

## UNICEF EDUCATION

### Education Case Study

## CAMBODIA

### Schools as platforms for climate action

17 April 2023

Cambodia is ranked the 46th most vulnerable country on the [Children's Climate Risk](#) Index, and as a result, the country is prioritising the integration of climate change into its Education Strategic Plan and SDG4 Roadmap for Education. UNICEF Cambodia is supporting the Ministry of Education Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) in engaging adolescents in climate action through a school-based Local Life Skill Education (LLSE) programme.

The LLSE programme encourages students, parents, local experts and communities to work together to identify and solve local problems related to climate change and environmental issues using a six-step problem-based learning approach. The programme has been so successful that UNICEF and MoEYS are planning to scale it up in 2023. For example, four students in Grade 9 at Roluos School in Siem Reap Province initiated a project called 'Green Village,' which aimed to keep households clean and free of plastic and promote planting around the house and pond in the village. The project initially involved eight households but eventually expanded to cover 301 households, with the support of the local government.

Similarly, in 2022-23, Samlaut High School in Battambang Province established two student clubs that focused on rubbish management and forest tree preservation. The students engaged with the local government to coordinate the implementation and sustainability of their projects, which included planting trees and cleaning up plastic and rubbish from the communities. Overall, these programmes demonstrate Cambodia's commitment to tackling climate change and empowering its youth to be agents of change in their communities.

#### RESULTS

- So far, 294 schools in Cambodia have implemented the LLSE programme. Of these schools, 86 have chosen to focus on solving climate change and environment related challenges, reaching about 25,800 students in Grades 7-9.

- The proposed solutions drawn from LLSE are transforming into community projects. For example, the 'Green Village' project, initiated by four students, has successfully reached 301 households comprising 1,472 people (782 females). Remarkably, students were able to raise US \$1,000 themselves for its implementation.
- Local governments have stepped up to support the implementation of these projects and replicate the model in other schools. In Siem Reap Province, the local government contributed to one community project that embraces a plastic-free culture, called the 'Plastic Free Village,' initiated by 47 lower secondary students in Aranh Rainsey School, which will be implemented in May 2023. The school also mobilised funds for a new, climate-ready school building that cost US \$100,000.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **School leadership is paramount for successful programmes on climate change and education.** The school director's leadership is crucial in identifying climate change and environmental issues in the community and bringing these issues to light in the classroom, encouraging students to work collaboratively to find solutions. They also play a guiding role in the transformation of proposed solutions drawn from LLSE community projects.



- **Addressing real problems in the local context provides an authentic learning experience for students.** This approach also supports the development of soft skills, leadership and confidence, while also promoting community ownership to sustain the results.
- **Engagement and motivation of teachers are irrevocably linked with government ownership.** Strong government leadership and buy-in inspire teachers to instruct on climate change in the classroom. Integrating this pedagogical approach with teachers' professional development is critical for scale-up and to ensure sustainability.

## NEXT STEPS

NICEF Cambodia will continue to support the MoEYS in implementing and expanding the LLSE programme with a focus on climate change issues. In response to a request from MoEYS, UNICEF is providing technical support for developing a special LLSE module on climate change, which will be piloted in 2023. UNICEF is also working with the Government to review the role of student councils, so that they can play a more significant role in developing, planning, implementing and supporting climate change related activities initiated through the LLSE programme. These initiatives will support MoEYS's efforts to roll out climate change focused LLSE intervention systematically in all schools across the country.



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**Cost effectiveness:** The LLSE programme has benefitted nearly 100,000 children and youth in Cambodia. Since 2022, UNICEF has invested US \$130,000 in climate change, which is one of the components of the programme. Each LLSE unit costs about US \$2,000 per school, which covers training, monitoring and annual reflection workshops. There is also an initial cost of US \$20,000 per province associated with policy, guidelines and quality assurance. There is no cost associated with the projects led by students.

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