

The Development of Strategy for the future of Speech Therapy

CABDICO

Workshop held on 16-17 December, 2013 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade





Background

On the 16th and 17th of December, 2013, CABDICO and the Disability Action Council (DAC) Secretariat General, using funds administered by the Australian Embassy, held a workshop in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to discuss the future of Speech Therapy in the country.

It was the first time that government and non-governmental stakeholders, national and international, had gathered together as a group to discuss this topic.

The purpose of the workshop was to develop:

- Output 1: Common understanding of Speech Therapy and the Situation of Speech Therapy in Cambodia (through a position paper)
- Output 2: Table of potential barriers and possible solutions to long term Speech Therapy delivery in Cambodia
- Output 3: A shared plan and vision for long term solutions
- Output 4: Special interest group and committee for plan in Output 3.

CABDICO would like to thank the generous support of the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who, through the Direct Assistance Program (DAP) administered by the Australian Embassy, has supported this workshop.

Participants

- **Government** including Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Disability Action Council Secretariat General (DAC-SG), Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Cambodian National Children's Council and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- **Disability Action Council**
- **Multilateral representatives** including the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **International and local Speech Therapy guests** including those from James Cook University Australia, La Trobe University Australia, Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine, Vietnam
- **International NGOs** including Handicap International and CBM Australia.
- **National NGOs** including Children's Surgical Centre, Cambodia Children's Centre for Mental Health, All Ears Cambodia, New Humanity, Rabbit School and CABDICO
- **Physical Rehabilitation Centre representatives**

Activities

Please see Annex 1 for the full agenda.



Output 1: Position Paper on Speech Therapy in Cambodia

What is the issue?

Speech Therapy (also referred to as Speech and Language Therapy and Speech Pathology in different parts of the world) refers to a specialty that aims to evaluate and treat communication and also swallowing disorders.

Although data in Cambodia is insufficient, CABDICO estimates that there are over 600,000 people with communication and swallowing disorders in Cambodia. Despite this, there is a lack of state policy that comprehensively covers the needs and rights of those with speech and language impairments, and is inclusive of swallowing disorders. Treatment options that do exist usually are based upon disability type, meaning that there are large gaps in delivery.

Apart from gaps in service delivery, there is minimal build up of knowledge in Speech Therapy within the country, amongst Cambodian people. Although some individuals receive training from overseas specialists, either in Cambodia or otherwise, this education is not coordinated, consolidated or widely spread.

We, the participants in the workshop on Speech Therapy 16th and 17th of December, 2013, believe that there are four key reasons why Speech Therapy, as a discipline, has not improved in Cambodia:

- 1) Lack of policy to explicitly address Speech Therapy and the needs of those with communication and swallowing problems,
- 2) Lack of community awareness on the needs of those with communication and swallowing problems and the benefits of Speech Therapy,
- 3) Lack of identification and referral for those who could benefit from Speech Therapy,
- 4) Lack of sustainable education for Cambodians in Speech Therapy skills and knowledge.

Why is the issue important?

The implications of untreated communication and swallowing disorders are serious and well documented. People with untreated swallowing disorders are 13 times more likely to suffer premature death than those who are not. This is because they are at risk of aspirating (food or liquid entering the lungs) and hence contracting a pneumonia (chest infection). People with communication problems face isolation and low opportunities to participate. Mental health is also majorly impacted.

Further, the economic cost of untreated swallowing disorders is huge. Research in the UK has shown that a £1 investment in Speech Therapy services for people with swallowing problems generates £2.3 in health care cost savings through avoided cases of chest infections. This could result in significant savings for the health sector in Cambodia.



What are we doing about it?

As a result of this workshop, we have formed four working groups to improve the situation in Cambodia. Each working group focuses on one of the four problems identified above.

The first group, which focuses on lack of government policy related to Speech Therapy, is primarily comprised of government workers. Groups 2 and 3, which focus on community needs, are primarily comprised of community workers. The final group, focussing on an education course in Speech Therapy in Cambodia consists of those who have links to education (international university representatives) and those who have broader knowledge of what is required for this to progress.

Each group has their own internal management, their own schedule for meeting, and communication system.

The objectives and activities of each group can be found later in this document.



Output 2: Potential barriers and solutions to long term Speech Therapy delivery in Cambodia

Using a SWOT analysis approach, the group analysed Speech Therapy delivery in Cambodia. As a result, the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats were identified by the group. Specifically, opportunities and threats identified give good information about potential barriers and solutions to long term Speech Therapy delivery in Cambodia.

Strengths:

- Government has the ability to respond to the needs.
- Good collaboration across sector.
- Training centres exist (for example in Takhmao).
- Community based services exist.
- Participation from Ministry of Health early.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of professional and skillful trainers.
- Lack of actual ability to practice.
- Not enough equipment and tools.
- Children with disabilities still face discrimination.
- Lack of data.
- Lack of financial resources and coordination between partners.
- Policy of government is limited.
- Workload too high.

Opportunities:

- Technical aids in the community could be produced better.
- More training should be provided by professional trainers on Speech Therapy.
- Collaboration and coordination amongst those who provide Speech Therapy could occur in one working group.
- Lessons learnt from partners who have experience in Speech Therapy should be collected and shared.
- National guidelines on Speech Therapy should be publicised so that it is shared.
- Specialists in the physical rehabilitation centres and other places that see people with communication and swallowing difficulties should be trained.



Threats:

- Lack of financial support – means that we will not be able to send staff to get training.
- Integrating Speech Therapy into the curriculum of other disciplines would offset this.
- Government has not yet integrated Speech Therapy into the health sector.
- Dissemination of information is not adequate – NGO partners need to understand what it is and share it broadly at national and subnational level.
- Subject is new – at the moment still reliant on international experts.



Output 3: A shared plan and vision

We, the participants in the workshop on Speech Therapy 16th and 17th of December, 2013, believe that these objectives can improve the long term delivery of Speech Therapy services in Cambodia. Each of the objectives have been grouped under the 4 working groups formed during the workshop.

Policy

- Advocate for the set up of training course in Speech Therapy (approved by government)
- Integrate policies for people with communication and swallowing problems into existing policies of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth, and any other relevant ministries.

Community Awareness and Identification and Referral (both groups have the same objectives)

- Improve participation (social and economic).
- Reduce discrimination.
- Improve ability of children with communication and swallowing disorders to go to school.
- Improve health outcomes of this population.

Education of Speech Therapists

- Ensure high standard of delivery of Speech Therapy services, so that, as a minimum, no harm is done to those receiving treatment.
- Decrease reliance on overseas professionals with Speech Therapy knowledge and skills.
- Delivery comprehensive Speech Therapy services, particularly to those most vulnerable and those in rural areas.



Output 4: Working groups

As mentioned, 4 working groups were formed to tackle the 4 problems that prevent comprehensive and long term Speech Therapy services in Cambodia. Each of these groups has their own internal management, their own schedule for meeting, and communication system.

The core activities of each group are as follows:

Policy

- Increase knowledge of Speech Therapy amongst law makers.
- Make Speech Therapy a priority in government policy.
- Improve the classification of those with communication and swallowing disabilities within government policy.
- Improve data collection (including integrating disability data into existing health and socioeconomic data).
- Provide evidence base to government on the benefits of Speech Therapy.
- Integrate Speech Therapy into Physical Rehabilitation Centres.

Community Awareness

- Lobby government on the need for more community awareness of Speech Therapy and benefits.
- Run workshops spreading awareness of Speech Therapy amongst those who encounter people with disabilities.
- Create video and media (leaflets, newspaper articles etc).
- Run family education groups.

Identification and Referral

- Compile and maintain a list of service providers in Speech Therapy.
- Collect data on those with communication and swallowing difficulties (integrate data into existing measures).
- Disseminate information on appropriate identification and referral.



Education of Speech Therapists

- Select appropriate candidates for education based on motivation.
- Spread information about overseas Speech Therapy specialists and coordinate visits.
- Focus on more sustainable training in country - coordinate with universities. Develop plan of action and MOU with University of Health Sciences.



Annex 1: Agenda

Day 1

Time	Agenda item	Person responsible
8:00 – 8:30	Registration	
8:30 – 8:45	Welcome Speech CABDICO	Mr Yeang Bun Eang, CABDICO E.D.
8:45 – 9:00	Welcome speech DAC	H.E. Em Chan Makara
9:00 – 9:15	Opening speech	H.E. Heng Tay Kry Secretary of State of MoH and deputy president of DAC
9:15 – 9:30	DAC present about approach to disability in Cambodia	H.E. Em Chan Makara
9:30 – 10:00	Break	
10:00 – 10:20	Outline purpose of workshop	Weh Yeoh
10:20 – 11:00	What is Speech Therapy?	Dr Chyrisse Heine
11:00– 12:00	Recent experiences setting up Speech Therapy degree in Vietnam	Mrs Xuan Le and Ms Libby Brownlie. Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 14:20	Icebreaker	Sandrine Bohan-Jacquot
14:20 – 15:30	Group work: Participants views and experiences on Speech Therapy within Cambodia	Weh Yeoh (facilitates)
15:30 – 16:00	Break	
16:00 – 17:00	Case study of successful collaboration between Cambodian organisation and overseas specialists – what worked and what didn't.	Dr Hong Chea. Ms Sok Dearozet, Dr Bhoomikumar Jegannathan, Cambodian Centre for Adolescent Mental Health.



Day 2

Time	Agenda item	Person responsible
8:00 – 8:30	Ice breaker	Sandrine Bohan-Jacquot
8:30 – 9:30	CABDICO's recent research into Speech Therapy	Weh Yeoh
9:30 – 10:30	Group work: Barrier identification – working in groups, people will be given the opportunity to talk about potential barriers to improving Speech Therapy services in Cambodia in the long term	Weh Yeoh (facilitates)
10:30 – 10:50	Break	
10:50 – 12:00	Continuation of group work and presenting back results.	Weh Yeoh (facilitates)
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 15:30	Group work: Solution identification – working in groups, people will be given the opportunity to talk about potential solutions to improving Speech Therapy services in Cambodia in the long term.	Weh Yeoh (facilitates)
15:30 – 15:50	Break	
15:50 – 16:45	Clarify links between activities and workshop outputs a) Position paper b) Table of barriers & solution c) Plan d) Special interest group	Weh Yeoh (facilitates)
16:45 – 17:00	Closing remarks	H.E. Em Chan Makara