Nonformal Education MTB-MLE Initiatives help achieve SDGs in the Cambodian Highlands

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Making ‘Education for All’ a reality in the Cambodian Highlands

1996

2016

How can the remote indigenous ethnic minority communities of Cambodia access education ???
So that everyone can have the opportunity to learn to read and write... and count money... and protect their land and forest... and have good health...
SDG goal 4 (education)

- Inclusive
- Equitable
- Quality
- Life-long learning
- Skills Training
- Opportunity for all
- Eliminate gender disparity
- Access
- Youth & adults achieve literacy and numeracy
Learning is enjoyable and empowering

‘The school the students built’
MLE Pilots Nonformal Education (NFE) Approach

Ratanakiri Province - 1996- present

Nonformal Education (NFE) MLE among Children, youth, and adults of northeastern Cambodia
MLE started in Ratanakiri Province (Preparation 1996, first teacher training 1997)

expansion to Mondulkiri (2005-present)

and Steung Treng Provinces (2002; 2009-present)
20 years ago

1999: BASELINE SURVEY
Brao village, Ratanakiri Province

Ability to Count Money by Gender

‘Can you count this money?’
1999: BASELINE SURVEY
Brao village, Ratanakiri Province

‘Can you speak Khmer?’
‘Can you read Khmer?’
Nonformal Education Approach:

- Teachers from the community
- Class schedule planned by communities
- Flexible, locally relevant curriculum
- Local curriculum writers and checking committees
- Project staff (literacy, health, development, etc.) from local ethnic communities
- Classes in evenings
- All ages, many children and youth
- After 3 years of evening classes, children test into primary school at the district town at grade 4 to 6
Most teachers are former MLE evening class students rather than primary school graduates. Thus class is not hierarchical.

(teacher in red jacket, class meets in his house)
Expanding MTB-MLE approach for Kavet language 2007

Meetings by village to plan classes for new literacy cycle (teachers, community school board, village chief, local monitors)
Various Challenges, overcome step-by-step:

- Training up teachers when almost no one can read the national language or the mother tongue
- Finalizing the alphabet and spelling
- Why learn to read our own language, we already know it?
- ‘Will government allow local language in education?’
- Volunteer teacher turnover
- Students have finished all the materials in the 3-year program, but want to continue longer, we need to write more books

Projects in 3 provinces demonstrating in countless villages that the MTB-MLE approach really works!
2016: MLE NFE in 3 Provinces, 4 Organizations, 60+ classes of 15-30 students each; 5 language varieties; 6th language in 2017

2016: Kavet Language MLE

2 provinces, 11 villages, 35 classes, 700 students, 65 volunteer teachers, 9 volunteer monitors, 5 Kavet trainers, 2 organizations…
Non-formal Approach for Ethnic Minorities in Northeast Cambodia Bilingual Literacy Programs (1996- present)

Alphabets developed for 6 Languages
Integrated Community Development
Health and hygiene
Livelihood, fair prices counting money
Agriculture, natural resources, forest protection
Early days of the project - 1999
School built by villagers did not accommodate women

Addressing Issues of Access:

- Language everyone understands
- Evenings & location they choose
- Teacher from their hamlet
- Classes move back and forth to hamlets as necessary
- For all ages
- Male and female
Evening classes as all ages are busy in fields during daylight hours

Network of government schools does not reach to distant villages

Villagers relocate to field hamlets up to 10 months per year

Class meets outside, in teachers’ houses, or in bamboo classroom built by students

Nonformal approach:

MTB-MLE Approach:
Start with what the learners know
Teach reading in the mother tongue and bridge to the national language, develop relevant materials in both mother tongue and national language
SDG goal 3 (Healthy Lives, well being)

SDG goal 6 (water and sanitation)
Re-hydration lesson: Brao/Kavet language—also health skits/dramas, health messages through puppet shows using 3 local languages…
Villagers waiting for ferry to cross river with new toilet bowls:

Villagers now understand the importance of good sanitation to prevent disease previously all illness was blamed on the spirits, and required expensive sacrifices to appease them.
Water filter poster designed locally written in mother tongue
Filter can be made of locally available materials (Pipe, sand, gravel, charcoal...
Community-based Natural Resources Committees monitor logging, poaching....

SDG goal 15
(Life on land - environment: Forests, halt biodiversity loss)
SDG goal 5 (gender equality, empower all women and girls)
Training Community Teachers
Transformation from Student to Teacher…

2005:
NFE Student

2007:
Kavet MLE Teacher Training
(the 2 young women teachers sit in front)
2008: As new MLE teacher, coached by monitor
1997: zero women teachers (Khmer NFE- not MLE)

2002-2007: 2 women teachers

2016: 32 women teachers (2/3 of the Kavet teachers)
As new teacher, being coached by the monitor
2008: Teacher Ohn and family

2014: Daughter with her students
Advanced level
Kavet MLE Teachers and monitors

More males than females as women tend to dropout for marriage so can only teach lower levels
Volunteer Teachers become monitors, students become literacy and math teachers, community members help with music, community committees manage classes, students volunteer in teachers’ fields....
SDG goal 8 (Decent work & economic growth)
SDG goal 10 (Reduced inequalities)
SDG goal 11 (sustainable communities)
SDG goal 16 (Peaceful inclusion in society, justice)
SDG goal 17 (Global partnerships)

Community building, expansion to other provinces...
Influence national policy for NFE MTB MLE
Study exchanges with Lao PDR, NE India...
Teachers and community join Graduation at end of 3-year evening course.

Some students continue their training - commute to primary school, join training for village vet, village malaria worker, work for local government or NGOs....
Graduation !!!
Some become MLE teachers, natural resource committee members…
Empowerment…

Thit’s story:
From NFE student to:
• primary school student
• volunteer NFE teacher
• NFE monitor
• MLE NFE teacher trainer
• NGO staff producing the first Kavet- Khmer dictionary
• community facilitator
Ratanakiri Brao language MLE staff conduct survey among Kavet (related language) in neighboring Steung Treng Province
Expansion of MLE to neighboring Province: 2009

Our language can be written down!

Seeing alphabet chart for the first time

Climbing a tree for a better view
How many want to learn to read and write?
New school board members join MLE teacher training to learn to read

Community literacy monitors from Ratanakiri teaching literacy and hygiene songs

(trainers are volunteer literacy teachers themselves)
2002 MLE Seminar:
Ministry of Education officials admire vernacular language desktop publishing by local language curriculum teams

Networking:
Seminars bring together all levels: Ministry, Province, District, Village levels

Influencing national policy for MTB-MLE through NFE

Official approval: 2010
Overcoming challenges....

Bonfire for lighting
Logistical issues: maintenance for lights is crucial

Solar panels introduced through the NFE program are the chief source of light in the villages
Overcoming challenges….

Especially in 2006-2007 when MTB MLE started ‘taking off’ for Kavet language
Teacher in shanty and outdoor classroom
Overcoming challenges….

Community Libraries
Overcoming challenges....

Travel
Nonformal Education MTB-MLE Initiatives help achieve many of these SDGs in countless ways...
Indigenous Identity - documenting indigenous knowledge

Family reading a poster printed in their own language
Indigenous ethnic minority youth in the Cambodian Highlands contemplating his future as modernization impacts his community:

Which direction to take? How to get there?
Community discussion using local language - Mondulkiri Province
Bunong Artist - Mondulkiri Province MLE Team
Creative community-based MTB-MLE initiatives help equip, empower, and give voice to ethnic minority individuals and communities.

Ethnic minority villagers are actively participating in community development activities, making informed decisions, and choosing the best path for themselves and their families.