the planning and implementation process due to time constraints from their daily farming and income generation work.

In Prey Veng, stakeholders reported that the work of some VDCs is hampered by some of the members being involved in local politics. In such cases, development activities become tools in the political process with VDC members prioritising allies' requests over those of political opponents or those who wield no political power. As a result, in some areas, with development sites being selected by VDC members to benefit themselves, their families and their associates, the implementation process was perceived to be lacking in transparency. Nevertheless, it is difficult to know how widespread this problem is as villagers are often reluctant to report on those in positions of authority.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- Given that the VDCs are the pivotal point around which the development process at the village level revolves, more time and resources should be dedicated to improving their capacity and supporting them in their roles. Interviewees at all levels agreed that refresher training is necessary to strengthen the ability of VDC members to carry out their specific tasks and responsibilities and to improve their understanding of their roles and the programme. It is also recommended that they be provided with further training on monitoring and follow-up techniques, documentation and report writing. If possible, this training should be conducted in their spare time after the busy rice-planting season and should be followed up and monitored for its effectiveness. In addition, the important role of the VDCs should be recognised and the committee members encouraged in their tasks, whether through incentives, certificates, or priority materials from the programme. However, in doing this, the issue of sustainability needs to be considered, and any incentives offered need to be linked to the activities at village level, and not provided directly by UNICEF.
- The issue of participation of the poorest villagers in VDCs and in the development process overall needs to be addressed if the programme is to achieve its objectives. A previous internal report<sup>7</sup> also identified the problem of inactive VDC members due to poverty, poor health or illiteracy (which are usually linked). However, instead of addressing the root causes of their lack of engagement, suggested solutions have been to replace inactive members and introduce more stringent selection criteria for VDC members. If the Seth Koma programme wishes to promote the inclusion of the poorest members of its constituency in governance of their own development activities, it needs to investigate options for providing food-for-work or other incentives for poor VDC members. However, given that changing dominant

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<sup>7</sup> Summarised Report on Achievements of CASD Programme, Svay Rieng Province, 1996-2000

attitudes at village level towards the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable is a gradual process, it is perhaps unrealistic at this stage of the programme to expect that they will be able to participate at this level. The full inclusion of the poorest villagers may have to be postponed until later in the life of the programme, when grassroots level awareness raising and activities have had time to take effect.

- Regular monitoring of the programme should indicate whether all villagers are involved in choosing the sites for development, or whether VDC members are selecting them to suit their own priorities.

### **VILLAGE ACTION PLANS**

The village action planning process is generally recognised as being one of the main strengths of the programme. Through this process, villagers have control over the development of their own villages, and by beginning from the principle of women's and children's rights, they have a framework to guide the process and measure progress. In most cases, villagers and VDC members work together to create the VAP, which is generally agreed to accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the community. VAPs also enable UNICEF and other programmes and organisations to direct their efforts towards the priorities of the villages, as well as building villagers' capacity in discussing issues and solving problems within the community.

The main barrier to effective development and implementation of VAPs identified by the majority of stakeholders was a decrease in villagers' willingness to participate in the process. There are a number of reasons why villagers are not participating:

1. Poverty - poor villagers often do not attend the VAP sessions because they have no time. Many of the poorest villagers live from hand to mouth and often have to travel outside the village to find work. Furthermore, the poor often do not see the value in participating because they have little hope for the future. The majority of participants in the process are the better-off villagers because they stay at home or have income earning activities at home or inside the village. The same pattern occurs during implementation of activities as poor villagers are generally unable to make any contributions of time or money (which is often one of UNICEF's conditions for an activity being granted support).
2. Relevance - many villagers are reluctant to participate because they do not perceive services received in the past as relevant to their needs. This can have a number of causes:
  - Village priorities can get 'lost' during the development of the Commune Action Plans.
  - Assistance which is provisionally promised at the district integration workshop may never eventuate.
  - As discussed above, local politics or nepotism can result in services being allocated inappropriately.
  - Villagers may identify needs which are not covered by the Seth Koma programme's mandate and no other programme or organisation is able to provide support.

- The delay in providing supplies or training (which can take between four months to one year) after the development of the VAP sometimes means that villagers have forgotten what it was they requested or that supplies arrive when they are no longer of any use (e.g. seeds arriving once the planting season has finished).
3. Flooding (Prey Veng) - villagers have been badly affected by two years of flooding, increasing their vulnerability to future crises. This has forced many villagers to travel outside their villages to earn an income, thus reducing their motivation to participate in a process that does not result in lasting benefits.
  4. Resettlement (Odar Meanchey) - older villagers tend to join in the VAP sessions due to their years of working under collective Khmer Rouge management, but newly settled villagers without such a background have not yet gained a sufficient sense of community to value participation in village planning.

The delay in provision of services was identified as a problem at all levels, in all provinces. The late provision of supplies was generally identified as resulting from UNICEF's slow response to requests. Although it takes time at the village level to collect the relevant supporting documents, the plan is then perceived to pass relatively quickly through the process, until it reaches UNICEF. It can then take several months to receive a response. In the meantime villagers are not certain what exactly will be provided and when. As well as resulting in a decrease in participation at the village level, this also makes it difficult for the Seth Koma working groups to plan for implementation. There was little understanding of the funding constraints under which UNICEF operates, which often make it difficult to specify the timing of activities.

Low levels of education or awareness amongst villagers can work against the VAP process as it is difficult for them to plan for things they are not aware of and/or do not value. Without excellent facilitators, this can result in unrealistic or inappropriate priorities being included in the VAPs. Despite an increase in understanding since the beginning of the programme due to capacity building and training activities, traditional beliefs persist, and can hinder the outcomes of the programme. An example of this is cases where people believe that immunisation can harm their child, making it improbable that immunisation would be included in the VAP.

Using committees or working groups at all levels means that there is often no designated key person who has overall responsibility for the VAP. Many VDCs and even communes do not know which level (commune, district, provincial) is responsible for the VAP and do not know whom to contact to find out the current status of their VAP.

Villagers still lack a sense of ownership of their VAPs. As UNICEF only supports certain parts of the plan, villagers associate the activities with the Seth Koma programme, and not with their own VAP. This reduces villagers' willingness to participate in future planning, as they do not see the use in contributing their time to the planning process if effective control over what actually happens still rests with a higher authority. This may lead to outside priorities being imposed on the villages' local needs. Lack of ownership can also result from a lack of involvement of VDCs in budgetary planning of activities. Without financial control, villagers cannot truly plan; they can only prioritise their needs and hope that someone from outside will decide that their priorities are worthy of support. Many of the frustrations of

villagers with the perceived ineffectiveness of the planning process could be due to their lack of control of the outcomes of the process. Despite the advantages of having villagers identify their own needs for development, the decisions as to which activities will actually take place are to a large part taken out of their hands and decided at a higher level, whether it be commune, district, province or national/UNICEF. This lack of ownership manifests itself in a lack of involvement in the process and in low levels of maintenance and contribution to the services provided by the programme

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- Villagers are often excluded by their poverty from the very processes that are designed to improve their lives. Programmes that fail to take this into account are at risk of benefiting only those villagers who are relatively better off and can afford to participate in activities that require significant contributions of time and/or material resources. Poorer members of the community need to be encouraged to participate by providing immediate benefits to them and/or their children. For example, specifically targeting poorer villagers for distributions of seeds and tools should be continued and the possibility of linking this to participation in other programme activities should be considered. Allowing poorer villagers to participate for shorter amounts of time or providing them with food compensation for their labour based on a needs assessment could also increase participation. In Svay Rieng, the provincial level working group suggested that those villagers who have the time but not the motivation to participate could be shown examples of families or children who have benefited as a result of participation.
- The timing of Seth Koma's workplan should be reviewed. If UNICEF specified what support it is willing to offer before the DIWs are held, villagers would not have to wait as long to hear which of their priorities will be supported. This would also give villagers giving them more time to request support from other programmes or organisations for areas of the VAP which are not within Seth Koma's mandate. This would also cut down on administration, as Seth Koma would only have to collect supporting documentation for activities which are likely to be supported, saving both time and disappointment. Seth Koma should also take the initiative to contact other programmes or organisations working in the same areas with the potential to support VAPs. Additionally, the provision of supplies clearly needs to be streamlined. The delay in providing promised services impacts badly on the process and outcomes of the programme. If donor constraints mean that it is impossible for UNICEF to revise the way in which assistance is provided, the process should be made more transparent by providing accurate information regarding timing of activities at all levels, so as not to mislead other stakeholders.
- More effective top-down monitoring should be designed in order to prevent inappropriate allocation of resources (see also section on monitoring below).
- The problem of villagers' low levels of education is not one that can be addressed in the short term but their levels of awareness can. Stakeholders do agree that awareness of many issues has increased as a result of programme activities but it is

recommended that awareness-raising activities immediately prior to the development of the VAP be implemented (notably focussing on key areas, such as education and immunisation, which come under the mandate of the Seth Koma programme).

- To increase ownership and encourage accountability at the village level, it is recommended that Seth Koma consider involving VDCs more in the financial management of the activities<sup>8</sup> (this could be simply informing them of the cost of each activity) and providing them with a small budget for VAP activities which are not covered by other organisations or programmes. This recommendation should however be informed by developments at commune level within the Seila process, as further decentralisation of financial matters may not be practicable. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the limitations on village ownership of VAPs imposed by a lack of financial control.

## **MONITORING**

There is some disagreement between stakeholders regarding the adequacy of the Seth Koma monitoring systems. On the whole, provincial coordinating committees are satisfied with the current system, where each department monitors the activities for which it is directly responsible. However, many other stakeholders cited monitoring as one of the main weaknesses of the programme. The majority of monitoring activities are done by the level immediately above, i.e. villages are monitored by communes and districts are monitored by provinces. Only limited monitoring of villages by provincial committees, NST or national UNICEF staff takes place. Consequently, much of the information available to these levels is based on reports which have been passed up the line. The current monitoring system means that problems which are identified and reported by lower levels can be effectively dealt with by higher level working groups, who will make a field trip to analyse the situation and try to find a solution. However, problems which are not officially reported for whatever reason (e.g. embarrassment, nepotism, lack of time or skills) are much less likely to be detected. Information available to UNICEF comes mostly from the provincial level, and infrequent monitoring visits mean that staff are perceived to be out of touch with the situation at village level.

Furthermore, outside the provincial working groups, many stakeholders expressed concern regarding the quality of monitoring. Those responsible for monitoring at each level often have limited knowledge and experience of monitoring, particularly at lower levels. Moreover, monitoring is sometimes used as a controlling mechanism simply to judge the people at the next level, and there is little understanding of monitoring as a tool to be used to improve the quality of programme activities and more effectively achieve the objectives. This encourages people to prepare positive reports lacking in constructive criticism to be sent up the line, obscuring any problems that may need attention.

Provincial UNICEF Health and Education staff were particularly concerned about the monitoring of the programme. They see village-level information as being crucial for the effective functioning of the programme, citing cases they have seen during their own

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<sup>8</sup> Although it should be noted that they are already involved in the financial management of credit programmes and library-building activities.

monitoring where money has been wasted because activities were not followed up and problems were not identified and solved. They monitor Seth Koma activities when they are in the villages, but there is a degree of resentment at having to give their time to another programme with little perceived benefit to their own sectors. A combined monitoring form for UNICEF sectors (devised in Stung Treng) does exist, which is used in some areas by some staff, but in general people are sceptical about the usefulness of the information collected. Limited overlap between Seth Koma, Health and Education means that is difficult to use this in any systematic way.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- To increase the effectiveness and credibility of the programme, Seth Koma's monitoring systems need to be revised and improved. It is recommended that UNICEF increases the amount of monitoring it does at the village level, basing a staff member in each province whose main responsibility is monitoring. The role of the NST in monitoring needs to be more clearly defined and the staff used more effectively for this purpose. Monitoring by VDCs and Seth Koma working groups should be observed, and refresher training focusing on the purpose and use of monitoring information provided where needed. Cross monitoring of activities by departments not directly responsible for their implementation should also be considered. The possibility of integrated monitoring systems needs to be investigated following the initiative of the UNICEF combined sectors monitoring form, but using a tool designed specifically for Seth Koma activities.
- Working in the same provinces as UNICEF Health and Education presents a good opportunity for collaboration between the sectors in areas such as monitoring. However, different operational areas limit the scope of the collaboration and make it difficult to devise consistent systems. It is recommended that UNICEF review its current areas of operation to determine whether the areas of overlap could be increased.
- The combined monitoring form is a sound initiative, which should be followed up and revised, based on feedback from staff in the field. If Health and Education staff are to take responsibility for monitoring some of Seth Koma's activities, monitoring by Seth Koma staff and working group members needs to be improved so that both sides benefit.

### **UNICEF SUPPORT**

On the whole, provincial working group members in Prey Veng province were satisfied with the current level of support provided by UNICEF, where there are no Seth Koma staff based in the province but frequent visits from Phnom Penh-based staff. Other stakeholders generally felt it was desirable to have a UNICEF staff member based in each province. Seth Koma working group members are skilled in their own areas, but need support in carrying out the process of the programme and in coordinating crosscutting activities such as monitoring and collaboration between UNICEF sectors. By being based in the province, the staff member would have more time to spend in the field, with a resulting increase in understanding of how the programme is working at village level. Having a recognised

spokesperson from UNICEF for the programme at provincial level would also increase UNICEF's accountability to its constituency, as villages and communes would know who to contact with queries regarding the progress of their VAP requests through the system.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- It is recommended that a Seth Koma staff member be based in each province, replacing the current system of Phnom Penh-based staff responsible for each province. This staff member's main responsibilities should include: monitoring, coordinating collaboration between UNICEF sectors and representing UNICEF within the programme.

### **COLLABORATION WITHIN UNICEF**

Collaboration between UNICEF Health and Education and Seth Koma currently exists more as an ideal than a formalised practice. Beyond information sharing, there is very little in the way of actual concrete collaboration. UNICEF would prefer an integrated approach, but planning is still separate for each sector at the provincial level. All sectors agree that closer collaboration would be beneficial to all but that the form of this collaboration has not yet been decided upon. Although UNICEF's current five-year operating plan ensures that all sectors operate in the same provinces, efforts to collaborate are hampered by the fact that the operational areas of the sectors only partially overlap.

Health and Education appreciate the information on village priorities obtained through the VAP process and in some cases have begun to use it in their own planning. Through sharing of information, the sectors can maximise their impact and ensure that development at village level is as effective as possible. Health and Education also make use of the Seth Koma structures at village level, using VDCs to disseminate information or encourage villagers to participate in their activities.

Training is an area where there has been discussion about the possibility of collaboration, but very little has actually been done. There is potential for collaboration with health centre staff in providing community health training and with POE staff in providing training for teachers and/or librarians. Currently, there is very little coordination of training schedules and a lack of consultation during the planning process results in missed opportunities for shared training. Although all sectors are supportive of the idea of collaborating on training, this has yet to be put into practice.

In terms of activities, Seth Koma has recently begun to work more closely with other sectors in four main areas:

- Health collaborate to carry out Seth Koma's child assessment three times a year, involving health centre staff in the process and using the opportunity to provide vitamin A supplements or immunisation. They have also succeeded in implementing a single yellow vaccination card per child in most areas, after almost a year of negotiations<sup>9</sup>. This collaboration is more advanced in Svay Rieng province

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<sup>9</sup> Yellow vaccination cards are given to children to be used as a record of childhood vaccinations.

compared to Prey Veng province, where in many areas children still have two yellow cards, one from Seth Koma held by the VDC and one from Health kept by the mother, and coordination of Health activities with child assessments has not yet been fully achieved.

- Education plans to invite childcare teachers living in their operational areas to attend technical meetings which are held on Thursdays for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports preschool teachers. Seth Koma's childcare teachers are volunteers with only 20 days training. Their teaching capacity is therefore much lower than that of the MoEYS teachers and they would benefit greatly from further training assistance and opportunities to share ideas and develop materials with the more experienced MoEYS teachers.
- The Children in Need of Special Protection programme works with Seth Koma to implement the Community Based Child Protection programme, using Seth Koma's working groups with the addition of the members of the police and government religious department.
- UNICEF HIV/AIDS work with UNICEF Health on Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing and prevention of mother to child transmission, working through Seth Koma to implement prevention, caring and protection programmes at the community level. These focus on dissemination of information and discussion in focus groups of possible plans for the community. HIV/AIDS provides the concept and the budget, the Seth Koma working groups are responsible for planning and implementation.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- The Seth Koma programme as a multi-sectoral programme provides an excellent opportunity for UNICEF's different sectors to work more closely together. It is recommended that UNICEF consider this opportunity when reviewing the operational areas of each sector, given that collaboration is easier and more effective when the sectors operate in the same geographical locations.
- Collaboration is progressing in a positive direction but opportunities exist for the sectors to work together more closely. It is recommended that input from the other sectors be requested early in the planning process for each province, in order that schedules for training and complementary activities can be coordinated.

### **FUNCTIONING OF SETH KOMA WORKING GROUPS**

#### **PROVINCE**

Seth Koma's structure at the provincial level has both its advantages and disadvantages. Although the programme and the working groups are multi-departmental, activities are still the responsibility of individual departments. This means that working group members are working within their area of capacity and Seth Koma activities complement their other government work. However, this can also mean that the programme is in fact relatively sectoralised, with little collaboration between departments on monitoring or problem solving. The committees exist mainly as a forum for coordination and sharing information but the activities are implemented by the individual departments. This requires certain

individuals to devote disproportionate amounts of time to the programme, which is not always possible for directors or deputy directors of busy departments.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- Although dividing responsibility for activities between government departments is practical and should contribute to the programme's sustainability by providing a structure through which individual departments can respond to village-level priorities within their own areas of technical expertise, it is recommended that cross-monitoring of activities and more cooperation in problem solving be introduced (see section on monitoring for more detail).

### **DISTRICT**

Given that the structure of the district level working group is similar to that at provincial level, the same advantages, disadvantages and recommendations apply. Nevertheless, it appears that it is at the district where most doubts arise concerning the role of the working group and the scope of their activities. Often, the district level working groups act merely as a bridge between the commune level working groups and the provincial coordinating committees. In many cases, the district level working groups are completely bypassed, with the commune level working group being told to deal directly with the provincial coordinating committee. However, from the experience in Odar Meanchey, it can be seen that strong working groups at district level can be very effective in capacity building and supporting the lower levels. For this to happen in other provinces, people at the district level need to spend more time carrying out routine monitoring and follow-up at the commune and village levels.

The district is a crucial level in the planning process, as it is at the district integration workshop that temporary agreements are made to support the VAPs. District level working groups are hampered in this process by not being empowered to specify the areas in which they can support the commune plans. Giving them power to do so would enable better integration of planning and funding.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- It is recommended that the schedule for Seth Koma's planning at the national level be revised, in order to be able to specify in the district integration workshops in which areas Seth Koma can support the commune plans.
- It is recommended that working groups at the district level be encouraged to spend more time in the villages, providing support for VDCs and commune working groups.

### **COMMUNE**

The commune level working group is seen as being a vital component in the Seth Koma process. The implementation of activities depends on the action or intervention of the commune level working group. If the commune chief does not pay attention to the process, development does not happen but if he is active, activities run better. Currently, the

commune level working group is the weakest link in the Seth Koma process. This is not a structural issue, but has been an inevitable outcome of the recent commune elections and the corresponding changes to the composition of the groups. With the newly elected Commune Councils in place, Seth Koma's commune level working groups are now chaired by the elected commune chief with the commune clerk acting as his assistant. This means that almost all commune level working groups now contain members with no experience with the programme, and who have not yet received the same level of capacity building as previous members. However, having the previous health and education workers continue with the working group has provided some continuity and means that there are at least three people in the working group with experience in the programme and the process. Furthermore, in several cases, former working group members are still performing their duties as Commune Councils have not yet fully taken on their role due to lack of training. This at least means that Seth Koma activities are continuing, whereas in areas where the new Commune Councils are already operating, it seems that many activities have been postponed pending orders or regulations from a higher level.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- This change in the composition of working groups means that the provision of training to new members must be considered a priority. However, given that council members are currently undergoing training for their new roles, facilitated by different programmes and organisations, time constraints make it difficult for Seth Koma to conduct additional training, and increase the risk of council members suffering from information overload. Nevertheless, Seth Koma needs to provide training on facilitation and monitoring, and on the programme in general as soon as is practically possible. In doing so, the feedback provided by UNICEF Education, among others, should be taken into account: for training to be effective there needs to be follow-up training and monitoring, and trainers should use simple terms. They need to recognise the different levels of education of the people they are working with and cater to them - some Commune Council members are barely literate, and using difficult terminology (e.g. "component" or "investment plan") does not result in effective training. In the meantime, Seth Koma must rely on the district and provincial working groups to help them to operate the activities, and on the experience and skills of VDC members. During this transition period, careful monitoring by higher levels is required in order to make sure that the activities continue as planned.

### **NATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM**

Although assessing the role of the NST was not within the scope of the ToR, it was requested during feedback sessions that this be included in the report. What follows is a brief summary of discussions with Dr. Chea Sam Nang, Director of the Department of Rural Health Care within the Ministry of Rural Development and with three of his NST colleagues from the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sport, Women's and Veterans' Affairs and Health.

The NST exists to provide support to the Seth Koma programme at the national level. They are responsible for advising on policy and supporting training, monitoring and evaluation

activities. They also participate in planning workshops at the national and provincial levels. The team works in a similar way to coordinating committees in the provinces, in that each ministry is responsible for certain Seth Koma activities. Implementation is carried out by the departments in the provinces and districts, supported by their ministry NST staff. The NST is also available to help with solving problems and providing advice when requested by the provinces.

Monitoring is one of the main responsibilities of the NST and they sometimes go out to the provinces for this purpose, either as a whole team when invited by the chairman of the NST, or individually under the auspices of their department. This year, there have not been many group activities and most departments have been working on their own. There are two ways for activities to be assigned to NST members. In the first case, UNICEF may request they take part in a certain activity, as was the case for this assessment. In the second case, the NST may propose a programme of activities for approval by UNICEF. This is generally done early in the year and UNICEF responds by providing a budget for those activities which are agreed upon during consultations. However, NST members said that this year, there have been no discussions since they proposed the plan of activities in February. As a result, none of the activities they proposed for the first seven months of the year have been carried out, including regular monitoring and evaluation activities. NST members expressed disappointment that their skills and experience were not being put to better use for this purpose.

#### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- Given that no other stakeholders were consulted, no recommendations can be made regarding the role of the NST. Nevertheless, it is suggested that in the future, the responsibilities of this group in terms of monitoring and support activities are increased, as members of the group show a strong commitment to the programme and are eager to contribute more.

## **PART I – SECTION 2**

### **VILLAGE PLANS FOR BASIC SERVICES (ACTIVITIES)**

For villagers, the tangible outcomes of the Seth Koma programme are the basic services provided by UNICEF in response to the priorities identified during the VAP process. Given the small number of villages included in the assessment, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about individual activities, but more general recommendations will be made at the end of this section.

#### **HEALTH, HYGIENE, NUTRITION AND CARING PRACTICES**

Stakeholders at all levels and in all provinces stated that activities falling under the Health, Hygiene, Nutrition and Caring Practices sub-project made the most significant contribution to achieving the overall goals of the programme. Levels of health knowledge were thought to have improved in all areas. Moreover, in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng, villagers and working group members felt that the health and nutritional status of women and children in the Seth Koma villages had improved as a result of programme activities. They reported that the percentage of underweight children had decreased by between 5-20% (which varied between villages). Members of the provincial coordinating committee in Prey Veng attributed this to an increase in the number of villagers growing vegetables, as a result of the training and seeds provided by the Seth Koma programme. Villagers no longer have to buy vegetables, reducing pressure on their minimal income, and some even have a surplus which they can sell or use to support other development activities in their villages. In Odar Meanchey, the programme has only been in operation for between one and two years (depending on the district) so it is still too early to see any long-term impact on health and nutrition.

Villagers said that the health education programme on birth spacing was very popular, as many of them have large families and would like to limit the number of children they have in the future. The provincial coordinating committee in Prey Veng claimed that birth rates have declined as a result of Seth Koma birth spacing education and it has encouraged discussion among villagers of what used to be a taboo subject. Villagers understand the principles of birth spacing and a large number of women now use modern methods such as contraceptive pills or injections. In Svay Rieng, it was noted that villagers were not using condoms for birth spacing purposes, as they believe they are only for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Other health improvements mentioned by interviewees were a reduction in the number of women at risk of complications during childbirth, a reduction in the number of diarrhoea cases among children, an increase in the incidence of breast-feeding, a reduction of the incidence of mosquito-borne diseases and improvements in hygiene practices such as using latrines and washing hands before eating. Villagers in Svay Rieng also noted that more information on HIV/AIDS is now being distributed in areas covered by Seth Koma.

In Prey Veng, commune level working group members indicated that there had been some difficulties in conducting immunisations. Many adults have left the villages to find work in the towns, which means that parents are often not available to take their children to be vaccinated. In addition, a number of villagers had misplaced their immunisation records and duplicate records at the commune office were difficult to access as health officials were

unable to find them. Furthermore, although awareness-raising has improved villagers' knowledge of the benefits of immunisation, some still believe that the vaccinations make their children sick and are therefore reluctant to take them to growth monitoring sessions. Also in Prey Veng, some villagers were reluctant to bring their children to growth monitoring because they did not receive any immediate tangible incentives after the weighing was done.

For discussion of coordination of Seth Koma health and hygiene activities with UNICEF Health, see Section 1.

### **WATER AND SANITATION, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT**

Villagers and working groups in all three provinces mentioned wells as one of the most important Seth Koma activities, although villagers in Svay Rieng and Odar Meanchey still felt that more wells were needed. The Seth Koma programme is aware of this and hopes eventually to ensure access to safe drinking water for all villagers in the project area. There had however been complaints from many villagers in all provinces that the selection of well sites was inappropriate, either because wells were communal and constructed far from their houses or were often located very close to VDC members' houses. It appears that many of the complaints were a result either of inaccurate expectations that wells would be provided to individual families or of a lack of understanding of the technical constraints on choosing well sites. The problem seems to be resolving itself through increased community consultation regarding well sites and through increased information sharing by commune level working groups and VDC members.

The functioning of well committees varies between villages, depending on the commitment of the members. In general, committees have been successful in organising the construction and maintenance of their wells and in coordinating contributions from the communities. However, villagers in Svay Rieng and Odar Meanchey were concerned that not all villagers participate equally in the construction of wells and some do not contribute to their upkeep. Poorer villagers find it particularly difficult to dedicate the necessary time or money, which can result in them being excluded by those who were more involved in the activity.

Seth Koma has provided latrines to individual households, which VDC members in Svay Rieng state has improved overall levels of hygiene and sanitation. However, in Prey Veng, commune level working groups were concerned that not all latrines had been completed, as families were unable to contribute the necessary labour and/or materials. They recommended closer monitoring in order to avoid this problem in the future.

In Odar Meanchey, training in rice and vegetable growing and in fish and animal raising had not yet been conducted, although some farmers had been provided with seeds and a demonstration vegetable garden had been planted. Working group members in all provinces stated that these activities, particularly vegetable growing, had helped to reduce malnutrition rates and had raised living standards, as villagers were able to sell surplus vegetables. This in turn has had the effect of increasing participation in other programme activities, as villagers have more time and energy. Working group members in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng also recognised the value of the IPM training and said that villagers had been able to put the techniques into practice. However, in Prey Veng, some farmers had not had the chance to practice their skills due to flooding or drought and had forgotten their training before they

were able to share their experiences with others. There had also been problems with animal raising, as villagers were not always able to apply their training, with the result that the animals they were given died. Commune working groups believed that many of these problems could have been prevented through closer monitoring by VDC members.

### **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS**

Rice banks now exist in many of the villages covered by the Seth Koma programme, and, in general, are rated positively by all stakeholders. In Svay Rieng, the number of rice loans has increased, villagers stating that this is because the interest is much cheaper than with private agencies. Better-off villagers do not compete with poorer villagers for rice loans and in Odar Meanchey some villagers participate in the rice bank as a way of supporting those poorer than themselves while also saving rice for the future. However, in Svay Rieng and Odar Meanchey, villagers who did not have close ties with VDC members were concerned by the lack of information regarding the banks, as some were not aware there was a rice bank in their village and some were afraid of being cheated as they were not aware of the guidelines for loans. Furthermore, in Prey Veng, flooding has had a negative impact on the operation of the rice banks, as the rice crops of many villagers were destroyed and they were unable to repay their loans.

Credit activities are operational in some villages in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. In Odar Meanchey, training has been provided to VDCs in the management of funds but the credit schemes are not yet up and running. However, villagers said that cow banks would be more appropriate for their needs than cash credit. There were concerns in both Prey Veng and Svay Rieng that some villagers had been unable to repay their loans, as they did not know how to use the capital to generate enough income. In one district in Svay Rieng, working group members said that some villagers had been forced to sell their properties in order to pay back their loans. This then serves as a deterrent to other poor villagers who become reluctant to use the scheme.

The Seth Koma programme targets vulnerable children and women for the provision of agricultural supplies and training. Interviewees in all three provinces had noticed positive changes in standards of living as a result of these carefully targeted activities. In Svay Rieng, working group members had noticed a reduction in the number of villagers who were forced to leave to look for work in the towns. However, landless villagers are still particularly vulnerable and farmers are still suffering as a result of natural disasters. Furthermore, VDC members stated that some vulnerable children did not believe they received sufficient assistance from the programme, as they were only provided with education and not with any material benefits.

### **COMMUNITY CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION**

Community childcare groups were reported to be functioning well in all three provinces and were instrumental in encouraging parents (particularly women) to participate in other programme activities such as literacy classes. The number of children in childcare has increased as parents have noticed many positive changes in children who attend, such as increased confidence, improved hygiene practices (such as washing hands before meals) and improved behaviour at home. However, many childcare groups lack materials and toys for the children to play with and some do not have suitable areas for children to play in, or are located far from wells or from parents' houses. In Odar Meanchey, there were problems in

one district with parents who did not accept the cut-off age for childcare classes and wanted to send their younger children to classes as well.

Literacy classes were identified in all provinces as one of the least successful activities in the Seth Koma programme. Stakeholders believe that the classes can be useful, as they believe that people who have completed the classes have gained basic literacy skills and have also learnt about topics relevant to their lives such as health, hygiene and agricultural techniques. Nevertheless, attendance in classes is irregular and dropout rates are high. Although in some cases this is due to a lack of awareness of the value of education, for the most part it can be attributed to poverty constraints. Poorer villagers do not have time to spare to attend classes, as they are fully occupied with farming and income-generating activities. Many are forced to leave their villages to find work, or spend all their time in peak farming seasons away from the village in their fields. Women who do stay in the village are often occupied with household duties and others are simply too tired to attend after working all day, often having eaten very little. Many students in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng had requested that the programme provide them with incentives of rice or money so that they would be able to attend classes.

Both literacy and childcare teachers are volunteers. The majority have low levels of education and lack the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to be effective teachers. The programme provides a short pre-service training and regular technical meetings, but many teachers feel that this is not sufficient, finding it difficult to absorb the new skills in the time available. They feel that they do not receive sufficient support for their work from the programme (VDCs and higher level working groups). In addition, in Prey Veng, teachers were not satisfied with the amount of rice provided by the programme each month as an incentive for their work, saying that it was insufficient compensation for the time they were expected to spend teaching. They also said that the Daily Subsistence Allowance they received for training did not cover food and transport costs and that on occasion they did not receive any allowance at all.

Libraries in Prey Veng were reported to be in poor condition and the books did not cover relevant topics. As a result only a few villagers actually use the libraries. In Svay Rieng, the situation was similar, although the members of the district level working group believed that some younger villagers were using the library facilities.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- Flooding in Prey Veng has had a negative impact on many project activities, destroying crops and increasing poverty levels, resulting in reduced participation in activities ranging from literacy classes to well construction. It is recommended that Seth Koma investigate the possibility of collaborating with programmes/organisations active in the area of disaster preparedness/mitigation, as it is otherwise difficult to fully achieve the objectives of the programme in this province.
- In many cases, villagers requested "gifts" in return for their participation in programme activities. This shows a lack of understanding of Seth Koma's purpose

and process and potentially a lack of interest in the benefits of programme activities. It is recommended that the content of Seth Koma programme awareness-raising materials be reviewed, to ensure that it a clear explanation is provided regarding the fact that the programme does not provide cash or other incentives in return for participation and that the activities should be reward enough in and of themselves. In addition, other programmes/organisations operating in the same areas should be consulted to see if conflicting expectations have been created.

- The activity which received the most criticism from stakeholders was the literacy programme. As many villagers and working group members identified low educational levels as having a negative impact on project activities, it is recommended that a thorough review of this component be conducted. Some preliminary suggestions for strategies which could improve the operation of classes are as follows: discuss with the MoEYS non-formal education department the possibility of Seth Koma teachers being accepted and remunerated as MoEYS contract teachers after a set period of training and experience; investigate the possibility of literacy teachers being supported by the new Commune Councils; work with Parent Teacher Associations or Village Education Committees to follow up absences and encourage learners to attend classes; investigate developing IPM or specially targeted health education activities which are already part of the programme as post-literacy options to make classes more relevant and attractive to learners; allow learners to define the class times to suit their schedules; consult with UNICEF Education to discuss the roles of the two programmes in non-formal education, and whether they should take responsibility for the literacy classes or restrict themselves to the provision of technical support.

## **PART II**

### **AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SETH KOMA AND SEILA**

#### **OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE**

The objective of this section is to assess the collaboration between Seth Koma and Seila, focusing on the extent to which Seth Koma enhances community participation in local planning and adds social sector activities to local development plans. It also addresses how Seth Koma processes integrate the newly elected Commune Councils and other institutional structures that have been implemented at the provincial and district levels. This evaluation also provides an insight into the extent to which Seth Koma hopes to link up with the Seila and Commune Council planning process and implementation.

The study went through the following processes:

- Reviewing and analysing current modalities for collaboration between Seth Koma, Seila and Commune Councils. Determining to what extent stakeholders understand Seth Koma's strategy and objectives.
- Identifying and analysing stakeholders' perspectives on Seth Koma's long-term activities in relation to its strategy and objectives. Examining which components are thought to achieve the stated goals and objectives.
- Identifying what major stakeholders believe to be necessary adjustments for Seth Koma in terms of strategy and objectives.
- Identifying and reporting on conflicting or complementary views of major stakeholder regarding Seth Koma's programming methods.
- Identifying potential opportunities for reducing conflicts and enhancing the complementarities.

#### **THE EVOLVING DECENTRALISATION AND DECONCENTRATION FRAMEWORK**

The future of collaboration between Seth Koma and Seila needs to be viewed in the light of the new local governance framework. In assessing how collaboration between Seth Koma and Seila could be strengthened further, it should be noted that many of the rules and regulations governing the functioning of Commune Councils are yet to be finalised.

In accordance with the government's focus on decentralisation, the Law on Administration and Management of Communes and Sangkats was passed in 2001. The law provides for elected Commune Councils and legislative and executive powers for commune authorities. It distinguishes the role of the Commune Councils as representatives of their constituents in local affairs and as agents of the central state.<sup>10</sup> A more detailed sub-decree on the decentralisation of the power, role and duties of Commune Councils also came into effect in

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<sup>10</sup> Article 42 of the Law on Administration and Management of Communes and Sangkats (LAMCS).

2002. A National Committee for Support to Communes/Sangkats was also set up to further articulate the government's policy of decentralisation. The NCSC will act as an inter-ministerial committee in charge of steering the implementation of the commune administrative management law, while the Department of Local Administration within the Ministry of Interior will oversee the administrative operations of communes and organise the necessary capacity building measures.

The LAMCS has been supplemented by a sub-decree on the establishment of Commune/Sangkat Funds which will enable the RGC to make annual transfers of revenue to the communes. The fund will enable communes to assume overall responsibility for local administration and promotion of local governance. The fund will also help minimise regional disparities in the ability of councils to raise their own revenue as a result of different demographic, social and economic conditions. This sub-decree (on Commune/Sangkat Financial Management System) was approved by the NCSC in March 2002. The sub-decree states the rules and procedures relating to the commune budget, payment and accounting system, expenditures management, durable assets and financial reporting and auditing.

Draft rules for the provincial and district governors regarding their relationship with the new Commune Councils have also been laid down. New initiatives for deconcentration at the provincial level are being introduced and methods of delegating authority concerning the use of fiscal resources are being explored. These include government funding through chapters of the national budget and donor funding outside the national budget.

#### **THE NATURE OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN SETH KOMA AND SEILA**

Seila's goal is to contribute to poverty alleviation through good governance. The programme's immediate objective is to implement decentralised and deconcentrated systems and strategies to manage sustainable local development. Seila hopes to achieve this by strengthening institutions at all levels in order to implement decentralised and deconcentrated systems, capacity building for provincial and commune administration and for the performance of new governance functions by elected councils, developing, testing and institutionalising participatory planning procedures, efficient and effective services and investments for local development and decentralised financing facilities.<sup>11</sup>

Seila provides a standard framework for decentralised planning and financing of local development to communes. It provides structures and systems that many donors use to define their programmes for integrated participatory planning. Seth Koma brings community participation into the process and focuses on social sector development including health, nutrition, education, literacy and sanitation. Seila recognises the need for intensive village level activities for social development while Seth Koma recognises the need for strengthened provincial and local management.<sup>12</sup>

In 2001, Seth Koma revised its planning process so that village plans are presented in such a way that they can be integrated into the Seila commune planning process and supported by the local development funds from Seila. This collaboration is allowing Seth Koma to focus more on local planning processes, up to the district level, and on supporting village activities

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<sup>11</sup> Seila Programme Document 2001-2005.

<sup>12</sup> Seila Program Document 2001-2005, page 12.

(mainly social sector). Seth Koma provides support and technical assistance to CDCs (which have now been replaced by Commune Councils) and to provincial and district facilitators involved in the joint local planning process. The Local Development Funds from Seila are used to build commune or village level infrastructure. Seth Koma then uses this infrastructure for Seth Koma activities.

According to Mr. Duong Vanna, a Seila official from Partnerships for Local Governance in Prey Veng, this collaboration is advantageous. The plan belongs to the commune and not to several organisations or programmes. Therefore all support should be integrated into these commune plans. He also stated that one of the main benefits of Seth Koma is that it works at the village level, where Seila does not, integrating village needs and priorities into the commune level planning process. It is important to the commune that they have an integrated plan, although who is supporting different parts of the plan is not important. Seth Koma has supplemented the Seila planning process with growth monitoring activities and the identification of villagers' needs and priorities.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- Continued collaboration will be beneficial in the long run. It is important however to ensure careful monitoring by Seth Koma that adequate village representation is present at the commune level to ensure integration of village needs and priorities in commune level planning.

### **INTEGRATION AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL**

In Prey Veng, the Seth Koma coordination committee comprises seven representatives from the departments of Rural Development, Women's and Veterans' Affairs, Planning, Education, Health, Social Affairs and Agriculture. The Director of the Department of Rural Development is the chair of this committee and the Director of the Department of Women's and Veterans' Affairs is the Deputy Chair. This committee is responsible for the management, supervision and follow-up of the Seth Koma programme at the provincial level.

The Seth Koma working group has 28 members representing seven government departments. Nine of them are representatives from the Department of Rural Development, six are from the Department of Women's and Veterans' Affairs, four are from the Department of Agriculture, three are from the Department of Health, and there are two representatives from each of the departments of Planning, Education and Social Affairs.

Some of the provincial level staff work for both Seth Koma and Seila. The Director of the Department of Rural Development is both the chair of the Seth Koma working group and the Deputy Chief of the Provincial Rural Development Executive Committee involved in Seila activities. Seth Koma working group members agree that this structure is easy to work with. As the members come from different departments, the work falls within their normal work and they do not feel overwhelmed by their Seth Koma duties because there is a specific planning process and the activities and schedules are implemented separately according to each department.

In order to enhance collaboration with Seila, two national workshops were held in July 2001, and again in Prey Veng in May 2002 to draw up an agreement between the two programmes. Seth Koma and Seila now work on the basis of this agreement that provides for overlapping functions for the Provincial and District Facilitation Teams.

In Odar Meanchey, a new method for collaboration between Seth Koma and Seila is being piloted at the provincial level. Overall management of the Seth Koma programme will be carried out by the PRDC Excom and not by the provincial level Coordinating Committee as in the other provinces. The PDRC Excom's technical support unit, local administration unit and monitoring and evaluation unit will support the management of the programme and be responsible for the supervision, management and follow-up of the Seth Koma budget (excluding supplies). The Departments of Health, Education and Social Affairs will also be involved.

An intersectoral Seth Koma working group comprising of nine departments will manage the Seth Koma programme process. These departments are the Department of Women's and Veterans' Affairs, Rural development, Planning, Health, Education, Agriculture, Social Action, Finance and the Provincial Office of Local Administration. Individual departments will be responsible for the service delivery of the programme with assistance from UNICEF sectoral staff. Seth Koma and Seila will share PFTs and DFTs. Therefore, instead of both process and service delivery being carried out by intersectoral groups, individual departments will be responsible for service delivery for their own activities, coordinated by an intersectoral group. Human resource and budget management will therefore not be carried out by an intersectoral committee as in other provinces.

With the pilot programme in Odar Meanchey, the service delivery of the programme will become the responsibility of separate departments which is likely to promote a more integrated approach to the management of similar activities supported by different programmes. This should also avoid the duplication of activities. A re-grouped intersectoral committee would still operate to manage the Seth Koma process.

Seila is already involved in developing models, in consultation with government departments in Seila provinces, in an attempt to deconcentrate service delivery further. Although Seila itself is not responsible for the production and delivery of infrastructure and services, it provides the framework for experimentation with new approaches. Recently implemented Seila activities include: collaboration with governors to assess the current modes of delivering certain services for which the government office is responsible; collaborating with selected departments in reviewing their service operations; evaluating ongoing innovations by other departments, particularly health and education in terms of identifying common elements that may be relevant to others; and developing a set of principles or guidelines for improving local service delivery.

Seila's Provincial Investment Fund is a method for supporting deconcentration at the provincial level. The PIF provides what are essentially block grants, the use of which is determined by provincial authorities subject to certain restrictions. The PIF is the only source of open-ended funds available to the province and managed by the governor and

PRDC Excom. The programming of the PIF funds is based on a participatory planning process that starts at the village and works its way up through Commune Council planning and budgeting committees. Commune representatives meet department staff at the DIW to reach preliminary agreements on which activities are to be funded through the PIF. The Excom maintains control over the fund.<sup>13</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- An undeniable fact that emerges from Prey Veng is that collaboration between Seth Koma, Seila and other programmes is essential for the realisation of Seth Koma objectives. A concern expressed by the Seth Koma working group is that this collaboration is weakened by the lack of a forum for more regular dialogue between the programmes and organisations. The agreement between Seth Koma and Seila in 2000 is a positive step in this direction but even now the meetings are arranged on an ad hoc basis. In addition, in Odar Meanchey, ensuring methods for effective dialogue between Seth Koma, Seila and other sectoral programmes will be a major factor determining the programme's success. Developing effective communication channels between programmes, organisations and sectors therefore requires serious consideration.
- The Odar Meanchey pilot has to be viewed in the light of the current measures to deconcentrate the provincial levels and delegate more financial autonomy to provincial authorities. It may be the case that the PRDC Excom has more capacity and technical expertise to supervise, manage and follow up the Seth Koma budget. Collaborating with Seila to use the PIF funds could also be beneficial for the programme by improving service delivery.

### **INTEGRATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL**

At the district level in Prey Veng the Seth Koma working group comprises of seven or eight members, chosen from district level government offices of Rural Development, Health, Agriculture, Education, Planning and Women's and Veterans' Affairs. The District Governor or Deputy Governor is the Chair of the Seth Koma working group. In Odar Meanchey, the Seth Koma working group at Trapeang Prasat district has a similar structure. The governor of the Trapeang Prasat District is the chair of Seth Koma working group and the Deputy Governor of the District is the deputy chair. As Seth Koma did not have a provincial presence in Odar Meanchey, the provincial Seth Koma working group is situated in Alung Veng. The Deputy Director of the Department of Women's and Veterans' Affairs is the chair of the Seth Koma working group and the Deputy Governor of the District is the Deputy chair. This Seth Koma working group also coordinates the activities of the Trapeang Prasat Seth Koma working group.

The role of PFTs and DFTs for Seila and Seth Koma overlap. There is usually one PFT for each district and one DFT for two-three communes. When the PFTs and DFTs work full time for the Seila programme, Seila give them a monthly salary incentive. PFTs receive

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<sup>13</sup> PLG Document – Seila Support to Deconcentration Framework – Hugh Emrys Evans, May 2002.

USD 80 per month and DFTs receive USD 40. PFTs and DFTs both receive motorbikes from Seila.

Seth Koma working group members receive DSAs when they travel from the province to the district or village or from the district to the province or village for training, workshops or any such Seth Koma activities. In such cases, they may receive up to USD 5 in DSA. According to Ms. Ros Sivanna (Project Officer for Seth Koma in Phnom Penh), Seth Koma working group members are entitled to an average of 20-30 days DSA every month during the busiest period of the year. Between twenty and thirty percent of them have been given motorbikes. Their travel expenses are also reimbursed.

In Prey Veng, the PFTs and DFTs who work for both programmes have a common ToR, made in July 2001. According to this agreement, the PFTs and DFTs will be involved in activities common to both programmes. Such activities include capacity building of VDCs, facilitating the decentralised planning process, and participating in monitoring and evaluation of activities and services. Seth Koma contributes half of their monthly salary incentive. According to Ros Sivanna, this is important because PFTs and DFTs who work for Seila already have full time work, and so they are not able to do Seth Koma work. This contribution will ensure their enthusiasm for doing Seth Koma activities. In Odar Meanchey, this common ToR does not exist although their functions overlap and they are fully funded by Seila. PFTs and DFTs expressed dissatisfaction in having to work for Seth Koma when they are paid by Seila. Seth Koma staff in Svay Rieng complained of not having enough people to effectively implement programme activities and the disparities in their allowances compared to Seila staff.

In Prey Veng, nine people work for both programmes in two districts. In Odar Meanchey there are four people in each district. According to Mr. Duong Vanna, Senior Provincial Programme Advisor for PLG (Seila) in Prey Veng, the DFTs are particularly busy this year with intensive training for the Commune Councils. They also have to help Seth Koma with the village planning process. In his opinion, this year's planning imposes time constraints and he has already discussed hiring more staff if the district facilitators feel they are overworked.

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

- A combined ToR for PFTs and DFTs carrying out Seila and Seth Koma work helps the integration of both programmes and avoids duplication. However, discrepancies arising from different incentives being provided for the different programmes and the problem of overwork and difficulty in prioritising work needs to be addressed.

### **VILLAGE, COMMUNE AND PROVINCIAL PLANS**

There are two levels of planning, one at the provincial level and one at the commune level where the village action plans are integrated into the commune plan. The new Seila programme has more emphasis on the planning process down to the commune level. At the time of the Cambodia Reconciliation and Rehabilitation project, there was more emphasis

on village participation. The strength of the Seth Koma programme lies in the villages. Keeping the integrity of the VDC election process, making sure the village contributions are well argued and raised, creating active and village based monitoring procedures, maintaining the engagement of VDC members in the CDC (now replaced by Commune Councils), with a particular focus on women's participation, have been the key processes where Seth Koma involvement has been considerable.<sup>14</sup>

The incorporation of the VAPs into the CAPs is one of the most important steps in the decentralisation of local planning supported by Seth Koma. The CAP is a package which combines all the VAPs from villages in that Commune. The VAPs are formulated using a Triple-A process with the participation of the villagers, VDC members and facilitators. The CAP is now prepared by the Commune Council. Seth Koma coordinators, the provincial and district Seth Koma working group members, Commune Council representatives, provincial departments, donors, NGOs, IOs, UN agencies and representatives of UNICEF all participate in the DIW where the plan is discussed, and support and assistance promised. Seth Koma's involvement in decentralised planning processes and village level activities is made more effective by the use of platforms like Commune Councils and DIWs where a solid linkage with Seila is guaranteed.

The newly elected Commune Councils are now replacing the CDCs and the council's planning and budgeting committee will develop the CAPs<sup>15</sup>. As it currently stands, this committee will be composed of the Commune/Sangkat Chief as Chairperson, three Commune Councillors, two village authorities from each village selected by the Commune/Sangkat Council, two to four villagers (male and female) chosen by the Commune Chief based on population numbers, and the Commune/Sangkat clerk as secretary. The Prakas also provides for two VDC representatives. This provision, however, can be found in the transitional arrangements. The exact details of what the composition of these committees is in reality are under discussion. It is generally agreed that what is currently allowed for would be unworkable. Therefore the question of how the village action plans will be integrated into the CAPs is still quite unclear.

Nevertheless, new guidelines for the Commune/Sangkat development planning process states that the preparation and approval of the Commune/Sangkat development plan shall consist of five phases: analysis, strategies, projects, programme and approval. Selection of priorities at the Commune/Sangkat and village level on which the council focus their efforts is one of the steps in this planning process. Presentation and compilation of the priority village issues/needs using data from village level is one of activities to be undertaken. It therefore appears that village needs/priorities formulated through a participatory process and laid out in the VAPs will find a place in the CAP. The DIW would continue to play an important role in the planning process.

Provision is made for the Commune Councils to formulate a five-year plan, complemented by a three-year rolling investment plan. This will also apply to planning at the provincial level. Every year in November, once the planning stage is completed, information collected from the communes is used to develop the provincial plan. The linkage at the district level is

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<sup>14</sup> Note on Seila and Seth Korma Cooperation, UNICEF Document, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Inter-Ministerial Prakas on Commune/Sangkat Development Planning – February 2002.

crucial, as it is at the DIW that it is decided how the sectors will respond to the needs of the communes and what the communes will do with their budget. Some stakeholders feel that the scheduling of UNICEF's planning process does not match with that of the DIW and as a result UNICEF is unable to specify which activities they are able to support at this time.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

- Rules and regulations governing the functioning of the Commune Council's planning and budgeting committee are still being discussed and it would therefore be premature to draw any definitive conclusions on the matter. However, the structure being piloted in Odar Meanchey is a step in the right direction. To some extent, the present framework addresses the need for VDC representation and prioritisation of village needs to be part of the planning process at the commune level and therefore the DIW would continue to play an important role in strengthening collaboration between programmes and organisations to support the commune plan.
- Matching of schedules of UNICEF plans and the schedules in the new decentralized planning process needs to be looked into.

### **TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Before the election of the Commune Councils, the commune level Seth Koma working group comprised the Commune Chief, the first deputy, the second deputy, the third deputy and the assistant. The new commune level Seth Koma working group includes the Commune Chief and the Commune Clerk. The two health members and one education member have remained the same as in the previous working group. The Seth Koma working group resembles a special committee which supports the Commune Council.

According to the provincial Seth Koma working group in Prey Veng, the presence of the health and education members has provided some continuity, as there are at least three people in the group who know the programme and the process.

Training of Commune Councils forms part of the Seila and Seth Koma agenda. According to the Seth Koma working group in Prey Veng, Seila has already provided training to the Commune Councils on capacity building, resource management and financial management. Seth Koma has not yet provided any training. Most Commune Council members were involved previously in Seth Koma but the first and second deputies still know little or nothing about the programme. Provincial Seth Koma working group members in Prey Veng also mentioned plans to provide training regarding the Seth Koma programme for the newly elected Commune Council members.

In Trapeang Prey Commune, Odar Meanchey province, new members have been elected to the Commune Council. This is an example of where the old Seth Koma working group is still operating, as the new members are still not aware of how the Seth Koma programme works. The only information the new members have of the programme is from the former members of CDC and so it was a practical decision to continue to work with the old group.

## ***RECOMMENDATION***

- It is important to train the new Commune Council members and members of the commune level Seth Koma working on the Seth Koma programme. Linkages with Seila in providing comprehensive training could be explored.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since issues such as policy matters relating to the nature of the provincial body, policy matters concerning functions and fiscal resources, provision for programming issues at the provincial level and production and service delivery issues are still evolving, necessary adjustments will have to be made in the Seth Koma programme whenever necessary to address such matters.

However, given the magnitude of Seila's operations, it is not surprising that contributions of stakeholders at the village level are not always incorporated into the Seila framework. Nevertheless, UNICEF should not presume that once the institutional framework is finalised that this will guarantee solid ties between the village and commune level. Seth Koma itself needs to form strong ties with Commune Council members in order to ensure that these linkages are in place.

## APPENDIX A: STRUCTURE OF THE WORKPLAN

### Consultant Team

#### Lead Consultant

- Desk review and preliminary consultation 2 days
  - Develop workplan 3 days
  - Field Visits 10 days
  - Analysis of results 5 days
  - Develop final report and debriefing 5 days
- 25 days**

#### Consultant for Objective 1

- Desk review 2 days
  - Survey design 3 days
  - Field Visits 4 days
  - Analysis of results 5 days
  - Develop final report 1 day
- 15 days**

#### Consultant for Objective 2

- Desk review 2 days
  - Develop workplan and review methods 3 days
  - Analysis of results 5 days
  - Develop final report 5 days
- 15 days**

#### Research Teams (x 2)

- Desk review 2 days
  - Survey design and collecting relevant materials for review 3 days
  - Field Visits 20 days
  - Analysis of results 5 days
- 30 days**

## **APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED**

### **PREY VENG**

Both assessment teams spent approximately 10 days conducting interviews in Prey Veng. Activities covered two districts, four communes and seven villages:

#### **Kanchrieach District**

- Tnaut Commune
  - Krala Meak village
  - Kork village
- Chong Ampil Commune
  - Kandach village
  - Prey Svay village

#### **Baphnom District**

- Beung Preah commune
  - Ang Krang village
  - Tachey village
- Raung Damrei commune
  - Kdei Daung village

Team 1 conducted interviews with village level stakeholders including:

- VDC members
- Families with children under the age of five (from different socio-economic backgrounds)
- Widows with children under the age of five

Team 2 interviewed the following stakeholders at the commune, district and provincial levels:

- UNICEF Health and Education
- Partnerships for local Governance
- Seth Koma Coordinating Committee
- Seth Koma working group
- Provincial and District Facilitation Teams
- Former Commune Development Committee and current Commune Council members

### **PREY VENG PROVINCE**

Mr. Soon Sekheng (UNICEF Education)

Ms. Suriya (UNICEF Health)

Ms. Chanthy (UNICEF Health)

Mr. Duong Vanna (Senior Provincial Programme Advisor for PLG)

Mrs. Em Phalla (Deputy Chair of SKCC and Head of Women's and Veterans' Affairs)

Mr. Son Seun (Chair of SKWG and Director of PDRD)

Mr. Samrith Makara (SKWG member)

Mr. Thorng Vannareth (SKWG member from Provincial DoA)

Mr. Van Doern (SKWG member and Vice Director of the Water Supply Office of the DRD)

### **KANCHRIECH DISTRICT**

Mr. Hourt Chun (SKWG Chair and Deputy Governor)

Mr. So Ny (SKWG member and DOE official)

Mr. Sam Phirom (SKWG member and District Planning and Statistics Office Official)

Mrs. Nourn Samean (SKWG member and District Women's and Veterans' Affairs Office Official)

**TNAUT COMMUNE**

Mr. Prab Sok (former Chair of CDC and Commune Chief)  
Mr. Chea Chem (Core teacher)  
Mr. Mean Mon (Head of Health office)  
Mr. Pat Kunthy (Deputy Head of Health)  
Mr. Hourn Hean (Commune Clerk)  
Mr. Vann Chum (Commune Council member)

**CHONG AMPIL COMMUNE**

Mr. Pho Phal (former Chair of CDC and Commune Chief)  
Mrs. Va Kimhun (Head of Health Office)  
Mr. Um Am (former Clerk of CDC and Credit Agent)

**BAPHNOM DISTRICT**

Mr. Mao Eng (SKWG chair and Governor)  
Mr. Keo Samnang (Head of Health Office)  
Mr. Mok Kheng (SKWG member and Director District Planning and Statistics Office)  
Mr. Hin Sean (SKWG member and DoA Official)  
Mr. Nourn Vann (SKWG member and DOE Official)  
Mrs. Ich Bich (SKWG member and District Women's and Veterans' Affairs Office Official)  
Mr. Teav Rithy (DFT and Director of District Social Affairs Office)

**Beung Preah commune**

Mr. Long Ny (Deputy Chair and Clerk)  
Mr. Kuy Son (Commune Council member)  
Mr. Meas Phal (Commune Council member)  
Mr. Hin Seang (former CDC member and DoA official)  
Mr. Nob Thy (Head of Health Office)

**Raung Damrei commune**

Mr. On Lot (Commune Council Chair and Commune Chief)  
Mr. Mob Vong (First deputy Commune Chief)  
Mr. Cheg Chenda (Clerk)  
Mr. Chim Ann (Commune Council member)  
Mr. Keng Kimhan (Core teacher)  
Mr. Sam Savuth (Head of Health Office)

## **ODAR MEANCHEY**

1 assessment team was present in Odar Meanchey for approximately 10 days. Seth Koma only operates in two districts in Odar Meanchey province (Anlung Veng and Trapeang Prasat) but collaborates with Seila in both of these districts. The target stakeholders were the same as in Prey Veng.

### **Anlung Veng district**

- Trapeang Prey commune  
-Tourl Sala village

### **Trapeang Prasat district**

- Trapeang Prasat commune  
-Prey Saak Village

## **ODAR MEANCHEY PROVINCE**

Mr. Sim SangVatt (UNICEF Education)  
Dr. Robert Overtoom (UNICEF Health)  
Mr. Kong Vanny (UNICEF Seth Koma)

## **ANLUNG VENG DISTRICT**

Mrs. Ek Sovann Virak (SKWG Chair and Deputy Director of Provincial Women's and Veterans' Affairs Office)  
Mr. Peuy Sareun (SKWG Deputy Chair and Deputy Anlung Veng District Governor)  
Mr. Soa Tharn (SKWG Deputy Chair)

### **Trapeang Prey Commune**

Mr. Sou Nath (Commune Chief)  
Mr. Chou Nou (First Deputy Chief and former Chief of CDC)  
Mr. Chap Bunthoeun (Second Deputy)

## **TRAPEANG PRASAT DISTRICT**

Mr. Yok Cheun (SKWG member and Deputy Governor)  
Mrs. Tu Sarom (SKWG member and Chief of District Women's and Veterans' Affairs Office)  
Mr. Soo Than (SKWG Deputy Chair and Deputy Governor)  
Chin Kimthong (SKWG and PFI)

### **Trapeang Prasat Commune**

Mr. Ourng Roeun (Commune Chief)  
Mr. You Soy (First Deputy Chief)  
Mr. Khan Khem (Second Deputy Chief)  
Mr. Se Chhum (Commune Clerk)

## **SVAY RIENG**

There is nascent collaboration between Seth Koma and Seila in Svay Rieng but this was not assessed for the purposes of this report. Two districts, two communes and four villages were chosen for the study. The same stakeholders as above were interviewed.

### **Svay Chrum district**

- Thlork commune
  - Ampov Prey village
  - Thom village

### **Svay Teap district**

- Sam Bour commune
  - Prey Tor Teung village
  - Sang Kros village

## **SVAY RIENG PROVINCE**

Ms. Kheng Navy (UNICEF Health)

Mr. Meas Kadul (UNICEF Education)

Mr. Hoi Saroeun (UNICEF Education)

Ms. Sao Kimlang (UNICEF CNSP)

Mr. Mei Lun (Director of PRD, Deputy Chair of PDRC and Second Deputy Director of Seila in Svay Rieng)

Mr. Be Yary (SKWG member)

Mr. Tep Sinon (SKWG member)

Mr. Pao Sann (SKWG member)

Mr. Soum Pho (SKCC Deputy and Deputy of PRDC)

Ms. Chhum Sarim (SKCC and Chief of Women's and Veterans' Affairs Office)

## **SVAY CHRUM DISTRICT**

Mrs. Chuo Phonvichea (SKWG member and Department of Social Affairs Official)

Mr. Sok Thim (SKWG member and District Chief of DoA)

Mr. Gnem Lak (SKWG member and Deputy Governor)

Mr. Morm Kemara (SKWG member and Director of Department for Rural Development)

### **Thlork Commune**

Mr. Srey Saphon (SKWG member and Commune Council member)

Mr. Ung Sakhorn (SKWG member and Commune Council member)

## **SVAY TEAP DISTRICT**

Mrs. Kuy Saran (SKWG member and Chief of Department of Women's and Veterans' Affairs)

Mr. Kim Phuong (SKWG member and DOE Official)

Mr. Uok Yam (SKWG member and District Governor's Office Official)

Mr. Phouk Sarun (SKWG member and District Governor's Office Official)

### **Sam Bour Commune**

Mr. Kert Porn (SKWG member and Commune Council member)

Mr. Tei Chhon (SKWG member and Commune Council member)

## **NATIONAL LEVEL STAFF**

The report was also informed by discussions in Phnom Penh with:

Dr. Chea Sam Nang (Director of the Department of Rural Health Care within the Ministry of Rural Development and Seth Koma NST leader)

M. Michel Le Pécoux (UNICEF Children Affected by Armed Conflict Project Officer)

Mr. Chem Phalla (Assistant Project Officer, Seth Koma, Phnom Penh)

Mr. Chesth Rotha (NST member from Ministry of Health)

Mr. Ek Thinavuth (Assistant Project Officer, Seth Koma, Phnom Penh)

Mr. James Meikljohn (Seth Koma Project Officer)

Mr. So Chantith (NST member from MoEYS)

Mrs. Kong Bunnak (NST member from Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs)

Mrs. Nhuonh Sophea (Assistant Project Officer, Seth Koma, Phnom Penh)

Ms. Ros Sivanna (Project Officer, Seth Koma in Phnom Penh)

## **APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF QUESTION GUIDELINES**

### **GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNE, DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL LEVEL**

#### **SETH KOMA**

1. What are the strategies and the objectives of the Seth Koma Programme?
2. Do you think these Strategies and objectives are realistic? Do you think any of these should be changed?
3. How well do the current activities and methods of implementation fit the strategy and objectives of the program?
4. What are the activities that contribute most?
5. What are the activities that contribute least?
6. What difficulties do you have with the way the program works/is set up? What things can make it hard to do your work? What would make it easier?
7. How do you think the program could be improved?
8. What are the main achievements of the program till now?
9. What do you and others perceive as the greatest opportunities influencing these achievements?
10. What do you and others perceive as the difficulties influencing these achievements?
11. How is the relationship of planning from village to commune, district and provincial level?
12. How well can Seth Koma and Commune Councils, district and provincial level work with each other?
  - a. What are the difficulties?
  - b. What are the easiest?
  - c. What are the main factors that Seth Koma can work well with them?
13. What kind of decision can be made by Commune Council in the VAP and CAP?

#### **COLLABORATION BETWEEN SETH KOMA AND SEILA**

1. Who are the people who work both Seth Koma and Seila?
2. What does Seth Koma do and what does Seila do in term of collaboration?
3. Was there any problem occurred within the collaboration?
4. If there was a problem, how was it resolved?
5. What are the difficulties of the collaboration? What would make it easier?
6. What are the plans or areas in which Seth Koma and Seila are working together?
7. What are main achievements of the collaboration?

## Questions Guide for Villagers and Direct Stakeholders

*These are the general questions, so the interviewers must narrow down to the particular activities covering the particular villages. Getting dept information of particular activities in particular villages*

**Province:**.....

**District:**.....

**Commune:**.....

**Village:**.....

**DATE:**.....

Can be interviewed individually or in group:

- a. Fairly-well-off family with child < 5 ages
  - b. Poor family with child < 5 ages
  - c. Widows
1. Name of and Age of respondents
  2. Educational Level+ other details (M/F, women with child < 5 ages, widows, very poor)
  3. What activities has Seth Koma focused in your village? How long has it been here? Why?
  4. When did you participate in the activities? Why/ Why not?
  5. What activity work well? Why?
  6. What activity did not work so well/ had problems? Why?
  7. What did you contribute to the activities? How?
  8. Does every one benefits? Who does? Who does not? Why?
  9. Did any activities have negative effects? Why?
  10. What has changed about the way you live as a result of programme activities?
  11. Does every body participate in program activities?
    11. 01: Who does not?
    11. 02: Why does not?
  12. Did the VDC corporate well with villagers? Why?

Follow up questions: 12. 01: How did the election process work?

    12. 02: How often?
    12. 03: Was it fair?
    12. 04: What is the role of the VDC?
    12. 05: Do you think they do a good job? Why?
    12. 06: What do you particularly like about the way the VDC works?
    12. 07: What could be better?
    12. 08: Would you ever think of standing for election to VDC? Why?
  13. What would you think about the VDC works? (Ask for concrete examples from activities mentioned before)
  14. What would you think about the programme activities? (Is it important for you?)
  15. Did the programme activities respond to what you needed?
  16. Do the activities continue - i.e. are wells still used/ classes still run/ people continue to use knowledge from trainings...etc.?
  17. What are the main constraints to program activities?
  18. How do you think the services provided can be maintained?
  19. How would you think the programme could be improved?

## Questions Guide for VDC

*These are the general questions, so the interviewers must narrow down to the particular activities covering the particular villages. Getting dept information of particular activities in particular villages*

**Province:**.....

**District:**.....

**Commune:**.....

**Village:**.....

**Date:**.....

1. Name of participants, Age, Sex, Educational level (years completed)
2. What activities has Seth Koma focused in your village?
  2. 01: How long has it been here?
  2. 02: Why?
3. What activities worked well? Why?
4. What activities did not work so well/had problems? Why?
5. Was anything done to try and improve this?
6. What did VDC contribute to the program activities?
7. Who participated in identification and prioritisation of the problems? VDC, villagers, men, women, widows, rich, poor? How?
  7. 01: Do you think the processes worked well?
  7. 02: Were there any problems/difficulties?
  7. 03: Why?
8. Who made decisions regarding selection of sites for program activities? How?
9. What ideas did VDCs have for maintaining what they have received from the program? (Ask to get concrete examples activities mentioned before?)
10. Do the activities continue - i.e. are wells still used/ classes still run/ people continue to use knowledge from trainings...etc.?
11. How do you receive assistance from Seth Koma? (money/supplies)
12. Do you have to provide financial estimates to accompany the VAPs?
13. Does the VDC handle any money? How does this work?
14. What did VDC do to promote the program activities?
15. Do villagers understand the programme activities?
  15. 01: Do all villagers participate?
  15. 02: Who does not?
  15. 03: Why does not?
16. What things have changed as a result of Seth Koma programs?
17. What constraints did VDC face in implementing the programme activities?
18. What suggestions do you have for improving the programme activities?
19. Who is the focal person for the Child Protection Network?

## SETH KOMA AND SEILA COLLABORATIONS

20. How does it work? Does it work well? Why?
21. How does Seila programme complement Seth Koma programme? In what ways?
22. What are the main benefits of this collaboration?
23. What are the main constraints to collaboration between Seila and Seth Koma?
24. What suggestions do you have for improving the collaboration?

## **VILLAGE ACTION PLAN PROCESSES**

25. Who participated in making VAPs? How?
26. How did the VAP get approved/which levels did the VAP pass through (before CCs established)?
27. How does the VAP get approved/ which levels does the VAP pass through (since CCs have been established?)
28. What would you think about your role in making VAP before CCs established?
29. What would you think about your role in making VAP after CCs established?
30. What would you think about the VAP works? (Does it work well? Why?)
31. What suggestions do you have for improving the VAP works?
32. What suggestions do you have for improving the VAP processes?

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