

# PUBLISHING IN CAMBODIA

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A SURVEY AND REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE PUBLISHING IN CAMBODIA PROJECT

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When persuaded by the Publishing in Cambodia Steering Committee to take on the assignment of being Survey Team Leaders for this project, neither of us quite appreciated the time and energy it would consume. What was envisaged originally as a one-person full-time job for three months turned into a two-person almost-full-time job for seven months as we became ever further drawn in to the fascinations and machinations of the topic.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Ingrid Muan and Ly Daravuth of Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture, Philippe Peycam of the Center for Khmer Studies, and Alan Feinstein of the Toyota Foundation for having confidence in us and for giving us the opportunity better to understand the country we are living in.

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Peter Arfanis  
Helen Jarvis

Phnom Penh, 11 November 2002

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Publishing in Cambodia is a project aiming to survey the current state of publishing in Cambodia and to offer a set of concrete recommendations for its improvement. This report, also available in Khmer, and the survey on which it is based will be discussed at a two-day technical workshop (Siem Reap, February 1–2) and a one-day conference (Phnom Penh, February 4). A revised version of the report, enhanced by the proceedings of the workshop and conference, will be published later in 2003.

The mandate for this survey report was broad—to assemble a picture of the entire publishing process from writers and writing through readers and reading. Given the limited time and funds, we have tried to compile a fair and representative, although not comprehensive, picture of the state of publishing in Cambodia today.

The data compiled and analysed here were collected mainly from May to July 2002 in Phnom Penh, and in July and August in eleven Cambodian provinces. For each of the five survey sections of the report, we used questionnaires and held interviews of approximately one hour with each interviewee. A series of databases record these interviews in detail and serve as a companion to this report; these databases will be made available for ongoing research purposes.

### *Writers & Writing*

Our interviews with writers regarding their background and experiences, as well as their impressions on the state of writing and reading in Cambodia in general, confirm that Cambodian writers are almost invariably unable to make a living from their writing. Many conduct the whole process of “editing”, “publishing” and “marketing” their works by themselves, principally photocopying their work and selling it directly to friends and at market stalls. Despite poor living conditions and the lack of return to be expected from writing, the results of the survey of writers show that productivity amongst our sample group was high, challenging the assertion that Cambodians do not write!

While there are in Cambodia today many people devoted to research and writing, they face the paradox that most of their books are not published due to inadequate capital. The quality of many of these unpublished manuscripts is hard to gauge, with only a small number of competitions to measure the work of new writers. Apart from the Khmer Writers’ Association there is little professional support for creative writers in Cambodia nor literary reviews to publicise and promote the works of Cambodian authors.

Academic writers find little institutional encouragement for carrying out research, and few outlets for publishing. Most research is conducted somewhat haphazardly by non-academic institutions and NGOs, with the results disseminated for limited distribution.

### *The Print Media*

Cambodia has an unusually high number of registered newspapers and magazines. However no newspapers are published outside the Phnom Penh region, and distribution is almost entirely limited to the principal provincial capitals. Thus, newspapers generally fail to reach the 80 percent of Cambodia’s population living in the rural areas.

A number of glossy new magazines are being sold to an emerging market of urban, primarily young Cambodians. These magazines are able to recover the costs of printing from sales and advertising. Other magazines and academic journals that serve to advance educational, social and governmental objectives depend almost entirely on injections of funding from external sources (government, NGOs, foundations, or individual entrepreneurs).

### *Publishing & Printing*

There are few “true” publishers in Cambodia. The idea of what constitutes a publisher is not clear in the minds of many authors, printers, and even those that proclaim to be publishers. The skills that are required to be a publisher are lacking and this is reflected in the quality of publications printed in Cambodia. There is little support available for the few struggling independent publishers and there is no programme to strengthen private publishing. Without recognition by donors, authors, printers, and booksellers of the role of the publisher in the book sector there is little hope for most publishers to become self-sufficient or ever to rise above their dependence on foreign donors.

Of those involved in the book sector, printers have benefited most from Cambodia’s evolution to an open market economy. There is no shortage of printers in Phnom Penh and it seems the capacity and quality of their work is slowly improving. The same cannot be said for the provinces, where printers are almost non-existent and photocopy shops partly fill this void. The cost of printing is still unreasonably high due to the high cost of paper and ink, as well as the small print runs required by clients. Overall, print quality is poor with many printers not carrying out adequate quality control of their output.

### *The Book Trade*

Our interviews with bookshops, kiosks and market stall sellers indicate that, apart from some book wholesalers, booksellers cannot make a living from selling books only. Nearly all have to sell other merchandise to supplement the small profits they make from book sales. Sellers in general seem not to possess the necessary skills for effective management of a bookshop, with many not keeping records of stock or being aware of the value of effective book display and arrangement. While some wholesalers are also involved in publishing, they do not actively or openly promote their new publications.

Apart from word of mouth there is no way of knowing what is being published and by whom. Publishing catalogues are not being produced (with the exception of Sipar’s), there is no ISBN or ISSN registration system in place, a legal depository law is yet to be passed, and the National Library has only made sporadic attempts to compile a Cambodian National Bibliography. It is thus very difficult for sellers to know what books to order.

Distribution in Cambodia is still hampered by poor postal systems, inadequate road networks, and a lack of reliable and efficient means of transferring money and establishing credit accounts. This situation should improve as Cambodia continues to receive funds and loans to develop its communications, transport and financial infrastructure, but at this point distributors are unwilling to distribute outside of provincial centres. Distributors must look towards co-ordinating their activities and perhaps investigate the possibility of working with the MOEYS Distribution Office, which is at this time at a crossroads as it attempts to become semi-autonomous.

### *Readers and Literacy*

The results of the readers' survey partially dispel the myth that Cambodians do not like to read. Many people do not read because they are illiterate (62.9 percent of the population 15 years and over is estimated to be not really literate, particularly in the provinces). Many of those that are literate want to read, and see it as a way of improving their general knowledge. Generally, however, they do not have the funds, time, or means to access reading materials.

Libraries were shown to be a popular place for people to read, but there are few libraries, especially in the provinces, and the majority are in poor condition, have no acquisition budget, and are closed during those times when people are most likely to want to use them, for instance, outside working hours.

Book and reading promotion and awareness are lacking in Cambodia. While history books and novels are popular amongst our surveyed population, it seems there is little familiarity with Cambodian titles and authors except for bestselling novelists and for a few novels printed during the 1940s-1960s. People report buying books, both for pleasure and study, and book ownership appears to be high although this may have been overstated by those whom we surveyed. There seems to be a market for books, in particular books priced under 20,000 riel. However, people are likely not to be aware of what has been published recently because of poor marketing and distribution. In addition, small print runs due to lack of capital and of storage facilities lead to books going rapidly out of print.

Reading magazines is becoming increasingly popular, especially the new breed of glossy popular magazines that are now appearing. Newspapers, where they are available, are also read by many. Both magazines and newspapers, with their short and varied texts and images, are preferred to books and are often borrowed or rented.

### *Recommendations*

Each section of this report ends with a series of recommendations, many of which are cross-sectoral, including the formation of a National Book Council and a comprehensive national information policy for Cambodia; a number of legal measures (copyright, legal deposit, archives and records legislation, ISBN and ISSN); as well as the general promotion of books and reading. We also recommend that a supplementary survey of libraries, archives and documentation centres be carried out to complement this report, and to lay the groundwork for a national information policy.

Sectoral recommendations included: subsidies for writers; teaching of creative writing in schools; the establishment of associations of publishers, printers and booksellers; development of co-operative or joint long-term storage facilities; investigating establishing a paper mill in Cambodia; holding regular literacy campaigns followed up by post-literacy activities; requiring more extensive reading for students; increasing the number and quality of libraries and their collections, especially in the provinces; and developing educational programs for the development of professionals for all parts of the publishing sector, including librarians and information managers.



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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

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### BACKGROUND

**Publishing in Cambodia** is a project funded by the Toyota Foundation, and managed in partnership with the Center for Khmer Studies, Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture. In late 2001, Alan Feinstein of the Toyota Foundation carried out a range of discussions with people interested in the field of publishing in Cambodia, and in early 2002 a proposal was written together with the Center for Khmer Studies and Reyum Institute. With a generous supplementary grant from the Centre Culturel Français the research and survey component of the project began in March 2002.

To provide a historical context, we begin our report with a reproduction of the original outline for the project

*There is a crisis in publishing in Cambodia that has severe negative effects on the educational system and impedes the proper flow of intellectual knowledge and information in all fields. There is an imbalance in the scholarly materials written about Cambodia as well, since most are written and published abroad in foreign languages. The situation of publishing in Cambodia today can be compared to that of many other of the so-called "developing countries" (few opportunities for writers, a shortage of publishable manuscripts, a lack of professional editors and publishing houses, limited number of Khmer-language publications focused on a quite narrow range of topics, a relatively small market for Khmer-language publications given low literacy rates and weak purchasing power). There are also some hopeful signs however. A small but flourishing independent publishing industry established itself in Cambodia during the 1950s and 1960s, and can provide some useful models for the present. With the coming of peace in the 1990s, the printing industry, at least in Phnom Penh, has rapidly re-established itself so that there is no lack of cheap presses for printing books. The Khmer-language newspaper and magazine industry has expanded, indicating an eager audience of readers, while proposed reforms in higher education will undoubtedly bring increased attention, and perhaps funding, to book development efforts.*

#### ***Project Description***

*While there have been previous attempts to survey various aspects of the situation of publishing in Cambodia over the last decade, these surveys are now outdated and were often focused on particular parts of the publishing process. Our project proposes to study the state of publishing in Cambodia as a whole, and in so doing to detail the areas of "Writers and Writing", "Book Production", "Marketing and Distribution", and "Readers and Reading". A six-person team of researchers will gather information over a two-month period of intensive research. They will then write a survey report, which will be circulated in Khmer- and English-language versions to a large number of potentially interested parties in Cambodia and abroad.*

*Suggestions and comments on this report will be solicited in preparation for a two-day workshop, convened in Siem Reap in early 2003<sup>1</sup>, to draw up a set of concrete recommendations and possible project follow-ups. To this workshop—a kind of planning meeting for improving and developing the book sector—will be invited 20 people active in publishing in Cambodia, including representatives of the government, universities, libraries, commercial publishers and printers, local and foreign NGOs, as well as 3-5 outside experts on book development from Southeast Asia and beyond. Immediately following the workshop, a one-day public conference will be held in Phnom Penh, to which a wide range of interested parties, the press, and the general public will be invited. This larger gathering will encourage the airing of various reactions to the survey report and the workshop, and will focus public attention on the problem of book publishing in Cambodia.*

*Several months after the workshop/conference, an approximately 350-page report in Khmer and English will be published, presenting the survey findings and detailing the proceedings of the workshop and conference. This publication will be distributed to a wide potential readership in Cambodia and abroad—both through donation and sale.*

*The "Publishing in Cambodia" project hopes to assemble an accurate and comprehensive picture of the current state of publishing in Cambodia and then, on the basis of this information, to formulate a set of concrete recommendations and project initiatives which will be of use to a wide range of government ministries, private printing, publishing, and bookselling concerns, NGOs, and foreign donors.*

In March 2002 the Steering Committee appointed Helen Jarvis and Peter Arfanis to be the Research Co-ordinators for the survey and to write this report, and they in turn appointed a Survey Team consisting of Ung Vanna, Nop Polin, Vong Sotheara, Hak Vandara and Nhean Lakheana.

#### SCOPE

The team leaders reviewed the scope of the project as outlined by the Steering Committee and developed a work plan, which was approved by the Steering Committee. The time period for the survey and report writing phase was extended to six months, with three months to be devoted to the survey itself. Even this three-month period was not enough to design, test and carry out the survey in the four sectors and some, particularly the provincial surveying, carried on into August and even September.

It is important to point out that the scope determined in the original project outline for this Publishing in Cambodia survey and report deliberately extended beyond “the book sector “ to include newspapers and magazines. This decision was made due to the fact that newspapers are by far the most widely read and circulated print materials in Cambodia, while magazines, a relative newcomer, are finding a market among the emerging group of Cambodians with disposable income. Further, magazines (and possibly also newspapers) can provide outlets for writers, in the form of articles, short stories, poems, and excerpts and serialisation of longer works, and could form likely breeding grounds for publishing houses, as has happened in Indonesia. To reflect the inclusion of serial publications, the part on “Book Production” was broadened to cover “Publishing and

<sup>1</sup> The workshop will be held in Siem Reap on 30 January and 1 February, and the conference in Phnom Penh on 3 February 2003.

Printing”. In order to set achievable parameters for the survey, we decided to focus on commercial and academic publishing, and established several caveats:

Firstly, the survey would not carry out primary research in the area of textbook production. While textbooks represent the overwhelmingly largest part of the publishing sector in Cambodia, accounting for the bulk of books published and distributed and funds expended, they also represent the bulk of previous survey and research conducted, and so we will rely on this work rather than undertake our own research, noting also that a reliable survey of the schools and students of Cambodia would be well beyond our capability, given the time and resources allocated for our survey.

A second limitation on our research was the decision to give only limited attention to the substantial amount of publishing carried out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). There are more than 900 NGOs registered with the Cambodian government, some 700 local and 200 international, which publish a continuous output of reports, surveys, promotional and educational booklets etc, most of which can be classed as “grey matter”. We did not survey this sector comprehensively, except for noting the impact of the NGOs' activities on the printing and publishing industry, and we disregarded internal and limited distribution publications (which account for the bulk of NGO output) except for those categories of reports that might be considered to be research or academic in nature. The only NGOs we interviewed in depth are those whose mandate is publishing, such as Soutien à Initiative Privée Pour l'Aide à la Reconstruction (SIPAR) and Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) and Japan Publishing House, as well as Reyum Institute. We referred only to those NGO publications that do appear on the market, as well as giving some attention to mass distribution of material by the human rights non-governmental organisations, for example.

The third limitation was to exclude publishing "on" but not "in" Cambodia from our purview, thereby not taking into consideration writing and publishing outside the country, whether in Khmer or foreign languages.

We must emphasise that this report was commissioned to provide the findings of the survey, supplemented by sufficient background and contextual data to inform and enhance these data. We did not aim to write a comprehensive study of the entire Cambodian publishing sector, and neither would such an aim have been possible to achieve within the available time and resources. Representative samples from each of the four sectors were interviewed and the report is grounded particularly on their comments and perceptions, rather than on comments from consultants or experts or from secondary sources.

A questionnaire was designed for libraries, archives and documentation centres, and some useful data gathered from this and from other sources. Despite the fact that (or perhaps because) the Research Co-ordinators are both deeply involved in this sector, we felt unable to do justice to it within the time and resources available to us, and so we decided to refrain from attempting to report on it in this report except in passing. This remains an important task for the future.

In terms of interview time and analysis, and in terms of the size of the chapters too, the greatest emphasis in the PIC survey was devoted to writers and writing. We think that this, and our analysis of readers, give our research something not normally included in book sector surveys, which tend to focus on the production side of the cycle.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The team leaders felt that the methodologies adopted should vary depending on the extent to which each of the four areas identified was surveyed or reported, and the extent of previous work of continuing value. Although we intended to provide as much quantitative data as possible, we recognised that it would seldom be on a scale that could allow for statistically reliable extrapolation, and that our emphasis would be on providing qualitative data and interpretation. Our approach to each of the four sectors is described in the report section below. It should be noted that the provincial data related principally to selling activities, as publishing is scarcely carried on outside the capital, as will be discussed below.

## DATA COLLECTION

The report on the publishing sector was based principally on original survey and interview data collected mainly during the months of May through July 2002 in Phnom Penh and in July and August in eleven provinces.

Questionnaires were designed in both English and Khmer, and were discussed in draft form with the Steering Committee and with a range of other people involved in publishing in Cambodia.

Questionnaires were developed and applied for the following sectors:

- writers (creative, academic and technical)
- newspapers and magazines
- printers and publishers
- sellers
- libraries (as discussed above, these data were not analysed or reported)

Distributors and printing suppliers were interviewed without questionnaires.

(See Appendix A for a list of people interviewed, and Appendix B for copies of the questionnaires used in this survey).

Most interviews were conducted in Khmer, with questionnaires completed during the interview, and audio tapes were made of some interviews (especially of writers) for archival purposes as well as for our use in gaining a more detailed grasp of the respondent's views and opinions. In addition to our questionnaires, in-depth interviews were held, principally by the Survey Team leaders, with a number of key people involved in various aspects of publishing in Cambodia.

## DATA MANAGEMENT

Survey Team leader Peter Arfanis designed a suite of databases for the Publishing in Cambodia project, using Microsoft Access. A referral database provides data on individuals, organisations and reference publications of interest to the Survey Team. It is quite distinct from the database for survey results, and it does not include the names of everyone surveyed. The entries for individuals and organisations recorded basic contact information, as well as any interactions that the Publishing in Cambodia Survey Team held with key informants and experts (i.e. dates of meetings, with whom, basic matters covered, materials received). The reference entries give basic bibliographic details of relevant publications (mainly research reports) with hyperlinks to the documents themselves if we

have them in electronic format. This referral database is essentially a support tool for the research, but does have a continuing value as a directory of the Cambodian publishing sector. It is largely in English (although it has fields for Khmer script names).

A series of survey databases were designed to house data collected via questionnaire, with forms designed to mirror the survey form. It has the ability to compute and analyse the numeric fields and gives room for extensive text fields for the questions requiring qualitative and narrative responses. Data in the qualitative fields is entered in Khmer, while the quantitative fields have both languages as field tags to permit interrogation in either Khmer or English. We decided it was preferable for each Survey Team member to do data entry for their own interviews, as they could decipher their notes on the survey form, supplemented by playback of the audio tapes.

### THE REPORT

This report was designed to highlight the four areas identified in the Publishing in Cambodia project outline: Writers & Writing, Publishing & Printing, Marketing & Distribution, and Readers & Reading, as it was felt that these served to emphasise the breadth and the interconnectedness of the whole writing to reading continuum, and provide a good framework for the discussion of the cultural and social context of Publishing in Cambodia. A separate chapter was added on The Print Media, while the Marketing & Distribution chapter was renamed The Book Trade and the chapter on Readers and Reading became "Readers and Literacy".

It was decided to amplify the four areas by drawing on Unesco's suggested model for National book sector outline<sup>2</sup>. Collecting and analysing data consistent with the Unesco model will enable this survey's results to be compared with those from other countries. To quote from Unesco's *Guide*: "In the context of INTERBOOK, an international network for the exchange of information in publishing, the following model for national book sector outlines has been proposed for implementation in all participating countries."

Parts of the report were written in Khmer and parts in English with each then translated into the other language. A French version of the executive summary was also prepared.

It was decided not to disclose the names of individual respondents in order to protect their anonymity and commercial privacy. Rather they have been identified by their professional role and, in the case of writers, as to whether they are fiction writers (FW) or non-fiction writers (NFW).

### INTRODUCTION

Publishing in Cambodia objectives and evolution; our methodology; and previous surveys and reports on the Cambodian book sector and publishing was written by Helen Jarvis and translated by Nop Polin.

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<sup>2</sup> "National book sector outline model" in Appendix A Book sector survey of *A guide to sustainable book production*, by Pernille Askerud. Paris : Unesco, 1997

## PUBLISHING IN CAMBODIA IN CONTEXT

A brief history of publishing in Cambodia was written by Helen Jarvis, and the overview of the current state of publishing in Cambodia was written by Peter Arfanis and Helen Jarvis. The chapter was translated by Nop Polin.

## WRITERS AND WRITING

Sixty four writers were interviewed -- creative writers mainly by Ung Vanna, academic writers by Vong Sotheara and technical writers by Nop Polin. The reflective questions on copyright and impressions asked of all writers were analysed by Nhean Lakhena, who also wrote the section on writing promotion, while Vong Sotheara analysed the three questions asked only of academic writers and the questions on the effect of awards on their careers. Helen Jarvis, who wrote the historical background section, edited the chapter. Translations were done by Vong Sotheara and several sections by outside translators Eng Po and Im Sothearith.

## THE PRINT MEDIA

Representatives from the Khmer and Chinese language newspapers were interviewed in Khmer (mainly by Hak Vandara), while the English and French were interviewed in those languages. General magazines were surveyed by Hak Vandara and academic magazines by Vong Sotheara. The draft of the survey results were prepared by Hak Vandara and Vong Sotheara respectively, while Helen Jarvis was responsible for overall editing of the chapter and writing the historical background. Translations were done by Vong Sotheara.

## PUBLISHING AND PRINTING

Interviews were conducted by Nop Polin and Peter Arfanis and data was recorded in the database in English. The chapter was written by Peter Arfanis and translated by Nop Polin.

## THE BOOK TRADE

Interviews were conducted by Nop Polin and Peter Arfanis, and the chapter was written by Peter Arfanis and translated by Nop Polin.

## READING AND LITERACY IN CAMBODIA

We decided that the best way to gain sufficient data on reading habits within the time available to us was to design questionnaires for readers themselves to complete to be left in libraries and other likely places where numbers of possible readers may be found. We designed two forms – one for readers in academic libraries, and one for general readers. The obvious limitation of this approach is that filling in the questionnaire itself required a level of literacy and familiarity with survey methodology held by only a small proportion of Cambodia's population, and it turned out that a large number of those completing the general readers survey were themselves students, thereby giving a lower representation of the reading habits of non-students. An outside typist, Sok Soly, was employed to key the results into the database. The analysis and report was done by Peter Arfanis and translated by Nop Polin.

## PREVIOUS SURVEYS AND REPORTS OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO PUBLISHING IN CAMBODIA

A number of other surveys and reports have been prepared over the past decade on aspects of publishing in Cambodia. Five of these stand out as being particularly relevant and useful for our research, although each has its limitations.

### THE CAMBODIA BOOK SECTOR STUDY<sup>3</sup>

This major undertaking, commissioned and funded by the Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE) in 1991-2, involved six specialist studies covering Economy and Finance; Authorship, Copyright and Publishing; Printing and Raw Materials; Distribution and Book Availability; Higher Education Textbooks and Libraries; and Book Provision in Technical, Vocational, Complementary and Non-formal Education, whose findings are reported in *The Cambodia Book Sector Study: Summary Report*.

While the CODE study provides a raft of information, as can be seen at a glance from its contents, from the perspective of Publishing in Cambodia it is limited by several factors: its relative outdatedness (particularly considering the fact that the economic and political structure of Cambodia has been completely overhauled in the interim period); its emphasis on the education, especially textbook, sector; and its focus on the production and provision of books, with little, if any, attention to the cultures of reading and writing.

The CODE study came up with a number of recommendations, qualified by duration, cost and priority, and presented as a Book Development Framework for Cambodia. Some of these recommendations are still valid today, although most have been superseded by the change in Cambodia's economic and political structure over the past ten years.

We agree with the Unesco *Guide* summation:

*... book sector studies do a good job of describing the book situation in a country at the time when a team visits it. This often presents a bleak picture. However, there is a tendency for such studies to view countries as single but not unique cases and, while emphasizing negative aspects, not to convey the potential for growth which exists. Proposed solutions can reflect the donor's interest and determination to implement a project but not the country's need to improve its local publishing. National book sector outlines should not try to standardize projects or insist that one book model provides a global solution but should rather suggest options, alternatives and ideas that can be examined, compared, adapted and used.*

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<sup>3</sup> *The Cambodian book sector study: final summary report*. – Ottawa : CODE/OCED, May 1992.

### THE BASIC EDUCATION TEXTBOOK PROJECT (BETP)

The BETP was a major project funded by Unicef and the Asian Development Bank, in which from 1997-2002 \$30 million was spent on ensuring textbook provision to primary and secondary schools. The BETP research component comprised four specific studies: publishing capacity; financing purchases and publishing; publishing rights; and distribution. Its Final Report, published in June 1999, provided a model and five-year targets for future development of Cambodian educational publishing, focusing on:

*turning centralised educational publishing from the present monopoly situation towards a commercial environment in the future [by]... building up a commercial market (demand), changing the way the Publishing and Distribution House [PDH] works and opening up educational publishing to other publishers (supply). ("Policy studies final report", p.9)*

The recommendations of the BETP are already being implemented, with massive changes in the practices and structures of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) textbook publishing and distribution activities. From 1999-2001 the BETP research component funded the Textbook Availability and Utilisation Study, which conducted field research based on case studies in Grades 1,2,3,5,7,8,9, described in the Summary Report by Pascale Laurent published in March 2002.

The existence of this recent project and its comprehensive set of reports led the survey team leaders to decide that it was preferable to rely on the BETP data, rather than to attempt our own original research in the textbook sector. This decision was reinforced by the obvious fact that a three-month survey covering all aspects of publishing in Cambodia by a small team could in no way attempt to comprehend let alone to survey the school sector with over 16,000 individual schools spread over 24 provinces. Accordingly, the educational profile section of Chapter Two of this report is based heavily on the BETP reports, supplemented by interviews with key actors in the educational sector.

### CAMBODIA : OUTLINE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR BOOK AND INFORMATION CAPACITY BUILDING

Unesco's consultant Pernille Askerud came to Cambodia only last year to undertake this deceptively brief study, whose scope is close to our own. (See appendix C)

She carried out a preliminary situation analysis and needs assessment, which is worth quoting in some detail:

*In Cambodia today, few of [the] components [of a well functioning book sector] function properly or, in some cases, even exist. There are hardly any trained and experienced book professionals - be it publishers, writers, editors, illustrators and designers, lay-outers, book sellers, librarians or documentalists and most importantly no institutions or an infrastructure that can support and sustain the development of national capacity in this respect. Specific publishing skills are almost non-existent and skills like basic layout techniques and pre-press production prohibitively expensive. The quality of the books produced varies widely but 'quality' in general focuses more on form than content - also in terms of presentation.....*



*The library situation is terrible ... the libraries overall are in no position to contribute to the development process in Cambodia....*

*Cambodia has a fair amount of research institutions and, it appears, a number of potential writers. It also would seem that there is a potential market for publishing in Cambodia – at least in the urban areas – but it is difficult to gauge, as the supply of books is so limited for the time being.*

*The printing sector is doing better than the publishing sector....*

*On the other hand, there is not a single company that can be considered a serious professional publisher working in Cambodia today. ...*

*A major problem is the fact that nobody knows what has been published and whether it is available for other than the original target group.*

*There is no copyright legislation and authors are complaining that their books are pirated. The good side to this claim is the implicit implication that there might actually be a market for books.*

Askerud's observations were certainly borne out in our survey, as will be shown below. She went on to recommend a five-ten year strategy to establish a comprehensive, multi-sector capacity building project with the following key features:

*--A comprehensive Khmer publishing programme that will publish a minimum of 3,000 (?) titles over a period of five-ten years through Cambodian publishers. The publishers will receive technical assistance through the project. The publishing activities will include translations, adaptations, reprinting, co-publishing, and the development of new titles. The programme will aim at meeting the need for Khmer reading materials at all levels with special emphasis on: higher education materials and reference materials, attractive children's books, cultural heritage, fiction, etc. etc. while at the same time stimulating the development of professional publishing capacity and a market for books.*

*--The identification of support to a network of libraries or reading centres that will function as the focus for skills development and other project activities – and which will provide a market for the books published under the project.*

*--A comprehensive training and capacity building programme for the book and information sector.*

*-- A mechanism for coordination and cultivation of all kinds activities in support of book development.*

Unfortunately, it would seem that there has so far been no follow-up from Askerud's valuable report. Perhaps this Publishing in Cambodia report will give an impetus to various funding bodies to take action in this field.

## SURVEYS OF VARIOUS SUB-SECTORS OF THE CAMBODIAN PUBLISHING SECTOR

Our survey was informed by a number of other specialist reports on various sub-sectors of the publishing sector. We note here those of particular help in designing our questionnaires and in formulating our results:

- 1999(?) Soutien à Initiative Privée Pour l'Aide à la Reconstruction (SIPAR) unpublished survey of the technical capacity of eight Phnom Penh printing houses, summarising their pre-press, printing and post-press equipment and facilities
- 2000 SIPAR unpublished survey of book sellers
- 2000 SIPAR *La Synthèse sur l'enquête sur les réseaux de distribution des livres au Cambodge*
- 2001 SVA *Survey on the situation of juvenile book production* by Fukumachi Hideki
- 2002 Reyum Institute unpublished survey of book sellers

A number of valuable, but now outdated surveys of aspects of the publishing sector related particularly to printing and book production were written in 1991 by the Australian volunteer “Paul the Printer” who worked at both the University of Phnom Penh Printing House and the Ministry of Education Printing House.<sup>4</sup> And slightly earlier the printing sub-sector was reported for Unicef by . Nhiem Darith.<sup>5</sup>

A recent thesis by Kéda Black entitled “Le livre et la lecture au Cambodge : les orientations de la politique française de coopération” examined the policy and organisational framework of Le Bureau de Livre as well as the implementation of the extensive French assistance in the field of books and reading provided through the Service culturel of the French Embassy, with emphasis on the aid provided to the National Library of Cambodia and the “bibliobus” (mobile library) of the Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture; to the NGO SIPAR; and to the design company Graphic Roots. The role of the Centre Culturel Français, the Department of Books and Reading and the Librarians’ Association of Cambodia are also assessed with considerable insight.

As mentioned above, due to time constraints we were not able to study nor to report on the library, archives and documentation sector, and so, too, we will refrain here from providing an overview of the many useful reports on this sector that have been written since the mid-1980s.

## MONGOLIA : ACCESS TO BOOKS AND OTHER PRINTED MATERIALS

The Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in 2001 published a discussion paper reporting the results of a survey undertaken in 2000-2001 aimed at:

- studying book availability and the demand for books throughout the country with a particular view to the textbook situation,

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<sup>4</sup> See Paul Gibbings, “University of Phnom Penh Printshop: A Layman’s Guide to How it Works” (Phnom Penh, October 1991), “Paper Supplies in Cambodia” (Phnom Penh, November 1991), and “Production of Reading Materials for Children” (Phnom Penh, Redd Barna, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Nhiem Darith, “Printing Report” (Phnom Penh, UNICEF, June 1990)

- analysing the prevailing situation in publishing, printing, distribution of books, library activity, and
- developing a strategic plan on the basis of the survey findings.

This survey was part of a broader range of activities undertaken to support the Mongolian book sector capacity by UNESCO, the Mongolian Foundation for Open Society (the Soros Foundation) and the Mongolian Government. This survey was a far more ambitious one than ours, involving eight different survey teams, and the co-operation of Mongolian education and government officials at every administrative level in all 22 *aimags* (provincial level units). The National Statistical Office and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics processed and analysed the data, and UNESCO consultant Pernille Askerud advised.

It was extraordinary to read this document in the closing phase of our survey and to see its close parallels with the situation we ourselves were studying. Of particular resonance were the following findings:

*access to books and other information is very limited throughout the country and cannot meet the demand and the need for information among the population;*

*over the last 10 years there has been a significant (68 per cent) decline in book production per inhabitant per year*

*the number of printing houses and libraries, particularly outside the capital city have declined dramatically, as government services have been severely curtailed*

*book production is dominated by textbook production commissioned by the Government*

*the inability to raise the necessary funds [is] said to prevent private publishers from even considering many available manuscripts for publishing*

*there is no official record of published titles*

*most of the printing houses are located in the capital city and the extent of printing capacity in the regions is very limited*

*only a few of the printing houses can undertake all the jobs in the printing cycle -- there are for example only 2 or 3 printing houses that can do colour separation. The cost of printing varies a lot and the few large printing presses find it at times difficult to fully utilise their printing capacity and recoupe new investments*

*the total library collections have increased a little over the last decade*

*most libraries have not been able to buy a single book over the last 10 years*

*new newspaper and magazine publishing [has] mushroomed over the last few years but the sales of these are almost exclusively limited to the capital city*

In fact, one could take almost every single conclusion on the state of publishing in Mongolia and apply it to Cambodia – with the exception of one: the difficulties caused by lack of heating in libraries!

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## CHAPTER 2 PUBLISHING IN CAMBODIA IN CONTEXT

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### SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The chapters that follow, reporting our survey findings, will have greater meaning if the reader has some understanding of the Cambodian context, in particular as it relates to reading, writing and literacy. These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, but we feel that the current educational situation and its evolution form an essential backdrop to our work and deserve to be introduced here.

Cambodia is widely described as an oral society although this label belies its ancient literary tradition. However, in pre-colonial times reading and writing were confined to the religious and royal court elite. The colonial administration's requirements for a literate and numerate bureaucracy led, in Cambodia's case, not to a large-scale program of public education, but rather to the import of Vietnamese clerical workers, leaving the majority of Khmers in their illiterate state, but contributing to the development of a new, albeit small, literate urban population, principally of mixed ethnic and linguistic background, which combined Khmers with Chinese, Vietnamese, Thais, Indians and Europeans.

Outside the few schools, some public education was offered primarily through the 'pagoda schools', in which some colonial funds were given to strengthen and broaden the educational capacity of the traditional practice of imparting some, particularly religious and scripture-based learning, at least to boys, at the local *wat*. The palace also served as a place for a limited number of boys from elite families to gain literacy and some knowledge of tradition, culture and history. To extend education beyond these venues required travel abroad -- to Saigon or, in the twentieth century, also to France. But the numbers of students who were able to profit from such opportunities were extremely small.

In the immediate aftermath of independence, the government led by Head of State, Prince Norodom Sihanouk placed a great deal of emphasis on developing Cambodia's education system at all levels -- from mass primary schooling to the establishment of the country's first high schools and even technical schools and universities. Pre-1970 figures indicated that for the first time in Cambodia's history one could speak of a population of which a majority of young people had the opportunity for at least basic levels of primary education. (Literacy campaigns are discussed in Chapter 7 below).

All this came to an end as the country slipped into war and beyond. The U.S. bombing of the late 1960s and early 1970s led to the displacement of over a third of the population, and the national budget was almost entirely devoted to military expenditure. While the universities and schools in Phnom Penh continued to function at a minimal level, as did schools in some provincial centres such as Battambang and Siem Reap, whole areas of the country were devastated or (especially in the north and north-east) came under control of rebel Khmer Rouge forces, who had a policy of dismantling all manifestations of the enemy state, including educational institutions.

The victory of the Khmer Rouge over the Khmer Republic on 17 April 1975 brought a complete rupture in Cambodia's educational development and history, as in all other areas of life. Contrary to widespread notions, some schooling did take place during the following three years, eight months and 20 days of Democratic Kampuchea rule, but it was so sporadic and rudimentary that it can scarcely be described as education.

So it was that the social situation faced by the People's Republic of Kampuchea on 7 January 1979, the date of the overthrow of Democratic Kampuchea, attracted the name Year Zero. The number of teachers remaining in Cambodia was estimated at only 4-5,000 (25% of the pre-war figure of 21,313), and many of those fled the country in the next few years.<sup>6</sup> Most school buildings had been gutted if not destroyed, and the overwhelming majority of the school age population was functionally if not absolutely illiterate. Within months schools were reopened and a mass literacy campaign was launched. Within the first year after Pol Pot, the government reported that more than one million young people began to study, in over 13,000 classes, four secondary schools and the faculty of medicine and pharmacy.<sup>7</sup> Under a crash program of training teachers in six weeks, the number rose to 13,169 in 1979-80 and to 30,316 in the following year.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1980s this national effort, combined with assistance from Vietnam, the Eastern European states, Cuba and a number of international NGOs, led to the rebuilding of a mass primary and secondary educational system, and to the gradual reopening of vocational and tertiary institutions, albeit severely lacking in almost all regards. Vietnam was the nearest neighbour, and provided teachers as well as material resources, including printing and publishing of textbooks. During the Democratic Kampuchea period the National Library of Vietnam had collected and set aside books for the National Library of Cambodia, and Vietnamese provincial libraries were paired with Cambodian ones, so in 1979 a substantial donation of books was made, and professional librarians were sent to help reconstruct Cambodia's principal libraries (although one might question how much these books met the reading needs of the society.)

For the next ten years Cambodia's educational system was almost exclusively funded and run by the state, while some primary classes were run by NGOs and religious organisations (principally in conjunction with orphanages). In the late 1980s a small number schools for foreign languages (principally English) began to emerge.

In 1989 a profound change of constitutional status from the People's Republic of Kampuchea to the State of Cambodia allowed for the opening of a market economy, and the gradual loosening of restrictions on religion, publishing and education, as in many other spheres of economic and social life. Vietnam continued its withdrawal of its advisers and troops, which had begun in small measure even as far back as 1982, with the final contingent leaving Cambodia in September 1989.

Following the Paris Peace Agreements in 1991, the UNTAC period marked the end of the boycott that had been imposed on Cambodia by western countries, including its exclusion from the United Nations. Finally, Cambodia was included in the activities of the many and varied educational programs offered by UN agencies (especially Unicef), international NGOs and, most significantly, to international financing bodies, notably the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. As a result of these interventions, Cambodia's educational system underwent a major overhaul in 1996, with a resultant impact on many aspects of relevance to this study, including literacy, book availability and production.

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Clayton, *Education and the politics of language : hegemony and pragmatism in Cambodia, 1979-1989*. – Hong Kong : Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 2000, p.96.

<sup>7</sup> Figures from Hun Sen speech to International Conference of Solidarity with the People of Kampuchea, held in Phnom Penh under the auspices of the World Peace Council on 20 May 1980.

<sup>8</sup> Additional data provided by Vin McNamara, Chief Technical Adviser, EQIP, email to Publishing in Cambodia, 2 November 2002.

## STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The 1996 restructuring introduced a twelve-year total school grading system, based on six years at primary, three at lower secondary and three at upper secondary.

Considerable devolution of financial and administrative authority to provincial, district and even school level is a hallmark of the new structure. Each of Cambodia's 24 provinces has a Provincial Education Office (PEO), and each of the more than 185 districts has a District Education Office (DEO), which have increasing decision making powers. The role of MoEYS was cut back to policy making and strategic planning.

Many aspects of this major overhaul of the educational system, particularly decentralisation and deconcentration, and the concomitant diminution of national and governmental structures, are part and parcel of the economic, social and political "reforms" imposed on Cambodia as the price for admission into the international community in the era of globalisation. In the education sector, as in agriculture and health, privatisation and competition are the new watchwords whose consequences are profound.

### PRIMARY

Universal primary education for both boys and girls for six years is an objective of the Cambodian government, although its achievement is uneven across the country, with rural and especially remote areas falling behind target. Children of rice farmers are prone to seasonal absences from school, when they assist in planting and harvest tasks, or because of annual flooding which damages roads and bridges as well as displacing whole villages for months at a time.

Girls and non-Khmer ethnic children are still noticeably less present at each increasing grade and level of schooling, a phenomenon known as "lagging". The 1998 census reports school attendance for age 7-14 as 66% for males and 62% for females, but the ratio becomes more and more skewed at older ages, with the 15-19 year bracket showing 51.4% for males and 30% for females, the 20-24 year bracket showing 11.6% for males and only 5.3% for females, while those few girls who do make it through tertiary studies have a better chance of studying later, with the 25+ bracket showing 1.7% for males and 1.1% for females.<sup>9</sup> Repetition and dropout rates are staggering (41% and 12% respectively in Grade 1 and 8% and 21% by Grade 5).<sup>10</sup>

After trial runs in several provinces in the late 1980s on the initiative of the Norwegian Redd Barna, the cluster school system was introduced on a national scale in 1995, with approximately six to ten satellite primary schools relating to and to some extent dependent upon one cluster primary school. Clearly the intention was to maximise sharing of resources, both human and material, and to encourage co-operation and mutual assistance. The effectiveness of this cluster approach has been shown to vary markedly between different regions, with the most critical factor being distance, as

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<sup>9</sup> *General population census of Cambodia : analysis of census results report 7 – literacy and education*. – Phnom Penh : National Institute of Statistics, 2000, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> "Creating effective schools in Cambodia : Educational Quality Improvement Project (EQIP)", n.p., n.d, p.1

some satellite schools are really too remote to be able to interact in any meaningful way with the cluster school.<sup>11</sup>

The primary sector has been far and away the principal target for assistance, both from international NGOs and from international governmental agencies (notably Unicef).

The number of children enrolled in primary schools in 2001 was 2,382,481 in 5,463 schools.<sup>12</sup>

## SECONDARY

It would seem that the analysis of the primary sector as the key vector for gaining maximum leverage in education was taken as an absolute command for Cambodia from the mid-1990s, at least as far as the major donors (the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank) were concerned, and until very recently the secondary sector suffered comparative neglect in terms of assistance from outside.

As a result, in many ways there seems almost a disincentive to go on to secondary study – not only do most students have to travel far from home, but conditions of school buildings and furniture as well as teaching and learning resources are far inferior to most primary schools.

The number of children enrolled in secondary schools in 2001 was 387,172 in 520 schools.<sup>13</sup>

## VOCATIONAL

If secondary education is the poor cousin to primary, then vocational education in Cambodia stands entirely outside the family when it comes to receiving attention and assistance. Even in the heyday of educational funding during the Sangkum period of the 1950s and 1960s, vocational education was neglected, and the focus was on the academic path.

Since 1979 some international NGOs have focussed on this area (e.g. Don Bosco and Apheda), but it is still woefully under-funded.

## TERTIARY

Cambodia still has a low participation rate in higher education, with only 1.2% of the population enrolled, compared to an average of 20.7% in ASEAN countries, and 5.1% in low-income countries world-wide.<sup>14</sup>

The seven public universities (all in Phnom Penh) are:

Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP)  
Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA)  
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy

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<sup>11</sup> Vin McNamara, Chief Technical Adviser, EQIP, interview with Publishing in Cambodia, 13 June 2002 at MoEYS.

<sup>12</sup> *Major work achieved by the Royal Government of Cambodia in 2001*. – Phnom Penh : Office of the Council of Ministers, 2002, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> World Bank 2001.



Faculty of Law and Economics (FLE)  
National Institute of Management (formerly the Faculty of Business and Management)  
Chamkar Dong University of Agriculture  
Institute of Technology

Three other public tertiary educational institutions are worthy of mention here: the Royal School of Administration and the newly founded Royal School of Judges and Prosecutors – both of which stand in the French civil service tradition and which are now receiving substantial French government funding; and the Royal Academy of Cambodia, established within the second campus of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Originally conceived to follow the model of the French Royal Academy, its role was later expanded to include awarding masters degrees, especially for government officials.

The MoEYS has had a more direct role with regard to RUPP, while the other universities have had a dependent relationship to their corresponding ministries. However, all have become gradually more autonomous in recent years, and stand to do so to a considerably greater degree if the Higher Education Bill currently under consideration is passed.

Cambodia's tertiary institutions are the part of the education sector where privatisation has been most evident. From 1997, the opportunity has existed for the establishment of private universities and colleges, while various approaches to privatisation have been permitted, and even encouraged or imposed, in the existing public universities. The practice of imposing unofficial “fees” or payments for admission or for receiving a high mark or a passing grade continues to plague the tertiary sector.

Beginning in 2001 a limited number of fee-paying students have been offered places alongside those receiving a tuition free education. The National Institute of Management (formerly the Faculty of Business and Management) and the Faculty of Law and Economics have gone the furthest down the road, offering separate fee-based degree and diploma programs, mainly in conjunction with foreign institutions.

Private universities are the recent growth industry. Major institutions like Norton University, Regent College, Pannasastra University, the National Institute of Technology and Management and the International Institute of Cambodia have attracted thousands of students, principally part-time, while small private colleges and institutes abound in the capital and even beyond in provincial towns. In 2001 almost half the students graduating with bachelors degrees were private fee-paying students.<sup>15</sup> A matter of considerable concern is the varying quality of both state and private institutions, and the need to introduce some across-the-board system of accreditation, quality assurance and transferability.<sup>16</sup>

The number of students enrolled at the tertiary level in 2001 was 25,080 in 10 state-run and 6 private institutions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid* p. 19

<sup>16</sup> See the proceedings of the Innovation in Higher Education conference, Phnom Penh August 2001

<sup>17</sup> *Major work*, p.19.

The “baby boom” following 1979 has created a burgeoning student-age population, providing a basis of hope for a market that needs to and perhaps wants to read. The extent to which this is true is examined in the following chapters.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Publishing in Cambodia, like every other sector, is handicapped by the uncertain and rapidly changing legal framework. The new Constitution of 1993 enshrined the free market economy that had been evolving since reforms in the late 1980s. The ramifications of this change from the previous socialist-inspired (if not always practised) economic base are profound, and have not yet wrought their way through the legal system.

New Criminal and Civil Codes were introduced in 1992/3, but these are now about to be replaced in yet another total revamp, drafted in conjunction with legal experts from France and Japan respectively. Laws of specific relevance to the publishing sector are also in a state of limbo, as described briefly below.

### COPYRIGHT LAW

As part of the suite of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), along with trade marks and patents, copyright is of keen concern to policy makers in Cambodia as they seek to comply with conditions for entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and to accede to the ASEAN Framework for Intellectual Property Co-operation.

An analysis of “The legal and regulatory framework for Intellectual Property Protection in Cambodia” and “Analysis of the Cambodian draft copyright law” were prepared in 1999 by Sok Siphana, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Commerce, for the Basic Education Textbook Project.<sup>18</sup>

Under the 1992 UNTAC Criminal Law and Procedure (Article 48) misappropriation of Intellectual Property is prohibited, with reference to copyright as defined by the Berne Convention. However Cambodia is not yet a member of the Berne Convention or the Universal Copyright Convention.

Bilateral agreements have been signed with the United States (1996) and Thailand (1997) under which Cambodia has committed itself “to provide adequate and effective protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights”

While a “Law on Copyright and Allied Rights” was drafted by the Ministry of Commerce in 1995, responsibility for the copyright part of IPR has now been assigned to the Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture. A draft was approved by the Council of Ministers in May 2002 and is now in the hands of the National Assembly.

It is essential that public hearings and discussions be held on the draft law to enable due consideration of its positive and negative implications and to ensure that any law passed not only

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<sup>18</sup> Sok Siphana, *Review of the current and projected legal and fiscal environment concerning the textbook publishing sector in Cambodia*, -- BETP, MOEYS, January 1999, p. 10-21.

provides copyright protection of Cambodian works (one of the issues most frequently raised by writers interviewed in our survey) but also allows maximum access by Cambodians to information generated overseas.

#### PRESS LAW

The Press Law in effect in Cambodia was promulgated on 2 September 1995. The Law “determines the regime for the press, and assures freedom of the press and freedom of publication in conformity with Articles 31 and 41 of the Constitution”. It assures the right to confidentiality of sources, specifically prohibits pre-publication censorship, and provides for publication of official information and access to information in government-held records within certain limits.

It goes on to outline detailed rights and responsibilities of journalists, including the right to establish journalist associations. Primary principles of the law include: respect for the truth and the rights of the public to the truth; publish information with honesty; report only in accordance with facts based on original sources; use only fair methods to collect news; avoid publishing any information which incites discrimination; respect privacy; not to violate the rights of individuals to a fair trial; to regard as grave professional abuses fraudulent misrepresentation, calumny, defamation or unfounded humiliation; or acceptance of bribes. The law also includes the following “shall strictly respect grammatical rules of the Khmer language” and “publication of obscene texts or pictures and graphically violent materials shall be prohibited”.<sup>19</sup>

Editors or press directors are required to register with the Ministry of Information 30 days before commencing publication, giving details including name of editor and director, brief CV including criminal record, address, frequency, pagination, title and masthead and printer. Normally a specific *Prakas* (regulation) acknowledging such details is issued. Sometimes the Ministry of Information requires a change of title or logo if it is considered offensive or inciting.<sup>20</sup>

Press ownership is restricted to two Khmer language newspapers for each individual person or legal identity, and foreigners may not own more than 20% of the Khmer language newspapers published in Cambodia.

#### LEGAL DEPOSIT

Under the French protectorate, legal deposit ensured a marvellous collection of publications in the Bibliothèque Nationale and Archives Nationales (of France and Vietnam), but regrettably the Cambodian set has been diminished markedly by the vicissitudes of war and revolution. Some attempts are being made with French assistance to create a *Bibliothèque électronique francophone dans la région Asie-Pacifique* (BEFAP) commencing with the countries of former French Indochina, and this should assist a proper analysis of what is missing and an effort to rebuild the collection by means of restitution of patrimonial heritage materials held abroad, or through microfilm or scanning technologies.

A 1956 Law has never been rescinded (and under the Cambodian constitution therefore still has legal effect), but there is no current legal deposit legislation actually functioning in Cambodia. Under the

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<sup>19</sup> Reach Kram no. NS/R-Krm/0895/07, translated into English by Chum Kimpo, Legal Assistance Unit, Cambodian Office of the United Nations Commission of Human Rights

<sup>20</sup> Khieu Kanharith, Secretary of State, Ministry of Information, interview with Publishing in Cambodia, 12 October 2002.

Press Law editors or directors are required to deposit six copies of each issue with the Ministry of Information and two copies with the National Library of Cambodia. It should be noted that, regrettably, despite this requirement, neither institution appears to have a complete set of all newspapers published.

As to a comprehensive approach including all types of publications and other creative works, Khlot Vibolla, Director of the National Library of Cambodia, and Deputy Director of the Department of Books and Reading, has drafted a legal deposit law which is currently under discussion within the Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture.

#### ARCHIVES AND RECORDS LAW

In 2001, the National Archives of Cambodia, with the assistance of a consultant from the National Archives of France, formulated a draft Archives and Records law. The aim of the law is to protect documents created by the Royal Government of Cambodia from unlawful destruction, provide guidelines for the transfer of documents to the National Archives of Cambodia, stipulate which ministries will be exempt from the transferring documents, and define the role of the National Archives of Cambodia. The law has not yet been passed.

#### BOOK BOUNTY

In 1989 the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Kampuchea passed Decree no.17 on Book Bounty for Cultural Works, declaring as eligible to receive book bounty a wide range of "literary/artistic works, research works, technological and scientific works, textbooks translations and other works that are published in newspapers, magazines and bulletins, or broadcast on radio or television" as well as "works of art, drama, film and video, orchestral works, music, photographs, sculpture and architectural works". The book bounty was to be paid by those who use the works at a rate of payment to be set by the then Ministry of Information and Culture, and the Ministry of Finance. Whether this Decree is still in effect remains to be determined, but it deserves noting, that the "bounty" is perhaps more accurately described as a royalty.

#### INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK AND SERIAL NUMBERS (ISBN & ISSN)

Cambodia does not yet have any agency with a mandate to assign ISBNs and ISSNs to Cambodian publications. Under these programs a unique identifying number is assigned to a single publication to facilitate the achievement of the goal of "universal bibliographic control". Their absence is a hindrance to Cambodian publishers seeking to export their products, as international distributors expect and demand such codes.

The ISBN was approved as ISO standard 2108 in 1970. The International ISBN Agency grants the responsibility for assigning numbers to one or more local agencies nominated on official application by the Ministry of Education or Culture, following a survey on the publishing situation and "agreement among publishers, booksellers and the national bibliographic centre". The survey should report on the approximate number of publishers, the number of titles published per year and the number of titles per publisher.

The ISSN was approved as ISO standard 3297 in 1975 and the numbers are assigned by a National Centre once a country has become a Member State of the governing Convention. The National Centre is generally located in the National Library, if it is able to carry out the bibliographic functions and maintain liaison with the local bibliographic and publishing communities.

### OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF PUBLISHING IN CAMBODIA

Pernille Askerud uses the term "book sector" to encompass

*all activities concerned with the writing, publishing, production, printing, distribution, sale, promotion and utilization of books and other printed materials. The term emphasizes the multiple uses of books and covers more than the publishing sector, which focuses only on the business of publishing.<sup>21</sup>*

This project has at its goal the study of **Publishing in Cambodia**, a term which we consider to be equivalent to Askerud's "Book Sector". In our research we look at the entire book continuum (or "book chain"), which includes not only publishers, printers, distributors, and sellers, but also others involved in the book trade, such as writers, readers, and suppliers. Each link or sector is related to the other, and if one sector is weakened others are affected.

We use as a basis for our overview, Askerud's four phases of the book publishing process, as used in *A Guide to Sustainable Book Development*. These are:

1. Identification of viable projects; development of manuscripts;
2. Design; commissioning of additional illustrative material; checking layout; mock-up; pre-press;
3. Production;
4. Storage, marketing, sales and distribution.

We have added a fifth phase,

5. Readers and access to reading materials.

**Phase 1.** Identification of viable projects (publisher); development of manuscripts (writing, editing, gathering illustrative material, copy editing, corrections and approval of complete text).

An organised system whereby a publisher determines that a market for a publication exists is rare in Cambodia, but it does occur. With a growing middle class and youth who hunger for learning and attaining educational status, publishers or potential publishers are realising that a market for books is being established. This is evident from the growing number of titles being published/copied to satisfy the increasing numbers of people learning English and subjects such as economics, marketing, accounting, and business studies, albeit most of these publications would violate any copyright law as most are essentially straight copies of existing publications with some slight alterations for the local market. The point is that identification of a market and an attempt to satisfy the demand have been made. Overall, these types of publications are poorly produced, are rarely proof-read, and tend to be riddled with mistakes and inaccuracies.

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<sup>21</sup> Pernille Askerud. *A Guide to Sustainable Book Development*. UNESCO, 1997. p26

Where one finds genuine market research is in the area of children's books, particularly the publications of Save the Children Norway, Graphic Roots, Sipar, Domrai Sor, SVA, and Reyum.

Many of these publications are submitted to the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Culture, which after reading and making suggestions for any alterations will issue a *Prakas* (regulation) to declare that the publication meets with the approval of the relevant Ministry.

The relatively sophisticated process of identifying and developing viable projects; preparing a budget that includes printing and marketing costs; market research to determine what would be a suitable wholesale and retail price is sadly lacking. This is an issue that needs to be addressed through training and workshops and the formation of a publishers association.

Our interviews indicate that the commissioning of writers by a publisher tends to be rare, except in the case of a company or NGO that is seeking to publish a research report or something of that nature. Most publications are created through the initiative of a writer who may first write the manuscript then seek funds to publish, or formulate an idea and then seeks funding, usually from a donor agency such as the Toyota Foundation or UNESCO, for example. Most authors never enter into a contract with the publisher/printer, except in the case where the author receives funds from a donor agency to publish.

In these scenarios most authors, while having a knowledge of how to use a computer, will give little thought to the issues of software compatibility, or how the manuscript will be presented to the publisher/printer. The author in most cases is the one who does the layout and design, and checks his/her own text for accuracy. In the cases of children's books and novels, someone else may be commissioned to do illustrations or design the cover of the book.

**Phase 2.** Design (graphic, illustration and book design); commissioning of additional illustrative material; checking layout; mock-up; pre-press.

Here the typical case is that an author may go directly to a printer with a manuscript. The printer may make some suggestions regarding layout, colour and illustrations. There may be some reformatting and redesigning as the printer prepares the manuscript for pre-press. In many cases, in order to keep costs down, authors provide their own illustrations, usually with very little thought to the technical aspects of reproducing images. Reyum Institute is one publisher that is attempting to make the move into the role of taking the work of an author and then assuming the responsibility of preparing, designing, illustrating, and producing mock-ups.

The point needs to be made that it would seem most donors have not seen the significance of this stage in assuring a quality product, and tend to limit their grants to a fee for the author and the cost of printing.

**Phase 3.** Production (printing, binding, packaging).

Very little in-house printing is done in Cambodia. What in-house printing exists is confined to a few magazines and newspapers. In most cases it appears that proofs are provided to the client by the printer. Problems with the publication tend to arise later when poor quality control, inconsistent colour sampling, sloppy collation, and weak bindings lead to many copies being rejected by the client.

The cost of printing varies greatly from one printer to another. Much of the variation is due to the quality of the printing materials. Most paper and ink used by printers is imported and subject to import duties, contributing to the high cost of printing.

Once again, it would seem that short-term cost savings are often made at this stage to the detriment of the overall product.

#### **Phase 4.** Storage, marketing, sales and distribution.

The problem of storage receives very little attention, but continues to be a major obstacle for publishers and printers. The experiences of Reyum and the Khmer Writers Association serve as an example. They printed long runs of a number of publications in an attempt to lower the selling price. Of course this meant long-term storage was required. They found within a short period of time that much of their stock was destroyed or damaged by termite infestations. Many wholesalers who publish will print small runs purely because they don't have the facilities to store books for the long term. MOEYS and the Buddhist Institute are the only publishers to have any sort of significant storage space for books.

Distribution works on a rather ad hoc basis in Cambodia. There is no central distribution network, co-ordinating body, or association for distribution. The system is not well planned for distribution and sales. Magazine and newspaper distribution is controlled by seven or so different individuals who use insecure taxi transport to move periodicals to the provinces, while books tend to be delivered to retailers directly by relative or friends or via taxis.

The marketing of books is almost non-existent. One stumbles on new books in the market rather than hearing about them beforehand. There is no literary review nor could we find a newspaper or magazine that regularly printed book reviews. Some reviews appear in the French and English language media, or may appear in the Khmer press as part of an official book launch. But these are few and far between especially considering the number of publications that are produced each year. Regular book fairs are not held, nor is there promotion of libraries such as a national library week.

Furthermore, there is no legal depository law requiring all printed material to be deposited with the National Library, nor is there sufficient budget allocated to public libraries to purchase publications.

#### **Phase 5.** Readers and access to reading materials

The promotion of reading and the alleviation of illiteracy are key requirements in the improvement the situation of publishing in Cambodia. The eradication of illiteracy is vital to the development of the country. Studies have shown a positive link between literacy and socio-economic development. Currently, Cambodia has the second lowest literacy rate of all the ASEAN countries.

Projects to improve the rate of literacy are being conducted, but many people relapse as they have no access to reading materials. There are insufficient numbers of libraries, most are understocked, and there are no regular government initiatives to promote reading.

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### CHAPTER 3 WRITERS & WRITING

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Khmer literature,                      The Khmer should care for.  
Let it be long-lasting,                Well-maintained and pure,  
Because a nation's writing            Is that nation's true mark.  
If its writing disappears,              The nation vanishes.<sup>22</sup>

#### BACKGROUND

Cambodia has a venerable tradition of writing, noted as early as the Funan period, 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. The earliest surviving stone inscriptions (in Sanskrit and in Old Khmer) date from the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. It is thought that early texts may have been written on blackened animal hides, but these have not survived.

Although observed in use even during the Angkor period, the oldest extant palm-leaf manuscripts and other, chiefly mulberry bark based paper manuscripts, date only from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but because they underwent a continual process of re-copying (involving some amendment as well), some of their content perhaps dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. These documents principally served to proclaim royal decrees, regulations and achievements on the one hand, and to preserve and pass on religious scriptures and texts on the other.

The Khmer script is believed to have descended from the Brahmi script of South India. Khmer has its own history as an independent script for more than 1,100 years. What is designated Old Khmer was used from the 6<sup>th</sup> century to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and Middle Khmer from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, after which the modern script came onto the scene.

Over several centuries at least, a highly stylised Khmer classical literature developed, as remarked by Jacques Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy:

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<sup>22</sup> Epigram (*sloka*) introducing the literary section of *Kambujasuriya* from 1962, as translated by George Chigas, "The emergence of twentieth century Cambodian literary institutions", in *The canon in Southeast Asian literatures* ed. David Smyth. -- Richmond, Surrey : Curzon, 2000. This does not introduce the *Kambujasuriya* literary section any longer, but is inserted in the journal from time to time, notably following one of the articles by Publishing in Cambodia researcher Vong Sotheara in *Kambujasuriya*, v.53 (3) 1999, p.46.



*Comprised mostly of verse, its language is characterized by symmetry and circumlocution, with the rhythm of the sentence prevailing over punctuation. Its vocabulary was carefully selected and comprised archaism, borrowed terms and metaphors, the hallmark of 'appropriate' language.... This literature, more concerned with brilliant style than with psychological insights or realistic plots, is often didactic, in both the moral and satirical sense*”<sup>23</sup>

Paper documents with ink handwriting are thought to have been created from around the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly for palace records, most notably the so-called Royal Chronicles (the earliest complete extant text dates from 1818) and the Cbap (Laws, or more accurately, Codes of Conduct). As noted in the chapters on printing, the first Khmer type fonts were cast in France in 1877. Klairung Amratisha comments that prior to the 1940s “prose was not regarded as an artistic medium and was reserved for practical writings, such as legal texts, chronicles or translations of the Pali scriptures.”<sup>24</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, under the influence of the French colonial protectorate administration, chiefly the École Française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and the indefatigable Suzanne Karpeles, modern institutions were established devoted to collection and dissemination of earlier manuscripts and texts, and the writing down of what had previously been transmitted orally. This activity, begun in earnest in the 1920s, continued and adopted new forms of modern information technology, including microfilm, audiotape, videotape, film, television and comic strips. Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy caution “we must not overlook the fact that this continuity and revival were not spontaneous... [and] must be interpreted as an exploitation of existing literature rather than a search for new literary creation.”<sup>25</sup>

Cambodian literature based on the contemporary world, although to varying degrees still inspired by classical content and style, began to emerge in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Initially printed outside the country in Saigon, Paris, Hong Kong, Hanoi and Singapore, literary products began to appear in Phnom Penh from the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 1930s and 40s short stories, plays and novels or novellas (still, as today, sometimes in verse form) appeared on the scene, but the economic and political effects of the depression and the Second World War (including shortages of paper) limited their number, with only one or two novels published per year, and the majority of authors finding an outlet in the pages of *Kambujasuriya* and other journals.

What was claimed when published as the “first modern novel in Cambodia” is Kim Hak’s *Tek Tonle Sap* (The waters of Tonle Sap), published in Khmer and in French in 1939 in serial form over three issues of *Kambujasuriya*, although Rim Kin’s *Sopbat* was published in the previous year, and it is quite likely that there may have been earlier manifestations of this form of writing. Kim Hak explained his motivation in writing his novel as “to end the talk of those who represent the country who only know our Khmer language slightly and say the Khmer don’t have any books or stories which are easy

<sup>23</sup> Jacques Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy, “Literature and society in modern Cambodia”, in Tham Seong Chee (ed.), *Literature and society in Southeast Asia*. – Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1981, p. 56-57.

<sup>24</sup> Klairung Amratisha, “The Cambodian novel : a study of its emergence and development”, PhD, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998, p.14.

<sup>25</sup> Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy

to read.”<sup>26</sup> In this introduction Kim Hak used the new terms *aksar sastr* for literature (derived from the Sanskrit *aksar* (letter) and *sastr* (text) ) and *pralaom lok* (seducing the world, still used today for novel and for romance). The term *aksar sastr* appears to have been first used in print only in 1938 in the Venerable Chuon Nhat’s dictionary published by the Buddhist Institute.<sup>27</sup>

It was not until around 1950 that modern Cambodian literature reached a mass market. In 1973 Khuon Sokhamphu presented a paper on “Le roman khmer contemporain” at an international colloquium held at the Sorbonne. In it she produced the first attempt at a comprehensive listing of novels. She noted the problems arising from the lack of inadequate bibliographic description in the texts themselves – often lacking date and even the author’s name (or even pseudonym), let alone the name of the publisher, and the decreasing coverage and effectiveness of the legal deposit requirements. Dr Khuon identified three periods: pre-independence (15 titles), 1954-1969 (129 titles), and 1970-1973 (40 titles).<sup>28</sup>

While in 1955 Pierre Bitard was able to remark “In Cambodia there exist neither literary reviews nor professional critics, founders of schools or of programmes”<sup>29</sup>, this situation was not to last long, for literary criticism by Cambodians (as opposed to foreign, chiefly French, observers) came into its own in 1956 with the foundation of the Khmer Writers Association, and the publication -- again in Kambujasuriya -- of a review article on modern Cambodian literature by Ray Buc.

Khuon Sokhamphu later grouped Khmer novels into three: those following the classical themes; those inspired by Western themes; and the smaller group showing a “return to realism” based on Cambodian daily life and concerns, tending to emphasise the difficulties faced.<sup>30</sup>

This pre-1975 literature has a strong resonance with what the Publishing in Cambodia survey found being written today:

*In its sensibility...modern literature has apparently stayed remarkably close to classical literature. Fiction plots are based on the same love stories and broken friendships, all adventure novels include the legendary magical worlds and didactic moralism so appreciated by Cambodians.*<sup>31</sup>

As the war closed in around Phnom Penh, publishing succumbed like other enterprises, after a frenetic flourish of escapist film and books. The victory of the Khmer Rouge on 17 April 1975 brought an abrupt halt to all private efforts to publish, and there is no record of novel production,

<sup>26</sup> Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy, p.143

<sup>27</sup> George Chigas, p. 138.

<sup>28</sup> Khuon Sokhamphu, “Le roman khmer contemporain”, *Colloque international des littératures de l’Asie du Sud-Est* held at the Sorbonne, Paris, 16-22 July 1973, published in the same year by the Centre de Documentation et de Recherche, Section Lettres et Culture-Civilisations Khmères de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Phnom Penh.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Bitard, “La littérature cambodgienne moderne”, *France-Asie*, 114-115 (Nov-Dec 1955), p.473.

<sup>30</sup> Khuon Sokhamphu,

<sup>31</sup> Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy, p. 69

although songs, poems and short stories did appear in the official journals, and some brave souls did apparently continue to pen short works in secret.

Following the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge on 7 January 1979, efforts began to reconstruct Cambodian society and infrastructure. As noted elsewhere in this report, the printed and electronic press were of high priority, with principal emphasis given to education (both in schools and of a political nature) rather than to creative writing, although competitions for novels, poems, songs and drama were held, particularly devoted to encouraging writing along revolutionary themes.

Access by individual authors to the few printing establishments was limited, and both new and reprinted texts were subject to political censorship prior to publication. The Ministry of Information and Culture's publishing bureau, headed by Yi Thon, had the task of reviewing manuscripts proposed for publication, but the ultimate decision-making power lay in the hands of the Minister. Only when an author had a permit to publish could the printing house (all in government hands) accept the job.<sup>32</sup>

In such a situation, the phenomenon of circulated hand-written manuscript developed. Regrettably, these writings, and their successor roneoed or photocopied versions, have been completely disdained by Cambodian officials and librarians, and were never made the object of a sustained collection policy by the National Library of Cambodia or by any other cultural institution. To our knowledge the only significant collection of hand written novels are those collected by Olivier de Bernon of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient. De Bernon described the content of eight of these texts in a paper presented to the 2001 seminar at the National Library of Cambodia honouring the French archivist Paul Boudet.<sup>33</sup>

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (as of April 1992 separate from the Ministry of Information) established a Department of Publications, Reading and Documentation, later to become the Department of Books and Reading. Its first Director, Tauch Chhuong, himself a writer (author of a history of Battambang) bewailed the difficulties faced by the Department without adequate financial resources to realise its a demanding set of aims:

*to undertake systematic research into Cambodian literature, arts and customs;*

*to preserve, restore and conserve the written heritage, especially inscriptions, manuscripts and texts printed in Cambodia;*

*to reproduce previously published texts considered to be rare or in danger of disappearance, with the aim of compiling an inventory of the written heritage;*

*to translate texts on Cambodian culture and civilisation from and into Khmer, so as to make them available for future researchers;*

<sup>32</sup> Tauch Chhuong, "Des publications au Cambodge après 1980", *Bilan et perspectives des études khmères* (ed. Pierre L. Lamant). – Paris, l'Harmattan, 1997, p.43-62

<sup>33</sup> Olivier de Bernon, "La littérature des années des misères : les petits romans manuscrits du Cambodge de 1979 à 1993", *Seminaire Paul Boudet*, Bibliothèque nationale du Cambodge, Phnom Penh, 27-29 Nov. 2001. All the papers from this seminar have been posted on the website of the Centre Culturel Français at <http://ccfk.org/Boudet/rapports>

*to revive and promote reading through the creation of libraries at all levels and through other concerted and appropriate efforts.* <sup>34</sup>

The constitutional and technological changes that swept Cambodia from 1989-1993 opened for the first time new possibilities for writers to transform their manuscripts into printed books available for sale on the open market. At the same time as photocopy machines emerged on every street corner in the cities and towns, the censorship bureau was closed down and there was henceforth no prior censorship of texts, although the government has occasionally exercised its power to ban the distribution of books considered to be subversive of public order or, more particularly, defamatory to the King or high officials.

Nevertheless, the data compiled through our survey reveal the painful limitations of the current situation, where Bitard's observations on the livelihood of writers remain all too true almost 50 years later:

*As there is not at this moment a single Khmer writer who may reasonably expect to live from his pen, they must benefit from external competitions. ... It is necessary in the first place to improve the distribution network of the publishers that would permit the authors to become known throughout the country, as now only the inhabitants of the capital have a sufficient number of bookshops. It is equally important to create a literary review, which should be mainly open to young writers, supporting their efforts and making them better known to the public. And, finally, the establishment of an annual literary award and assistance to publishing would make a powerful contribution to the circulation of national literature.*<sup>35</sup>

#### PROMOTION OF WRITING IN CAMBODIA TODAY

Despite poor living conditions and the lack of return to be expected from writing, there are many people in Cambodia today devoted to research and writing yet are faced with the paradox that most of their books have not been published due to inadequate capital.

Some notable efforts are being made to encourage and promote writing through training programs and competitions organised by the Khmer Writers Association, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the Department of Books and Reading, and other institutions, including a new award for children's books offered by the Reyum Institute for Arts and Culture.

#### THE DEPARTMENT OF BOOKS AND READING (MOCFA)

Mrs. Khloth Vibolla, the Deputy Director of the Department of Books and Reading, and Director of the National Library of Cambodia, was interviewed on the work of the Department.

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<sup>34</sup> Tauch Chhuong, p.57

<sup>35</sup> Bitard, p.479

### *Budget*

In 2000 the department was provided 10 million riel by the government for repairing the building and buying books for the National Library, and in 2001 the amount granted was 7 million riel. So far in 2002 the department had not yet received its budgetary support.

### *Awards Organised by the Department*

In order to promote writing, the Department of Books and Reading organised competitions for novel writing and poetry. The award was advertised on radio, television, and in the press, and was disseminated directly to the ministries in Phnom Penh, provincial cultural offices, schools, and universities. The Department offers the following awards:

**Preah Suramarit Award:** The award is for novels and poetry relating to the theme of the culture of peace, with the winners announced on National Culture Day. In 2000 fifty manuscripts were received and ten winners were selected, five novels and five poems.

N° 1 winner	received	1,000,000 riel with a silver trophy
N° 2 winner	received	700,000 riel with a silver trophy
N° 3 winner	received	500,000 riel with a silver trophy
N° 4 winner	received	300,000 riel
N° 5 winner	received	200,000 riel

**Children Picture Book Award:** in 2001 36 illustrated manuscripts were submitted and five winners were selected and presented with:

N° 1 winner	received	2,000,000 riel
N° 2 winner	received	1,500,000 riel
N° 3 winner	received	1,000,000 riel
N° 4 winner	received	800,000 riel
N° 5 winner	received	500,000 riel

**Queen Indradevi Award:** In 2002 the novel and poetry competitions focused on equal rights between men and women and the issue of domestic violence. The results have not yet been announced.

The budget for organising these competition ceremonies was provided by the government, 21,500,000 riel for the Suramarit Award, 45,000,000 riel for Children Picture Book Award, and 45,000,000 riel for the Indradevi Award.

Mrs. Khloth added that the committee that marked the manuscripts had an articulated policy to evaluate the works submitted on the basis of their content, style and meaning, definition, and utility, but the Department did not have a policy concealing the competitors' names from the marking committee, and this led to some allegations of bias.

Every year the Department requests the government to provide funds to publish the winning manuscripts, but these funds were not forthcoming and the manuscripts remain unpublished, except for a novel by Mr. Yim Samnang who won the award N° 4 with a work entitled "The water flows uphill", which was published in 3,000 copies by a businessman in Orussey Market after reaching an agreement with the author. In return for his copyright, the author was provided more than 100

copies of the title and a little incentive money because he wished to disseminate his novels without any ambition to make money.

*Brief Summary of the Activities of the Department of Books and Reading in 2001*

This institution has 86 staff who play an important role in encouraging reading activity in Cambodia. Activities include the following programs:

- Conducted the Preah Suramarit Award competition.
- Purchased books for the National Library and the mobile library from the budget provided by the government for the year 2000.
- Translated the book entitled *Phnom Penh, Past and Present*, written by Michel Igout from French to Khmer. (forthcoming).
- Researched the works and biographies of well-known Khmer authors.
- Submitted proposals for buying, repairing, and republishing old books to keep in the National Library and the mobile library.
- Released the results of the competition for Illustrated Books for Children
- Operated mobile library reaching ten Phnom Penh suburbs, in operation 16 days per month.

Aside from these activities, the Department reported that it requested office supplies such stationery and furniture from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts for use in the Department itself and in the National Library.

CERTIFICATE OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ARTS (MOCFA)

This certificate has been awarded every year since 1991 for outstanding achievements in the arts as part of the Culture Day ceremony. These awards go mostly to the oldest great dancers, artists, singers, actors, musicians, and writers who have played a role in protecting and developing Cambodian culture. In 2000 Mr. Kong Bun Chhœurn was the first novelist to be honoured with this award. The award includes a Certificate of Recognition as Outstanding Achievers in the Arts and cash amounting to 300,000 riel.

The selection committee is composed of high dignitaries of the Ministry ranging from the Minister, Secretaries of State, Under-secretaries of State, Directors General, to Directors of all the Departments.

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY (MOEYS)

Mr. Eng Kim Ly of the Department of Research and Pedagogy provided information about writing for the curriculum.

*Technique*

The writing of subject textbooks occurred under the oversight of a committee formed from three subject specialists, a project team leader, a subject specialist teacher with long-term experience in the profession from a school or department, and a skilful layout person and graphic designer.

In researching textbooks the committee looked to the curriculum of neighbouring countries to serve as bibliographic references. A Japanese organisation, JICA, commented that textbooks used at levels in Cambodia are no lower than in western countries, and in some cases were higher than Japan. What makes for low quality education is the way in which teaching and learning is carried out.

### *Sources of Funds*

From 1995-7, the Department received grants from UNFPA, UNESCO, the European Union, and the French government for writing and publishing textbooks on the Social Studies program for primary and secondary schools.

From 1995-2001, the department received donations from UNICEF for writing and publishing textbooks for the subjects of Khmer Language and Science for primary and secondary schools. The students of primary and secondary schools in Cambodia could borrow books annually, at a ratio of one copy for each subject per student at primary school and one copy per two students at lower secondary school. High school students were required to buy the textbooks published by the Ministry of Education because this sector was granted funds only for writing not for printing.

All the books for different subjects were edited by experts supported by UNICEF. The department used the credit given by Asian Development Bank for writing and publishing. The grant for writing provided \$40 per page but the writers received only 66% of this amount. The remaining money was shared among the management committee.

### *Activity of the Department*

In 2002, the Department commenced to improve teacher textbooks for primary school grades 1, 2 and 3 and for secondary school grade 7, 8 and 9. The improvement ideas were obtained from the users and teachers of those levels through pilot surveys.

Supplementary reading books for each subject, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, science, and the environment, were written by skilled teams.

In 2003, the Department has plans to propose that local teachers research and write about their particular region to be included in the textbooks of the Ministry. Such documents would teach local students about each region of Cambodia.

### *Problems faced*

The main problem faced was the lack of books for lending to students in the provinces even though the Department has an allocation policy as mentioned earlier. Other problems include:

- Students of primary and secondary schools need more supplementary books to help them in reading beyond the textbooks provided by the Ministry.
- Many mistakes were found in the Social Studies textbook for grades 7-9 but corrections could not be made because of lack of funds.
- There is still a lack of gender-sensitive books even though in 1999-2001 the Department's experts modified and re-oriented the content of the textbooks on citizen and gender studies for primary and secondary schools with supported from UNICEF, Human Rights Organisations, and Unesco's Culture of Peace program.

- Producing full-colour books is needed to make them attractive for students to read, but now the textbooks have only colour covers because the Department lacks money.
- The Department wants to publish books containing large and clear pictures but the overall size had to be limited, and many crucial pictures are too small.
- Dictation exercises were cancelled several years ago, but now it has been suggested that this is one cause of Cambodian students becoming weak in writing and Khmer language. Now, the Department's experts are discussing this problem and seeking a solution.
- The Department does not have a budget for curriculum textbook writing. The Ministry given it second priority, so it has not yet been included in the PAP (Priority Action Plan).

## KHMER WRITERS ASSOCIATION

### *Background*

This association was re-established in 1993 to continue the role of the old Khmer Writers Association formed by Rem Kin in 1954 and destroyed under Democratic. Between 1980 and 1992 another organisation functioned – the Kampuchean Writers Association – whose members included Phat Phanur, Touch Sing Hay and Kong Bun Chhoeurn, who was Secretary-General.

In 1993 in order to re-create the old Khmer Writers Association as a non-government organisation, two former members, You Bo and Sou Chamran, formed a working group and requested authorisation from HRH Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Chair of the Supreme National Council (SNC), and also from UNTAC as well as the authorities of the State of Cambodia.

In 1993, HM Norodom Sihanouk, the King of Cambodia agreed to be the honorary president of the association conforming the request of the steering committee.

From 1994-6, Mr. You Bo was the president.

From 1997-98, Mr. Chey Chap was the president but recently he was appointed Under Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and so Mr. You Bo who was Deputy President has had to play the role of president.

### *Membership*

In 2002, the association has on its books 192 members, but less than 100 of them are professional writers, while the others can write only in their spare time.

### *Awards organised*

One of the main activities of the KWA is to stage competitions for novel and poetry writing, as does the Department of Books and Reading. These competitions are advertised through mass media, radio and television and announced via provincial cultural offices, the Royal University of Phnom Penh, and the Royal University of Fine Arts.

The two main awards that KWA organises in alternate years are:

*Preah Sihanouk Reach Award:* The KWA has held this competition four times since 1995. The main topic of this competition is national unification and peace. They received about 140 manuscripts the



first time the competition was held, 70-80 for the second, 50-60 for the third, and about 50 for the fourth round, You Bo ascribes this decline in the number of competitors to the fact that writers become demoralised after failing to win in the previous competition and also because the Khmer Writers Association does not allow winners to submit manuscripts for five years after they have won an award.

*7 January Award:* This competition has been held 3 times since 1996 and has the theme of national development. The committee received from 110-120 manuscripts the first time, from 50-60 for the second, and from 40-50 for the third round.

The prizes that was awarded to the winners for both novel and poem writing were:

First Prize	\$1,000	with a silver trophy
Second Prize	\$ 800	with a silver trophy
Third Prize	\$500	with a silver trophy
Fourth Prize	\$300	
Fifth Prize	\$200	

The manuscripts were assessed by two groups of four persons each, one for novels and one for poetry. The manuscripts were evaluated in terms of three points: firstly, the approach, the style, and the aesthetic of writing; secondly, the honesty, virtue, and morality of the story; and thirdly, the utility, national value, educational value, and development value of each story. Each member was given a marking fee of \$10 per manuscript.

You Bo reported that among the 70 winning manuscripts, more than ten titles have been published, but lack of funds has meant that over 50 winning titles remain unpublished despite the fact that they all absolutely met the marking criteria of the committees and could be expected to compete on the market.

### *Writing Workshops*

The other principal activity of the KWA is to organise writer training workshops. So far 14 workshops have been held, with 325 participants, who were universities students, monks, and intellectuals. Among the 70 prize winning works mentioned above, ten were written by participants in the KWA writing workshops.

### *Budget*

The Khmer Writers Association has received grants from the following donors :

- H.M. Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia, for Preah Sihanouk Reach Award
- H.E. Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister, for 7 January Award
- Embassy of Canada and Great Britain for writing workshops
- Heinrich Böll Foundation in 1996 for publishing the winning manuscripts .

You Bo added that he had a number of ideas for what to do if the KWA received more funds. He would:

- increase the period of the workshops by one month because he thinks the present four month training period is short when compared with before the war when the workshops lasted nine months;

- organise a discussion forum for mutual exchange of ideas and experiences under the theme “the Peaceful Spirit”. The presenters would be well-known speakers from relevant institutions, government offices and NGOs
- publish all the winning manuscripts and ten unsuccessful manuscripts annually; and
- organise workshops on film-scenario writing and on conducting research on culture, history, and geography.

### *Problems Faced*

It is difficult to increase the amount and standard of writing in Cambodia today because of the lack of active investors and the low capability of writers. Mr. You Bo expressed regret that writers were unable to produce works that reflect the truth regarding each of Cambodia’s regimes, or to deal with issues such as literacy, poverty and corruption. He also bemoaned the small book market in Cambodia due to the low rate of reading, the low purchasing power of students and ordinary people, and the imbalance between expenditure and income. Revenue generated from book selling meets only 75% of the cost of publishing.

### *Suggestions*

You Bo offered three suggestions as follows:

- writers should research hard and improve their own knowledge in order to become real professionals;
- donors and investors should assist in publishing the work of Cambodian writers which meet the needs of the market and deal with topics such as morality in today’s society, poverty alleviation, the promotion of a peaceful spirit and globalisation.
- the government should give the opportunity for Khmer writers to understand the policy of the government by inviting them to attend national and international conferences or workshops organised by the Royal Academy of Cambodia.

## OTHER AWARDS

### *Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture*

To promote reading and to encourage children’s appreciation of books, Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture recently organised an open competition for new children's book manuscripts which in some way offer positive role models for children. This competition was funded by Kasumisou Foundation, and prizes were offered for manuscripts for children in each of three age groups: 5 to 8, 9 to 12, and over 12, as follows:

- First prize \$ 300
- Second prize \$ 200
- Third prize \$ 100
- Two Honourable mentions \$ 50 each

### *The Chinese Community*

The Chinese community grants awards to encourage writing among children. Five Cambodian winners in the 3rd World Chinese Primary School Essay Contest were awarded a two-week trip to China to attend the ceremony and participate in a summer camp organised by the China State Council for Overseas Chinese.<sup>36</sup>

### *Samohakam Phearin Chanpaka Award*

In 2002 Mr. Sam Subhearind, a successful writer who has won seven different awards from his eleven works, organised a poetry competition in order to raise the value accorded to Khmer literature and encourage professional writers. He used his own money to announce and advertise the competition and to provide the prize for winner. After broadcasting the announcement through Radio FM 99 MHz, he received 15 poetry manuscripts submitted from different provinces such as Takeo, Kandal, Kampong Speu, Stung Treng, and Phnom Penh. He was the judge of the competition. The winner selected was given a prize that he named Samohakam Phearin Chanpaka and \$10. Although the prize was very small this showed the high literary desire and the conscious charity of a young Cambodia writer in promoting this sector.

### *ASEAN Award*

Since 1999 ASEAN has annually offered the opportunity of competing for the certificate of ASEAN Winning Writer in Thailand. The initial jury committee is the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts of each country, which nominated persons who have made great achievements and of advanced age. Then one person was selected from among the nominees and sent to the jury committee of Asean, which reviews and usually approves the national selection.

The winner from each country is awarded a prize varying between \$3,000 to \$5,000 and also a certificate of honour handed to them by the King of Thailand. There is no further competition between them, so each country gets a first winner.

These ASEAN awards have been organised three times and the three Cambodian winning writers have been: Pech Tum Kravel, who has done a great deal of research and documentation on culture, arts, and the intangible heritage of Cambodia; Kong Bun Chhœurn, who has written many novels, songs, and film scenarios; and Mao Ayuth, who won the award for his poetry.

### *Overseas Khmer Writer Association (in France)*

This association has created several awards, including the Kram Ngouy Award and the Literature of Peace Award. Mrs. Pech Sangvar Van, the director of the association in France organised competitions for Khmer manuscripts from all over the world. However, she is not able to hold the competition regularly due to lack of funds, so each competition is organised every two to three years. The jury was composed of Cambodian intellectuals in France such as Mr. Vandy Kaonn, Mr. Soth Polin, Dr. Khing Hoc Dy, Mrs. Pech Sangvar Van.

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<sup>36</sup> *Cambodian Sin Chew Daily*, 5 August 2002.

In 2000 the association held an open competition for the award of Literature of peace, year 2000. The winners were awarded the following prizes:

First prize	\$ 1,000 US
Second prize	\$ 500 US
Third prize	\$ 300 US
Fourth prize	\$ 200 US (the honourable mention)
Fifth prize	\$ 100 US

For this award, all the winners were resident in Cambodia (not overseas Cambodians) and most of them were women.

## FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY ON WRITERS

We decided to survey three types of writers and writing: creative/fiction; academic/research; and technical/journalistic. A total of 64 writers were interviewed in the Khmer language (usually lasting approximately one hour, but some interviews lasted half a day or involved follow-up discussions and telephone calls).

The basic questionnaire consisted of 15 main questions (some with a series of internal sub-questions), of which 11 were devoted to their own writing background and experiences and four were more reflective questions concerning their views on copyright, on their own reading preferences, on the effect any awards they may have received had had on their career, and on their impressions on the state of writing and reading in Cambodia. A further four questions were asked of academic writers regarding problems facing researchers.

In addition to some preliminary and background information, this chapter will present the basic quantitative data on all the writers interviewed, as well as analyses of the qualitative responses to the reflective questions.

### SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

#### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Of the 64 writers interviewed 22% (14) were female and 78% (50) were male. Their ages ranged from 33 to 60 for females, and 24 to 71 for males, with an average age of 47.3 for females and 48.4 for males.

#### WHEN, WHY AND HOW DID THEY BECOME WRITERS

One third of the writers interviewed for our survey began writing in the past ten years, although one started over 50 years ago! Three began writing in the 1950s, nine in the 1960s, nine in the Lon Nol period (1970-75), none in the Khmer Rouge period, 21 in the People's Republic of Kampuchea/State of Cambodia period (1979-91), and a further 21 have begun writing since the Paris Peace Agreements of 1991.

When asked why and how they became a writer, they gave a variety of responses, which can be best conveyed in the form of a table:

Reasons	No. of responses
Personal background and attitudes	
Personal preference and commitment to writing	17 (6 fiction writers)
Natural talent	14 (4 fiction writers)
Want to become famous	8 (1 fiction writer)
Encouragement or orientation of the family	6 (3 fiction writers)
Habit of reading many books / listening to radio & watching TV	4 (1 fiction writer)
Become a more considerate and thoughtful person	2 (1 fiction writer)
Want to be a politician	1

Encouraged by Vietnamese lecturer in Hanoi	1
Because of diary writing	1
Do not want to waste free time	1
Socio-cultural benefit	
Want to make documents for reading / to contribute to written literature	14
Want to express the social reality	4 (3 fiction writers)
Contribute to constructing morality	4 (3 fiction writers)
Want to convey the experience and suffering of the nation /losing parents	4 (4 fiction writers)
To improve comprehension of Khmer culture / minority ethnic group cultures / recognition of national identity	3
Due to Cambodia's changing political situation there is a need for dissemination of ideas on democracy	1
Raise the visibility of Khmer culture	2
Want to investigate the root cause of problems in Khmer society	1
Work-related	
Need the income/ to make a living	6 (1 fiction writer)
Assigned by the ministry to write	6
As an academic is expected to research and write	6
Encouraged by NGO / institutions	4
Inspired to write following translating work / work as a newspaper editor	3

Hardly surprisingly, fiction writers tended to give a more altruistic rationale to their work, citing reasons that can be categorised as relating to socio-cultural benefit while work-related reasons were given largely by non-fiction writers. However, both types of writer ascribed the greatest influence to personal background and attitudes.

#### TRAINING IN WRITING

Some 64% of the writers interviewed had received some training or had attended workshops on writing. Of these, 70% had been trained by Cambodians and 49% by foreigners. The places of training varied greatly, with 80% reporting local training (12 writers at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, 9 at the Khmer Writers Association, 7 at various ministries and a single one reported training in writing at high school -- in Prey Veng in 1987), while a high figure of 44% had been trained overseas (8 in Vietnam, 5 in the USSR, 4 in France and one in the United States)

#### EDUCATION

Our survey population was extremely highly educated, as might be expected for writers, especially academics. Of the 64 writers interviewed, 65% had a tertiary education -- 18 writers held a post-graduate qualification and a further 23 held a bachelor degree, while one had a partial university education. A further 19 had completed senior high school, two had completed junior high school, and only one had only a primary school education.

In accordance with the prevailing situation in the population as a whole, the males in our sample had a significantly higher level of education than their female counterparts, only one of whom had a postgraduate qualification, and six of whom held a bachelors degree.

As to the distribution of educational level attained among fiction versus non-fiction writers, non-fiction writers had a noticeably higher level of attainment, accounting for 12 of the postgraduates and 15 of the bachelors.

#### TYPE OF WRITING

It is necessary to introduce this section with a mention of some problems we had in determining certain Khmer terms to be used in our interviews, after some discussion with our survey team and with others in the Steering Committee and the Khmer Writers Association. As in English, it seems that fiction (aksar sil) is more precisely delineated, and non-fiction is merely distinguished from it (aksar krao pi aksar sil). The term pralaom lok was used both for the novel form, and for romance as a topic.

Some 48% of our survey population reported writing only non-fiction, and 19% only fiction, while 33% wrote both fiction and non-fiction.

We asked our survey population to report separately on their writing for employment and for themselves, and found that 22% wrote purely for themselves, 27% wrote only as part of their employment, while 47% wrote both for employment and for themselves. Somewhat unexpectedly, while accounting for the smaller category of writing, fiction was written equally by writers who write only for themselves as those who wrote only for employment, and both fiction and non-fiction were written both by those employed and those writing for themselves.

As to the topics of writing within each category, the results showed an extraordinarily high level of consistency between subject matter for writings for an employer and for themselves, as follows (note that one author may report writing on a number of topics):

#### *Fiction*

Those who wrote fiction for an employer range over a wide number of topics, with the highest number (16) reporting that they wrote romance, while only 2 wrote detective stories and 1 wrote adventure. A high proportion reported that their fiction had a didactic purpose, covering topics such as morals (11), education (9), history (7), philosophy and religion (5).

Those who wrote for themselves covered the same topic areas romance (18), and only 3 wrote detective stories and 1 each reported writing adventure, science fiction, short stories and the traditional hand-written novel. A similar proportion reported that their fiction has a didactic purpose, covering topics such as morals (11), philosophy and religion (8), social issues (6), human rights (3), and gender (3), while only 2 reported writing fiction relating to culture and 1 on "reality".

#### *Non-fiction*

Those who wrote non-fiction for an employer range over a wide number of topics, with the highest number reporting that they focus on art and culture (11), philosophy and religion (11), good governance (9), gender (8), linguistics (8), history (7), environment (7), human rights (6), sociology (6), business and management (6), and agriculture (5).

Those who wrote for themselves tended to focus on some of the same topic areas: art and culture (9), philosophy and religion (6), history (6), gender (3), human rights (3), sociology (3), with a individuals writing on management, computers, tourism, agriculture, business and management, as well as literature and archaeology.

#### FINANCIAL SITUATION

It is abundantly clear from our research that writers are almost invariably unable to make a living from their writing. Only one writer interviewed reported being financially successful to this extent, and this probably accounts for the high percentage of our interviewees (47%) who wrote both for themselves and for an employer, while 27% reported writing only for an employer, and 22% only for themselves.

Of those 51 writers who wrote for an employer, 54% were paid on a monthly salary basis, 20% received no payment, 11% were paid a contract fee, and only 5% had earned royalties on their work.

As to the 44 who wrote for themselves, a high proportion (27%) reported that they make no income from their writing. The true percentage may even be higher, as three additional writers mentioned outlaying their own funds. The most common way of realising an income from their writing (31%) was to sell their works directly for immediate sale, 16% receive a contract fee and 14% sell their works on consignment. A further 12 indicated receiving some “other” form of payment, including prize money, and payment of 3-5,000 riels per article. Only 6 of these writers (14%) reported obtaining grants for their writing, and a paltry 2 individuals (4%) have earned royalties on their work.

#### PRODUCTIVITY

Our interviewees reported to us how many manuscripts they had written, and of those how many had been published, and by whom. These responses are hard to quantify, as some referred to entire books, while others referred to conference papers, chapters, or even newspaper articles. Our small sample of 64 writers reported having written over 1,000 manuscripts for books, novels or novellas, 300 songs, 36 short stories, 245 scripts, 24 poems, over 1,500 articles and 35 journal issues

An illustration of the fecundity of the writers we surveyed is shown from this sample of their output: “93 bulletins and 10 books”, “one novel and 200 songs”, “four poems and 29 novels”, “33 titles for myself and 160 instalments of a play for my work”, “73 titles”, “one poem, two novels and 1,000 newspaper articles”, “six poems, 30 songs and 30 religious books”, “68 songs, nine poems, six short stories, three articles and one reference book”, “90 novels, 70 scenarios and 30 short stories”, “25 novels, 15 video scenarios and three dramas”.

At the very least, our survey should lay to rest the oft-repeated assertion that Cambodians do not write!

#### THE “PUBLISHING” PROCESS

Most of the writers surveyed had most of their writings published in some form. Only three reported that none of their works had been published, while the others reported a total of 1082 items published (in addition to the articles).



However, the form of publication substantiates the weakness reported elsewhere in this survey regarding the production part of the book continuum. While only to be regarded as indicative, and disregarding those published in magazines or newspapers, our figures show that only 119 of these works (by only 15 writers) had been “given to a publisher who then takes responsibility for arranging the printing”. Some 61 works (by 8 writers) were photocopied in numbers of only 1-30 copies, while the majority, 446 items (by 29 writers) in numbers ranging from 1 to 40,000.

We asked our interviewees to describe the process they had experienced from the writing stage to printing, marketing and distribution of books. The responses to this question deserve further analysis, but they revealed a wide range of experiences, with a high proportion carrying out functions that would normally be considered the tasks of a publisher rather than an author.

Forty percent of the 64 writers interviewed themselves made the decision what to write; 19% were solely responsible for editing; 17% did their own layout and design; 14% did their own printing; and 10% undertook the distribution of the finished product.

#### TRANSLATIONS

We were interested in the extent to which Cambodian writers’ original works are translated, and also the extent to which writers are engaged in the translation of either their own or others’ works into or out of foreign languages. Of additional interest to us were how often permission is sought from the author or copyright holder, and how much attention is given to checking the accuracy of the translation.

Some 15 writers reported that their permission had been sought for their works to be translated, while two others reported that their works had been translated without permission. Only seven knew that any checking had been done for accuracy of the translation, and several complained that the translation was poor or parts were left out. As to payment, nine writers reported having received some form of payment, ranging from \$5 a page, \$20 for three short stories, \$100 and a gift, and \$500-600 for each novel.

Twenty six writers reported that they have undertaken translations of others’ works, but only 12 of these had sought permission, and only 13 of these received any form of payment for the work, including \$50 per short story, \$50 a month, included in the salary, 4,000 riel back in 1982, and two reported receiving assistance from Unesco for translation work.

Fifteen writers had translated their own works, with nine of these having the translation checked for accuracy, and eight receiving some form of payment, including \$100-200 per short item, \$100 each, travel and accommodation expenses covered and several reporting that this is built into their salary.

### **QUALITATIVE RESPONSES FROM THE WRITERS ON THE MORE REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS**

#### THE EFFECT THAT AWARDS HAVE ON WRITERS

Writing competitions have been held only for fiction and never for research or other non-fiction creative works. Among the 64 writers we surveyed, 21 had received a total of 70 awards for their fiction writing. (Thirteen of these award winners also wrote non-fiction.)

At least twenty two different awards had been won by our interviewees, with the number of winners among our group indicated:

Awards whose title was not specified (19)  
 7 January Award (14)  
 Preah Sihanouk Reach Award (7)  
 Award of Peace Literature in 2000 (in France) (5)  
 Award of the National Arts Festival of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (3)  
 Preah Suramarit Award (3)  
 Khmer Writing Association Award (3)  
 Award of the Art Festival of Phnom Penh Capital (2)  
 Award of the Nation-wide Writing Festival (1)  
 Award of the Nation-wide Literature Writing Festival (1)  
 Award of the Film and Video Festival (1)  
 Award of the Cambodian Women's Media Center (1)  
 Angkor Festival Award (1)  
 Viriya Bandito Pang Khat Award (1)  
 Asean Art Award (1)  
 Unesco Award of Culture of Peace in 2000 (1)  
 King's Encouragement Award (1)  
 Prime Minister Hun Sen's Encouragement Award (1)  
 Diploma of Author Hero (1)  
 Munisobhandhadhipadin Medal in Film, awarded by the King of Thailand (1)  
 Award of Radio Voice of China (CRI) in Khmer (1)  
 Award of Radio Australia (ABC) in Khmer (1)

The gift that winners received varied between Medal (gold, silver, bronze), cash, with the amount ranging from \$100-1,000, metal plate and money, materials (book, pen, motorbike etc.) and in addition to these awards they were awarded thirteen Certificates of Merit.

The interviewed winners mostly expressed excitement and appreciation with the award giving similar opinions on the effect such as:

- Gave great honour recognising their effort and struggle
- Illustrated the achievement of the goal
- Gave them the opportunity to share their knowledge among their own and younger generations.
- Gave greatest encouragement and a will to continue writing.
- Gave them glory because there were known by a lot of people, especially students, and they hope the book sells out when it is published.
- Gave great happiness because they received either honour or financial benefit.
- Became very excited and proud as a person representing the Khmer nation on the international stage and among other nations was provided with the greatest honour.
- Provided strong motivation to continue researching and writing until old age even though don't receive much material benefit from such of work.

However, some winners expressed concern about the low number of their readers, and the fact that their copyright was stolen by other entrepreneurs whenever their books were published. These were two reasons that caused winners not to risk publishing their novels, even though they had enough of their own capital to do so. Many award-winning works remain unpublished due to lack of capital and

investors. We remark that only four winners mentioned any concrete effect of the award on their careers.

Despite the fact that they themselves were successful, some 70% of the award winners expressed criticism of the judgement of the selection committee. However, all but one were quite guarded on this point and requested that their identity be not revealed. Only one man was brave enough to state openly that he was not happy with the award because of the injustice and blindness of the marking committee. Further, a member of one of the main committees told us that the committee members were aware of the anger of the competitors, but the committee really did not have any alternatives because "their hands were tied". Some of the responses given are as follows, with indications of whether they are a fiction writer (FW) or non-fiction writer (NFW) or both:

*I enjoy being a well-known person but I do not dare publish my book for selling because I am afraid that people will steal it. (FW)*

*Many people know me, especially students, so I hope my published books will sell well. (FW)*

*Because I am famous, many people recognise me, especially university students. If my books are sold, I hope they will sell well when there is an effective copyright law. (FW)*

*Makes for fame and being well known, and will help me to be employed. Moreover, the award makes me proud because it is achieved by my own struggle and is tangible evidence of my capacity. (FW)*

One author was interviewed after the original analysis of the 64 writers was done, but we add here his comments, naming three benefits from receiving the award:

His books sold well because of his fame, and many people -- ordinary people and government employees -- knew him through his novels.

He was appointed to a higher position in the government even though he was still young.

A pretty girl that he fell in love with decided to marry him without taking time for further consideration because he was her very favourite author.

#### OPINIONS ON COPYRIGHT LAW

When asked their understanding of copyright law, many interviewees defined it as a law to protect the author's creative work and rights, even if the author has already died, protecting their works from plagiarism and pirating. They mostly supported the implementation of such a law in Cambodia because it could promote and encourage writers and researchers, as well as develop the writing and publishing sectors. Furthermore, this law could obstruct the illegal entrepreneurs who incur no costs in the creation of works, but simply exploit the authors. Further, they added if no such law existed, then the number of active authors would decline.

Ten informants wanted the copyright law to be put into effect as soon as possible. Four others expressed the view that the law will assure proper acknowledgement and bibliographic references when an excerpt of text or ideas of a particular author were quoted.

*This law is the life of the author. (FW & NFW)*

*It is an important means to encourage writing because it protects the authors' income. (NFW)*

*Prevent entrepreneurs from carrying out illegal activities and urge them to respect the law in order to maintain the value of the author. The copies are often quite different from the original, as white differs from black. (NFW)*

*If there is no copyright law, people who do nothing but pirate for their own business profit get the benefit. (NFW)*

*If there is no copyright law, it seems to encourage anarchy and exploitation of the authors' profit. (FW & NFW)*

*This law was created for the purpose of halting pirating which may destroy the original idea of the authors. (FW & NFW)*

*This law is long overdue. In civilised countries, copyright law was put into effect a long time ago, and is absolutely respected in order to protect the benefit to the author. Therefore, this law should be passed by the National Assembly and put into effect immediately in order to obstruct plagiarism and pirating, and to encourage authors devoted to research and writing. (NFW)*

Moreover, two informants emphasised that copyright law is important not only for printed publications but also vital to other types of creative work such as songs, music, painting, sculpture, film, and video. They added that the lack of such a law prevented the creation and production of new works in those sectors.

*If this copyright law is not introduced, the Khmer nation will not develop, which is reflected in singers simply repeating old songs while there are no new songs, symphonies or melodies being composed. (NFW)*

Five authors informed us about their personal experiences with intellectual property violation and their decision not to publish, fearing illegal reproduction. Those experiences included the following:

*My book, one title, was illegally reproduced for someone's private business but no measures were taken against the thief. (FW)*

*Two novels of the Khmer Writer Association that were entrusted to a printing house were sold widely in the markets before the association collected the books from the printing house. (FW & NFW)*

*I have a dream to compile a glossary of new Khmer words that do not appear in the Khmer Dictionary of Samdech Sangh Reach Chuon Nath. But I worried that after publishing it, I would not be able to recoup my investment because my work would be pirated. Therefore, I abandoned the idea. (FW & NFW)*

Conversely, one writer discussed the negative consequences of a copyright law, and another three writers said they were not concerned about plagiarism and pirating. They wanted their books to be disseminated widely in the country even though these works may be illegally reproduced without their permission. Because of the low number of research books and the low purchasing power of Khmer people in Cambodia, a copyright law would create barriers to books for poor students. One author said he didn't need to worry about pirating because his books were specialised, and only needed by a small group of academic experts.

*This law has two consequences: firstly, it makes expensive books inaccessible to poor students and secondly, it is good for the authors. I believe that songs should be protected by the law but to limit book publication has a detrimental effect on the education sector, and the number of readers and the capacity of students will decline. (NFW)*

*In the present situation, copyright should not be enforced, in order to facilitate the country-wide dissemination of books. But in the future when there are a lot of authors, plagiarism and pirating should be prohibited by law. (NFW)*

*I consider plagiarising and pirating to be a charity to serve the needs of students and researchers. (FW & NFW)*

*I do not care about plagiarism and pirating because my books are academic and technical in content so they do not sell well in the market. (NFW)*

*In the interest of improving the knowledge of Khmer youth, I have never cared about plagiarism and pirating. (FW & NFW)*

Among all the informants, four did not seem to understand the meaning of copyright, and four others gave the view that even if copyright law came into effect, no one would respect it because people do not respect the authorities and subsequently do not obey the law. A further three authors thought that the law was already in effect; another author had participated in the drafting of the law in the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts Cambodia and another stated that the law had no chance of coming into effect in the context of present day Cambodia.

*I don't yet understand the law. (FW)*

*I don't have confidence in the effectiveness of the law when it is passed, because Khmer people nowadays are not interested in respecting the law. (FW & NFW)*

*The copyright law is good but this country has serious anarchy. (NFW)*

In conclusion, many of our informants support the creation of copyright law, especially commercial writers of both fiction and non-fiction. But we found a few non-fiction writers who expressed negative views regarding the effect of this law and stated that there is no need for it. We can conclude here that the lack of the copyright law in Cambodia is seen by the authors interviewed as one of the greatest concerns facing writers as a whole.

#### IMPRESSIONS REGARDING THE STATE OF WRITING AND READING IN CAMBODIA

In probing this broad topic we asked three sub-questions:

What are your impressions regarding the state of writing and reading in Cambodia?

What do you think are the problems for writers in Cambodia? and

Do you have any comments/suggestions regarding reading and writing in Cambodia?

The responses to these three questions showed considerable overlap, with as they see the overall state of reading and writing as being very weak, and this weakness relates directly to the problems they face.

##### *a) What are your impressions regarding the state of writing and reading in Cambodia?*

Firstly, the level of income for writers is low, which makes it impossible for them to support their families. Most writers are not concentrating on their writing and research because they need to supplement their income with other employment to feed their family.

*Writers generate income to support their livelihood through many jobs, and so they do not have time to research and writing. (FW & NFW)*

*Most researchers and writers also want to conduct their own research, but they lack the budget to carry it out. (NFW)*

*They have no hope to earn an income from their writing. (FW & NFW)*

Secondly: writing and researching in Cambodia is still limited in both quality and quantity because of its poor education system. Research institutions such as the Royal Academy of Cambodia

were only established recently. Most writing lacks any basis in contemporary reality, gives no references, and fails to meet any standards. This is particularly evident with regard to textbooks, which are of poor quality.

*Many spelling mistakes and unreliable quotes. (NFW)*

*Some writing is done only for money, not serving the interests of the society. I would like writers to concentrate their attention on our social problems, such as glue sniffing children and corruption. (FW)*

*Some writers and researchers express too many of their personal perspectives and give no reliable references, making their writings ungrounded in reality. (NFW)*

*Textbooks published by the Ministry do not include references to the sources used. As a result, teachers lack references to recommended reading materials.... Sometimes this leads to confusion because different readers interpret the text in different ways. (NFW)*

*Lack of human resources (scholars and Khmer writers). In fact there are some people who have the capacity to write, but they cannot generate money from their writing, so they have decided to do other jobs, and this leads to a decrease of writing in Cambodia. (NFW)*

Thirdly: there is a great lack of documents in most sectors due to the civil war and the shortage of writers and researchers. There is a lack reference materials to assist writers in their work, especially in Khmer, and many authors' understanding of foreign languages is still limited so they cannot utilise foreign language sources.

*At present, the writers of textbooks lack reference documents and they have to find out everything by themselves. (NFW)*

*Because the civil war raged in this country for a long period, there are few reading materials available in Cambodia. (FW & NFW)*

Some other points on the state of writing were made by small numbers of those interviewed, or even by only one:

*The works of writers may be classified into two categories: conscientious works that serve the interests of the nation, but not many people want to buy them for reading; in contrast, people want to read the works that were written for money only, and that serve immoral purposes which are dangerous to the society. (FW)*

*Some people always talk about copyright, but they themselves copy from others for their own profit. (FW & NFW)*

*If we want to develop our country, we must strengthen our national researchers. There can be no sustainable development without research. (NFW)*

*Writers dare not write the truth, even though there is almost no threat to them for doing so.*

*Writers in Cambodia are not only working to benefit themselves, but they also want to produce documents for the interest of the nation.*

*It is hopeless to make a living from writing and researching because many people are just waiting to copy from others.*

*Researchers in Cambodia have confidence only in publications from Europe, and ignore documents published in the neighbouring countries such as Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.*

*Today's writers and researchers are willing and interested to serve the nation. (FW & NFW)*

*There is almost no threat to writers, but still they are frightened. (FW)*

#### *b) Problems facing writers in Cambodia*

Writers raised five common problems:

Firstly: The reading market in Cambodia is small. because people don't want to read books, preferring to watch TV or video, and listen to the radio. There is no habit of reading for pleasure, with most only reading materials related to their work or studies. The illiteracy rate is still high particularly in the rural areas. The low standard of living of the majority of the population means that buying a book is a luxury.

*Decline in reading habits. For example, the library of the Ministry of National Defence contains thousands of books, but less than five readers come to use the library daily. The military personnel have plenty of free time, but they prefer to play cards or sing karaoke. (FW)*

*The increased availability of television and video has easily attracted people to watch television in their leisure time. Cambodian people who have low income are far removed from reading. (FW)*

*There is a small reading market and Cambodian people don't read. It is a custom that girls are not allowed to read because they might become immoral.<sup>37</sup> (FW)*

<sup>37</sup> It should be mentioned that the researchers working on the Publishing in Cambodia survey had different views about this notion. While the male researchers denied such a custom existed in Cambodia, one female researcher recalled having seen a neighbour chastise her daughter and burn her picture story book because she thought that the girl was whiling away time in dreams, and this researcher had another friend who said that she would never letting her mother know she was



Secondly: Lack of support from the government and NGOs to provide funds for printing, research, promotion of reading and writing, and development of human resources as well as support from civil society since few people like to read and spend money to buy books.

*In Cambodia, most writers lack funds to print their works because the printing companies do not buy them and neither does the government give support. (FW & NFW)*

*Compared to the requirements of the country, the level of researching and writing is extremely poor. Obstacles arise from the fact that there are no guidelines to assist researchers and translators. (NFW)*

*No encouragement and support from the government. They support only books that serve the policies of the government or people in power. (NFW)*

Thirdly: The need to adapt to the prevailing political trends, with most feeling that they have no freedom to write about the realities of society. Political motivations have an impact on writing, and even writing contests serve the interests of the sponsors.

*In writing competitions, the writers need to adapt to the interests of the sponsors. This shows the economic influence of the sponsors. (FW)*

*Writers and researchers have come under some pressure, such as Mr. Kong Bun Chhoeurn who wrote a story criticising a senior government official. He fled to another country for his personal security. (NFW)*

*Writers have to adapt to political trends, making writers themselves lose their value and identity because they do not write the truth. (NFW)*

*Another thing is a political issue. Now, there is a problem of history textbooks for grade 12. Because the book seemed to favour the Cambodian People's Party, the pro-Funcinpec officials decided to withdraw the text and to suspend the study of modern history in school. The textbook describes events from 1979 to 1990, but it does not discuss events from 1990 to the present. (NFW)*

Fourthly: the high cost of printing. Writers who publish their own books complained about the high cost of printing in Cambodia. Writers were not able to earn a profit by selling their books because people do not have much money to buy them.

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reading fiction. It is said that if their daughters read books they might become immoral, and if they learn to write they may write love letters.

*The amount received does compensate for the initial capital expended. (NFW)*

*I used to publish books but they did not sell well and I have lost money. Since then, I have never wanted to do this business again. (NFW)*

*The cost of printing is high, requiring writers to invest substantial capital. Therefore, the unit price of the item is high. (NFW)*

Fifthly: The writers identified the absence of copyright law as one of the major problems they face, with most writers mentioning illegal copying of their works. As this issue was discussed above, we will not duplicate the responses here.

Other problems mentioned by one or more writers:

- there is no institution to review and edit their works;
- there is no standard for spelling and writing Khmer characters.
- people don't buy books because they have received books from some NGOs free of charge, which they see as lowering the value of books.
- one writer pointed that most of his books were about religion and not many readers were interested in them because they prefer to read immoral writings.

*c) Comments/ suggestions on Reading and Writing in Cambodia*

Most writers' comments related to six points:

Firstly, they rely on financial support from the government and NGOs to print their existing works as well as new manuscripts. Support could also come in the form of protecting copyright, promoting writing, and banning immoral publications. The government should build up human resources and encourage writers and researchers. Funds and documents should be provided to improve the quality of education from primary school to tertiary level. One writer suggested that students should be trained in writing from high school up.

*The education program must be clearly defined. Should we use multiple choice questions or writing like an essay? If we select multiple choice questions, it means that we kill the spirit of writing. (NFW)*

*Writers should have full rights to write or highlight the realities in our society, in particular the government should support this right [to freedom of expression]. (NFW)*

*Cambodia needs to be a real state of law to give warmth and encouragement to writers. If not, writers dare not fully express their opinions. (FW)*

Secondly, all writers and researchers should try to improve the quality of their writing in accordance with the grammatical rules of the Khmer language. Articles should have reliable sources and give references.

*Writers should not only work for money. They must think about the value of their writing and make it useful to the readers. (FW & NFW)*

*Improve the quality of writing to be similar to western writers. (NFW)*

*Writers should serve the interest of the nation and must have reasonable evidence to support their statements. (NFW)*

Thirdly, reading encouragement and development is needed. Suggestions included encouraging students to spend time in the library, developing literacy programs, producing quiz programs to be broadcast on TV, providing training for rural area teachers on how to use reference documents, publishing useful and relevant publications to distribute to the Commune Councils to use to instruct people how read.

*Promote a reading habit to all people by establishing the libraries, produce education programs to broadcast on TV. This would encourage people to read in order to answer questions in the quizzes. (FW)*

Fourthly, Cambodia lacks documents in the Khmer language. Our emerging Cambodian scholars should try to produce publications in the national language to help those who are not able to read foreign languages.

*In order to produce materials for people to read, intellectuals should try to write publications, even though there is still anarchy with much illegal copying. (NFW)*

*People who have the ability to produce books should contribute to national publications for Cambodian people to improve their capacity. (NFW)*

Fifthly, to arrange regular meetings among writers in order to exchange ideas and experiences.

*Establish a writers committee including new writers as members to discuss the positive and negative points of their work (NFW).*

*I would like to have a conference on writing to give an opportunity for writers to meet, discuss and exchanges ideas. (FW)*

Sixthly, the majority of writers returned to the issue of the need for the copyright law to be passed soon and be implemented effectively. This is the insistent need of most writers, as we have noted above.

In addition to these opinions held by the majority of writers interviewed, the following suggestions were each made by several individuals:

*improve quality by increasing training in writing and research methodology, and offer training in translating documents from foreign languages to Khmer;*

*organise more writing competitions to encourage writing and research;*

*publications should maintain Khmer identity and not steal from or imitate others;*

*establish a publishing institution in order to check writing and raise its quality prior to publication;*

*reduce import tax on materials needed for printing and writing to enable writers to sell their works at a lower price, and more readers can afford to buy them.*

We also received a number of suggestions by single writers:

- to expand the topics of writing competitions;
- to ask writers to meet the needs of the market;
- a printing press should be donated to the Khmer Writers Association; and
- the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports should withdraw old literature text books (such as stories like Tum Teav តុំត្បែវ or Phka Sroporn ផ្កាស្រពោន which are seen as leading to a passive tradition-bound perspective<sup>38</sup>) and replace them with new stories whose quality has been checked.

One notable point was a complaint from one writer that the present copyright law permits the purchase of the original manuscript at a low price, especially by film production companies, without paying any continuing royalty to the writer on future sales of books, videos or karaoke.

And one voice differed from the others regarding tackling the problem of the lack of a reading habit:

*We need to wait until people become fed up with watching videos and then turn to reading books I think that at present, it is not yet the right time, and we cannot do anything.*

<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that different interpretations abound, and in some eras these works have been seen to reflect a revolutionary view challenging such traditions and inspiring rebellion. Conversation with Judiciary Ledgerwood, 14 November 2002.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

Educational institutions in Cambodia face two main problems relating directly to publishing in Cambodia: inadequate research materials in the national language; and a lack of a reading habit among Cambodian people, especially students. Four additional questions were added to the survey questionnaire to assist understand the issues behind these problems, as well as to help find solutions for future development. These questions were posed to those 26 interviewees who are academics or researchers.

#### HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE INADEQUATE MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Of the suggestions put forward, 18 researchers support the translation of documents from foreign language into Khmer language and proposed assigning translation as a high priority. Another 15 researchers support doing research and publishing documents in the national language. Eleven researchers said that they would not be able to do these jobs unless they receive moral and material support from the government, involved ministries and NGOs.

*Translate as many good foreign-language books into the national language as possible.*

Interviewees thought it important to respond to the urgent needs of readers in the country. They feel for the past few decades in Cambodia there have not been qualified people or scholars who can publish quality learning materials, and neither is the level of scientific achievement enough to meet the needs of students. The majority of curricula and scientific materials published by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport were translated from materials in foreign languages or were modelled upon foreign curricula, especially from western countries.

Our interviewees made the point that takes less time to translate than to write books. In neighbouring countries of Thailand and Vietnam, researchers and academics have been able to successfully translate foreign materials to the vernacular language, in part through the aid of donor funding. In Vietnam, one professor admitted that copyright concerns were subsumed to the more pressing need of providing up-to-date materials for their people. These countries have been able to provide enough materials in their languages to meet the need of their people, and their approach should be implemented in Cambodia.

According to two researchers, such translation programs cannot be implemented properly unless they have a sound basis, including establishing an examining committee composed of those who are knowledgeable in the national language as well as in English and French, and who are experienced translators. This committee should identify books to be translated, prioritise the books to be translated and control the quality of translation. Translators also must be knowledgeable in both English and/or French and the national language.

These respondents were of the opinion that to make such a program work successfully, an appropriate salary has to be offered -- at least equal to that offered by private schools for teaching of \$10 per hour. Otherwise, no qualified translators would do this work. For instance, at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the government gives additional funds under the Priority Action Program (PAP) to support lecturers who teach overtime in the summer school programs. The

university was authorised by the Ministry of Finance to use some of this money to pay lecturers to write books or translate books into Khmer to support the lecturing program. The initial rate offered was \$3 per page for writing and \$1 for translating, although later the amount authorised for writing was also reduced to \$1 per page. So far, no lecturers have taken up this offer because they think it is too low, and they can earn more doing other jobs such as teaching at private schools.

*Must try to translate good materials from foreign languages into Khmer language because none of our Cambodian researchers nowadays are knowledgeable enough to reach the standard expected of a scholar. So, the quality of their work is still limited compared to those of foreign scholars who have already written books. (Translator).*

*Must group translators according to their skills in translating existing materials in foreign languages into Khmer language. This job is easier and faster than doing research, but the translators must be knowledgeable in French, or English and also in Khmer. (NFW)*

*The first step is to set up a translation policy. We should translate as many materials from foreign language into Khmer language as soon as possible and the translated materials have to be comprehensively publicised. The translation has to be done by those who have a proper understanding of the languages they translate because a written translation for publication is more precise than verbal interpretation, and we have to be careful with all the key words. (NFW)*

*Researchers should try to write and arrange reprinting of as many materials as possible in the national language.*

In this effort, two of our respondents felt that priority should be given to collecting oral histories, particularly among the aged who have much knowledge. Such research must be carried out urgently, to capture their memories. Otherwise much knowledge of culture and civilisation will be lost.

In addition, an important task is to collect and compile existing publications, as well as hand written materials or manuscripts about laws, customs, culture and Khmer civilisation. These materials should be reprinted for Cambodian readers, and to can help young Cambodians to know about their national identity.

Further, experienced lecturers should come together to form a national body to co-ordinate research and prevent duplication.

University lecturers should use facilities and computers in their offices to write up their teaching materials to become textbooks. If all lecturers do this every year, students will have sufficient reading materials in the Khmer language. The support of government in publication and research can lower the price of these books and generate extra income for the authors.

*At the meeting of Francophone countries I proposed to help develop a policy of preparing and training national culture including publication, and to help set up a co-ordinating committee working on publications, explaining Khmer and foreign cultures, and on preserving intellectual property rights. (FW & NFW)*

*We should group teachers who are skilled researchers and writers together and set up a training and research unit. (NFW)*

*The government should pay attention to supporting publication and research work like the Vietnamese government does so that our books can be sold at a cheap price and the writers can also make sufficient additional income. (NFW)*

#### LIVING STANDARDS OF RESEARCHERS AND WRITERS IN CAMBODIA

Twenty three respondents were of the opinion that professional researchers and writers cannot live on the money made through their research and writing, while three maintained that it is possible to do so.

*Professional researchers and writers cannot survive by depending on the income earned from their research work and writing alone*

According to one researcher, in France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, even the famous writer Honoré de Balzac likewise had inadequate income from his researching and writing work. Another writer remarked that in developed countries, income from writing is also insufficient, but their government devotes resources to support them. One writer optimistically stated that researchers and writers should have a conscience and not think only of money.

*Professional researchers and writers cannot live on the income earned from their work, but they can live on income from the government, foundations and from extra work. (Translator)*

*Professional researchers can earn enough for their living*

This is very rare for researchers and writers in Cambodia, but those few who can, say that if writers have enough capacity, they can receive benefits and can earn more in accordance with how much they produce, or they may be hired by NGOs or other institutions to conduct research or may receive funds to carry out their own research.

Some of our respondents seemed to be concerned about the “brain drain”, or loss of research talent, resulting from meeting the continuous demands by donors for surveys and applied research (including of course this Publishing in Cambodia project). Scholars are diverted from original research following their own interests to carry out applied research in order to earn a living.

*Professional researchers cannot live on the income earned from their work now, except if they are hired by NGOs to work on a certain research project. (NFW)*

## OPINIONS ON THE STATE OF READING IN CAMBODIA

(Note that this topic is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 below).

Twenty two researchers said the number of readers is low, while eight thought there are many readers. However, among the eight, only two gave an unqualified answer.

### *Those who believe there is a low number of readers in Cambodia*

Some of the reasons put forward by researchers/academics as to why there are few readers are:

- No habit of reading for leisure or for improving knowledge;
- People have lost the will to read because of prolonged war ;
- Poor living conditions, so they do not care about books;
- No understanding of the importance of reading;
- Technological advancements of electronic media and telecommunication such as radio, television, video, and cassettes make people lazy to read. They prefer listening to the radio or watching television and video to reading books by themselves
- A lack of libraries, poorly maintained and stocked libraries, and poorly trained librarians;
- Lack of reading material, especially in the national language;
- Low literacy rate, especially in rural areas.

*The number of readers is low because they have not had a reading habit since they were young and because of the technological advancement of electronic media and telecommunication such as radio, television, and video makes people who used to like reading prefer listening to radio or watching television and video. There are not enough reading materials, and good reading places. People confuse the National Library to be a flower shop. (NFW) <sup>39</sup>*

*Because they are so poor, they care more about their stomach. This is very dangerous for our nation. (FW)*

*There are very few readers and the librarians working at various libraries cannot provide services to meet the needs of the public. There are few materials in the national language. Those who speak foreign languages well rarely spend time reading in the library, and the readers are mainly students who have a limited knowledge of foreign language. (FW & NFW)*

### *Those who believe there are many readers in Cambodia*

Among the eight respondents with this view, only two gave an unqualified answer.

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<sup>39</sup>Note: this is because the garden around the National Library of Cambodia has for some years now been rented as a nursery in order to gain some small funds to supplement the staff salaries.



*There are a lot of readers and there are a lot of people who are keen on learning, but there is nothing to read. There are a lot of writers, but their writings do not meet the need of readers and the writing quality is not good either. As a result, the readers do not want to read. (NFW)*

*I think that nowadays there are many people longing to read even though they live in remote areas. For instance, people who live in Neak Ta Khlaeng Moeung village [in Pursat] are very old, but they like reading, learning and knowing about things and events happening. I used to take books, newspapers, and magazines for people over there and I observed that there were a lot of people gathering together to read those materials both day and night (when time permitted). (NFW)*

#### HOW TO ENCOURAGE AND DEVELOP READING, RESEARCH AND WRITING

As mentioned above our findings confirmed that researchers and writers in Cambodia face many difficulties. The suggestions offered to us are very basic: research needs high-quality reading materials; and researchers and writers need readers. These are interrelated so it is difficult to separate them from each other. However, we try first to discuss the responses focusing on reading promotion, and then on development of research and writing.

##### *Opinions on promotion of widespread reading*

Nine of our interviewees felt that the encouragement of reading is the responsibility of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the government as a whole, and NGOs. They all need to pay more attention to implementation through their agents who are teachers in the country.

Children need to be encouraged to develop a reading habit, and the habit of going to the library for life. Those who are studying at high school or university have to be taught by teachers or professors about the importance of reading. In some cases, they have to be forced to read and we can use many approaches such as:

*Teachers should share their reading experience and remind students of the importance and necessity of reading, especially at the library. (FW & NFW)*

*Teachers or professors should set homework related to reading or assign more research projects for tertiary level students. (NFW)*

*Implement the new student-centered approach introduced by Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. (FW & NFW)*

*Teachers have to cut down selling lesson notes to their students, a custom which makes students memorise and follow only the teachers' ideas, without developing independent thinking. This does not encourage students to read other materials. (NFW)*

More libraries should be established, especially at academic institutions. More mobile libraries are needed to meet the need of students and general public. This also involves:

- Funding for purchasing books and reading tools
- Funding to support libraries
- Libraries must have enough books to meet the need of the readers. Children's books have to be appealing to children. Books for adults have to have good content, and give education and benefit readers
- Library services have to be better provided.
- The libraries have to be in a good condition, with good sanitation and appealing.
- The means of book distribution to libraries in the provinces have to be efficient.

More people would read and teachers would have the motivation to teach students if their living standards improved. As one of our interviewees commented:

*Before Buddha reached enlightenment, he stopped fasting and ate food. And in 1995 Maslow pointed out the five basic needs of each individual. The most important basic need is being healthy, which needs eating enough food, meaning that before they want something or want to do something, they have to be healthy, and have enough energy to do what they want to. Therefore, they have to have enough to live before starting to think about reading. (FW & NFW)*

Two respondents suggested this is the responsibility of readers themselves who have to take their own initiative.

*The activity of reading requires commitment on the part of the readers themselves. (NFW)*

*Readers who have a conscience and are hard working in seeking knowledge by their own efforts are taking this responsibility. They especially have to try hard to study foreign languages such as English and French so that they can read foreign materials. On the other hand, researchers and writers also need to select carefully what they work on so as to meet the interests of readers. (NFW)*

### *Opinions regarding the development of research and writing*

To advance this field and as perspectives for its future development, a number of advanced researchers and writers interviewed gave comments similar to those they provided in the first part of this question, namely that upgrading research and writing activities is dependent on the government and NGOs as well as on researchers and writers themselves. When we tried to uncover the reasons why they do not do research we found that:

- They have few means for conducting research, especially financial
- There is no policy of encouraging research work, and it is not taken into account for promotion or for pay rise. Those who have not done any research have the same position,

the same opportunity for promotion, and the same salary as those who have done a lot of research. So lecturers are reluctant to do research.

- Many competent researchers at the Royal University of Phnom Penh work for NGOs, and say they do not have time to conduct research at the university.

*Responsibility of government, NGOs and various donors*

They need to give honoraria and financial support as incentives to researchers.

*To develop research work, we have to pay more attention to the development of higher education. In the modern world, higher education is the brain of the country. Research and writing books are the intrinsic duty of professors at higher educational institutes. In case they are unable to do research, the government will have to remove them from their positions. (NFW)*

*Before implementing development projects successfully, research must be carried out on key issues or consequences of the issues. (NFW)*

Therefore, in order to enable academics to do research the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport or the government as a whole has to:

*Prepare organisational structures and titles of academics as other developed countries in the world do. Give different ranks and titles to researchers and professors such as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer, and teacher, etc. (NFW)*

*Appoint each to a particular rank based on their publications and experience. (NFW)*

*Prepare salary scales. Even if the government has insufficient funds, they can be officially appointed to a position so that the researchers can get an official honour. By doing so, we believe that researchers will be more active because they want honour. (NFW)*

However, the first researcher quoted above said that he did not expect that the government would actually make such a law, or even if it were passed, the government would not be able to implement it effectively. Other suggested actions included:

- Intellectual property right law has to be enacted
- Supporting and training researchers, writers, and their work:
- All libraries in the country should be required to buy newly published books by researchers. By doing so, researchers and writers will become recognised.
- Support new discoveries in fields such as history, and archaeology and include them in curriculum so that students throughout the country are aware of them.
- Judging committees for competitions should be transparent otherwise awards will be valueless.

- Establish an organisation or an institution whose job it is to examine all research work. Its role should be to, help improve research work, evaluate research work and honour researchers, financially support researchers.

#### *Responsibility of researchers*

Researchers should write to satisfy the needs of readers. If they want to succeed in their work they:

*Have to have conscience, capability and experience in doing research. They have to pay much attention to the art of writing in order to attract readers. (FW)*

*Have to know about market needs or the interests of readers. (NFW)*

*Have to know their target readers in planning the content of their work. If the books do not benefit readers, the readers will not read their books. (NFW)*

*Have to know the economic situation, meaning they have to know about the living standard of their target readers and whether they can afford books. (FW & NFW)*

*Should assess market potential before publishing their works. They should publish a small number of books and place them at bookstalls to see if the public are interested in the books. When we know that readers are interested, they may publish more. By doing so researchers will not waste too much money. (FW & NFW)*

Research centres and individual researchers should formulate projects and to be committed to do research by themselves

*All research centres should draw up projects to submit to partner organisations or related foundations. When funding is available, they should assign their researchers to implement research work according to their skills. Independent researchers should prepare their own research projects or set up a small research team with a team leader so that they can ask for support from NGOs or other foundations. All research projects have to follow scientific standards and find capable and experienced researchers and appropriate financial support has to be offered to them because work at acceptable standards is needed. (FW & NFW)*

Aside from whether or not they receive financial support, individual researchers should make their own commitment to carry on with their research

*They should not only consider economic gains to be made. (FW & NFW)*

*They should first try by themselves, but if they still face financial problem, they may ask for help. We have observed remarkable recent developments, because even though the research and writing situation is still not good, many people wish to show their ability, regardless of their financial problems. (FW & NFW)*

Based on our interviews, research in Cambodia is in an unsatisfactory condition. Neither universities nor individual scholars generate research publications as they do elsewhere in the modern world. Research activities are actively conducted mainly by NGOs, or by the few research centres with national researchers hired by foreign experts who oversee or commission the project.

Two writers observed that in Cambodia nowadays, although the living conditions of writers and researchers are not so good, they still see positive signs. This is because they have the will, conscience and the hope of winning awards in writing competitions held every year and of gaining fame and popularity. These writers may become independent researchers and writers with full capability and competency. However, nowadays Cambodia still lacks such researchers and needs development in this field.

It would seem that many of our interviewees believe that writers can write more if they have more readers. On the other hand, if there are few readers, writers will also be loathe to write as they think they will be wasting their time, money and energy.

We conclude this chapter by remarking on recent research activities at one university.

In August 1996 and 2000 the International Conferences on Khmer Studies were held at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Seeing the large gap between the quality of national research and the research done by international or Cambodian foreigners, in 1997 a training program on research skills was commenced, with funding from the Heinrich Böll Foundation. The 'Training course on Cambodia socio-cultural research for lecturers' was for all professors at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, and has been conducted six times. Connected with this program is the Socio-Cultural Research Congress on Cambodia, which has been held four times since 1997, with the fifth congress to be held in November 2002. Some researchers have published articles in the Literature and Humanity magazine, and the Royal University of Phnom Penh has published a single issue of an Annual Bulletin in 2000, compiling its research publications.

However, despite the research training program, few local Cambodian academics have presented research papers at the above-mentioned international conferences, and it seems that their number is actually declining. Most of the presenters are from NGOs.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of 64 writers were interviewed through a questionnaire consisting of 15 main questions on their own writing background and experiences and on their views on copyright, on their own reading preferences, on the effect any awards they may have received had had on their career, and on their

impressions on the state of writing and reading in Cambodia. A further four questions were asked of academic writers regarding problems facing researchers.

It is abundantly clear from our research that Cambodian writers are almost invariably unable to make a living from their writing, with only one writer interviewed reported being financially successful to this extent. Most writers need to take jobs to earn a living and fewer than 5% have earned royalties on their work. One-third of writers handle the whole process of "publishing" and "marketing" their works themselves (principally photocopy and selling directly to friends and market stalls).

Productivity is high: our small sample of 64 writers reported writing over 1,000 manuscripts for books, novels or novellas, 300 songs, 36 short stories, 245 scenarios, 24 poems, over 1,500 articles and 35 journal issues, challenging the assertion that Cambodians do not write!

Despite poor living conditions and the lack of return to be expected from writing, there are many people in Cambodia today devoted to research and writing. They face the paradox however that most of their books are not published due to inadequate capital.

Awards and competitions are almost the only form of encouragement or promotion, but even many of the prize-winning manuscripts remain unpublished due to lack of capital and investors, and because writers say they fear the risk of copyright violations. Some notable efforts are being made to encourage and promote writing through training programs and competitions organised by the Khmer Writers Association, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the Department of Books and Reading, and other institutions, including a new award for children's books offered by the Reyum Institute for Arts and Culture.

Cambodian publishing faces a lack of active investors because of the small book market, not only because the Khmer language and script are unique to this country and its relatively small emigrant communities, but due to the low rate of reading, the low purchasing power of students and ordinary people, and the imbalance between the cost of publishing and expected returns.

Copyright was the problem most frequently raised by writers, and they expect that their financial situation will be much improved if and when the copyright law is passed and enforced. Several writers observed that strict copyright law could have a detrimental effect on the availability and price of reading materials, and may actually hinder efforts to promote a higher level of reading.

Some of our respondents seemed to be concerned about the "brain drain", or loss of research talent, resulting from meeting the continuous demands by donors for surveys and applied research, and the continuing need for researchers to find paying jobs.

Writers reported that they translated other writers' work, but less than half of these had sought permission from the original author, while their own works were also translated sometimes without permission. Seldom was any royalty or payment made to the original author for translation and publication of their work, nor any serious attempt made to check the accuracy of the translation.

We should make reference here to the fact that foreign language training is one of the most highly sort after educational programs in Cambodia today, with private schools abounding, and most tertiary institutions teaching at least some of their program in either French or English. This is not the place to delve into the highly charged politics surrounding foreign language training. Suffice it to say that both French and English programs have been supported by a number of governments, and that Japan has a number of volunteer Japanese teachers in various institutions.

This was one of the first significant areas for Australian educational funding, with Quaker Service Australia working at the University of Phnom Penh during the 1980s, a program that later became the AusAID funded English language program at the Foreign Languages Institute at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. This program includes a translation component, as does the large Australian Centre for Education. The United Kingdom has also funded English language training.

France has supported French language as the medium of instruction in law, technology and medicine, and the French Embassy has established a highly regarded translation course, headed by Christophe Macquet, as part of a broader French and linguistics program at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.<sup>40</sup>

**We recommend that:**

- donors and investors should assist in commissioning and publishing the work of Cambodian writers which meet the needs of the market
- subsidise competent writers to enable them to continue to produce quality work, rather than to have to abandon it in favour of earning an income
- seek funds to publish all the winning manuscripts in various competitions
- organise more training workshops for writers and on film-scenario writing and on research on culture, history, and geography
- the government should give the opportunity for Khmer writers to understand the policy of the government by inviting them to attend national and international conferences or workshops organised by the Royal Academy of Cambodia
- educate publishers, writers and translators on issues relating to copyright and the draft legislation that is now with the National Assembly
- educate publishers, writers and translators on the need to seek permission and provide recompense to the original author
- school students should be trained in creative writing
- teachers should promote the importance and necessity of reading, especially at the library, including setting homework related to reading
- university lecturers should assign more research projects for tertiary level students, give required and recommended reading lists and cut down selling lesson notes to their students, a custom which makes students memorise and follow only the teachers' ideas, without developing independent thinking

**FOR ACADEMIC WRITERS AND RESEARCHERS**

- engage in systematic programs to select and stimulate the translation of foreign language material on Cambodia into Khmer
- encourage the generation of more material in the national language
- collect and compile earlier published national language materials, and develop programs for the selection of items for reprinting

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<sup>40</sup> It was this group that prepared a Khmer translation of *Le lotus bleu* and is now working on *Le petit prince* (to be published in Cambodia by Sipar) See chapter 5. Although a beautiful edition, the choice of *Le lotus bleu* as a response to Cambodian needs has been questioned by some people, with the \$5 price putting it out of reach to most Cambodians.

- introduce a national oral history program
- train national researchers to a level equal to that of foreign researchers
- improve the quality of research output
- educate writers and translators on the need to acknowledge sources used both in terms of footnotes and bibliographies
- the government should standardise positions and levels for academic staff, with defined obligations to engage in research and publication as a condition of appointment or promotion
- experienced lecturers should come together to form a national body to co-ordinate research and prevent duplication
- publishers and university lecturers should work together to write up teaching materials to become textbooks

#### FOR THE LIBRARY SECTOR

- funding must be given to libraries for purchasing appropriate and attractive books and reading tools
- an educational program for the development of professional librarians and information managers needs to be established within the Cambodian higher education sector
- library services have to be better provided
- libraries have to be in a good condition, with good sanitation and appealing
- adequate means of book distribution to libraries in the provinces has to be developed



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## CHAPTER 4 THE PRINT MEDIA

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### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

While Cambodia's rulers in ancient times proclaimed their achievements and regulations in inscriptions on stone and palm-leaf, the printed press in Cambodia commenced its activities only after French colonial penetration, with the earliest publications being solely in the French language and chiefly reporting official decisions and activities of the colonial regime.<sup>41</sup>

As early as the 1860s some news about colonial activities in Cambodia appeared in the pages of the press of Saigon and Hanoi, while it was not till several decades later that some journals focusing on Cambodia were established, including the *Bulletin officiel du Cambodge* (1884), printed in Saigon, *Annuaire illustré du Cambodge* (1890), the first periodical printed in Cambodia, and the first private newspaper *Le petit Cambodgien* (1899-1900) which was printed by lithography. The first type fonts of Khmer characters were cast in Paris some time before 1877, and missionaries in Paris, Singapore and Hong Kong carried out numerous printing activities around the turn of the century.

In 1911 the first official gazette in Khmer appeared, one that continues to this day as *Reachekech* (though during some periods known as *Rothakech*).

In 1918-1919 the first newspaper printed by typography was published, *La gazette khmer* (a Cambodian edition of *L'Opinion*)<sup>42</sup>, with other titles quickly following, such as *L'impartial de Phnom-Penh*, *La Gazette de Phnom-Penh*, and *L'Éducateur français*, with "the abundance of titles" indicating "not the quantity but the instability of the press" and most of which were still derivative offshoots of their principal printing house and publication in Saigon.

In 1926 the first solely Khmer language periodical appeared, *Kambujasuriya*, which again continues to this day. In 1929 a Vietnamese language version of *L'Echo du Cambodge* made a brief appearance, and several Chinese newspapers were published. In 1936 the first nationalist Khmer language newspaper appeared, *Nagaravatta*, which was published up until 1942 and included serialised translations of Chinese novels, and *Reatri Tngay Sao* (1935 to 1939), which serialised the early Khmer novels.

Following independence in 1954, the press soon manifested itself in two camps: those publications, such as the official news agency Agence Khmère de Presse (APK) and *Kambuja* (which is published again today) extolling the virtues of the government and the good deeds of the Head of State, Norodom Sihanouk; or

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<sup>41</sup> Most of the information on the press in the pre-DK period comes from Jacques Nepote, "Histoire de la presse au Cambodge, Présence Indochinoise, no.2, 1979, p.96-129, and Jacques Nepote and Khing Hoc Dy, "Literature and society in modern Cambodia", in Tham Seong Chee (ed.), *Literature and society in Southeast Asia*. - Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1981, p. 56-91.

<sup>42</sup> Letter no. 1312 from the Resident Superior of Cambodia to the Governor General of Indochina, 29 September 1919, not yet classified in the National Archives of Cambodia.

those of the opposition, which was closely controlled, as seen for example in the closure of Khieu Samphan's *L'Observateur*. With Sihanouk's overthrow in 1970 and the establishment of the pro-US Khmer Republic, the war in neighbouring Vietnam cast an ever longer shadow over Cambodia, and press censorship reached new heights, particularly against leftist or neutralist publications, while paradoxically at the same time an invigorated khmerisation campaign led to an increase in the number of titles published. Outside the country from 1970 until 1991 numerous bulletins of limited circulation were published by the many various exile groups.

The regime of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-79) totally controlled the press, as it sought to do in all fields. There were several official monthly publications, including *Yuvachun ning Yuvunarie Padevat* (*Boys and Girls of the Revolution*), which published its first issue in January 1974 and its last issue in November 1978 and *Tung Padevat* (*Revolutionary Flag*) published from January 1975 to September 1978.<sup>43</sup>

The Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation (Renakse) was formed in early December 1979 by rebel Cambodians and, together with Vietnamese armed forces, quickly overran Democratic Kampuchea. From its very beginning the Renakse paid attention to setting up press organs, including the official news agency Sarpordamean Kampuchea (SPK), whose earliest bulletins were roneoed in the jungle, and distributed to the world via Vietnam. Once in control of the capital city, the new government immediately installed SPK in its Ministry of Information compound, and SPK began issuing daily bulletins in Khmer, English and Vietnamese. Soon afterwards publication began of two newspapers, *Kampuchea* (a weekly organ of the Renakse edited by today's Secretary of State for Information, Khieu Kanharith) and *Kongtop Padevat* (Revolutionary Armed Forces). During the 1980s production of approved newspapers (both numbers of titles and copies) rose slowly but steadily, with some distribution in the provinces by government agencies. The governing party newspaper *Pracheachun* (The People) and the municipality's *Phnom Penh* (edited by Pen Samitthy, today editor of *Rasmei Kampuchea*) joined *Kampuchea*, each with a print run of 10,000.<sup>44</sup> During this period there was no opportunity for critical voices to be heard via the press.

In 1986 a number of political and economic reforms began to be introduced, including possibilities for private property and market operations, enshrined in the 1989 constitution of the State of Cambodia. Only three news publications survived the transition: *Kampuchea*, *Pracheachun* and SPK (in 1993 changed back to its original name AKP). After 1991 two new independent newspapers appeared (*Rasmei Kampuchea* and *Koh Santepheap*), which broadly speaking supported the government of the day ; soon a host of others burst onto the streets, with a wide range of political opinion expressed. A number of newspaper editors and journalists were killed or kidnapped, allegedly for political reasons, although sometimes extortion and graft may have also been involved. During the period between the elections of 1993 and 1998, five journalists were reported killed, but mercifully none during the last four years.

## CONTEMPORARY SCENE

According to the Press Law<sup>45</sup>, newspapers, magazines and foreign news agencies are required to register with the Department of Media, Ministry of Information. While there is no requirement for registration of

<sup>43</sup> This section on Democratic Kampuchea based on George Chigas and Dmitri Mosyakov "Literacy and Education under the Khmer Rouge (Featuring an overview of Revolutionary Flag Magazine)" published on the website of the Cambodian Genocide Program, Yale University <http://www.yale.edu/cgp>

<sup>44</sup> See Tauch Chhuong, "Les publications au Cambodge après 1980" in *Bilan et perspectives des études khmères*, (ed. Pierre L. Lamant). - Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997, p 43-61.

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix E.

internal bulletins for free distribution, many of these have also registered. The October 2002 figures showed a total of 160 national (Khmer language) newspapers, 36 foreign (language) newspapers, 42 magazines, 19 bulletins and 12 foreign news agencies.

On July 4, 2002 by declaration No 126/02 of the Ministry of Information, 29 newspapers and 18 magazines had their publishing licenses cancelled because they had violated the conditions of their registration to deposit copies with the Ministry and the National Library of Cambodia, and/or to publish their newspapers regularly according to the schedule that they had provided to the Ministry before being issued a publishing license.

The Open Forum of Cambodia publishes weekly reports on "Khmer language newspaper production", with a graph indicating the weekly tally of number of the newspaper titles and number of different issues published over the previous year. From 1 September 2001 to 31 August 2002 a total of 3160 separate issues were reported, averaging 61 issues per week from an average of 27 titles per week. The highest figures reported in a single week were 80 issues, and 41 titles, while the lowest were 14 issues and 6 titles (over Khmer new year).<sup>46</sup>

#### JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATIONS

A phenomenon to be noted is the presence of some seven associations of journalists in the country, quite in line with the proliferation of NGOs in every field, principally resulting from external donations and encouragement. While to some extent they may play the role normally understood for a professional association or a trade union, in many cases they serve more as a means of political expression of an individual or group. When the two most recent associations were founded in 2001, their presidents were asked why it was necessary to have more than the then existing five associations. They replied that "they will be invited to visit abroad, and ... during elections, political parties will hire them to promote their campaigns".<sup>47</sup>

The associations are:

- Khmer Journalists Association (est. 1979)
- Union of Independent Journalists
- Cambodian Association for Protection of Journalists
- Club of Cambodian Journalists (president Pen Samitthy, editor of *Rasmei Kampuchea*)
- League of Cambodian Journalists
- League of Cambodian Free and Neutral Journalists. (est. 2001, president Chea Song, publisher of *Samleng Yuvachun Khmer*)
- League of Independent Journalists for Democracy and Help in Poverty Alleviation (est. 2001, president Khun Ngao, publisher of *Samleng Thmey*)

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<sup>46</sup> Calculation made by PIC from a spreadsheet provided by the Open Forum.

<sup>47</sup> *Rasmei Angkor*, v8, 407, 12 June 2001.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

We did not include questions about the level of education and training of staff in our survey, so we are able here to report only general trends gathered from our interviews with key informants and from other reports.

It is generally understood that most Cambodian journalists have come to their employment with little professional education, although many have been able to attend short-term courses and workshops, especially those offered since 1994 by the Cambodian Communication Institute (CCI), supported by UNESCO and the Danish government, by The Asia Foundation, by the French government at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, by the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS), and by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

In 2001 the Royal University of Phnom Penh established a Department of Media and Communications, and in 2002 offered accommodation to the CCI, formerly housed at the Ministry of Information, with the intention of providing more long-term and academic professional education for journalists and other media professionals

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Cambodia today has a vigorous press, which is considerably less fettered than most of the rest of Southeast Asia. As this report was being finalised Reporters Without Borders issued its first world-wide index of press freedom, on the basis of 50 questions. Out of 139 countries Cambodia was ranked 71 in order of press freedom, with the other Asean countries ranked as follows: Indonesia 57, Thailand 65, Philippines 89, Malaysia 110, Brunei 111, Vietnam 131, Laos 133 and Myanmar 137. (Singapore was not ranked due to lack of reliable information).<sup>48</sup>

As mentioned in the introduction, newspapers are the most popular form of reading material in the country. Defamation law in the past ten years has been extremely loose and many newspapers could be described as scandal sheets with crudely drawn cartoons that regularly carry racist or other inflammatory or denunciatory material. Even the most serious newspaper have front pages specialising in gory photos of accident victims.

The most common practice in Cambodian newspaper publishing is for a single individual to finance the production of a newspaper, often as a vehicle for his (all proprietors we interviewed were male) political views and/or a means to curry favour with one or other political current. Few restrict political comment and bias to explicitly labelled editorials, but rather this permeates much of the papers' content.

*Secretary of State for the Ministry of Information, Khieu Kanbarith, was reported as agreeing "that financial pressures make it difficult to have a truly free press in Cambodia. He said he had suggested a subsidised printing press and tax exemptions on newsprint to make papers cheaper to produce. When newsprint becomes cheaper. . . then you can say, "I don't want any link with political parties, okay, I can still run my paper";' he said. 'Then we can let the market decide.'"<sup>49</sup>*

<sup>48</sup> Molly Ball, "Cambodia ranked 71<sup>st</sup> in press freedom survey", *The Cambodia Daily*, 28 October 2002, p.17

<sup>49</sup> Beth Moorthy and Samreth Sopha, "Media hampered by links to politics", *Phnom Penh Post*, Issue 8/10, May 14 - 27, 1999.

Khieu Kanharith considers that newspapers are sometimes published merely to intimidate or extort payment from a certain entrepreneur or official. They are distributed only locally or even not at all, and once payment is made they disappear from view.<sup>50</sup>

In marking World Press Freedom Day 2002, the *Phnom Penh Post* reported

*“Pen Samithy, president of the Club of Cambodian Journalists (CCJ), criticized Article 306 in the newly drafted Penal Code as endangering the already vulnerable status of the country’s journalists. He said it could result in journalists going to jail over the stories they write. ‘Experience has shown that Cambodian journalists are vulnerable to defamation lawsuits without reasonable justification,’ the organisation noted in a written statement. Samithy said he was worried about abuses of the code. ‘Those writing articles simply should not be jailed, even if it is only for six days,’ he said, referring to the penalty in Article 306 that stipulates a jail term of between six days and three months for those found guilty of defamation.”*<sup>51</sup>

In 2002 several defamation actions were filed against journalists. As this report was being written, on 11 October 2002 opposition leader Sam Rainsy filed a suit against *Rasmei Kampuchea* for a story thought to discredit his party. Earlier in the month *Samleng Yuwachun Khmer* was ordered to pay a 1 million riel fine and 10 million riel in compensation to Phnom Penh governor Chea Sophara, and in April the same newspaper was ordered to pay \$17,500 to Mong Rethy Company, but the case was dropped after an appeal was lodged.<sup>52</sup>

The editor and a reporter from *Chakraval* (one of the newspapers surveyed) were arrested in September 2002 “for allegedly causing social instability and defaming two top police officials”. They were detained for two days before being released on the orders of the Prime Minister, who was reported as being “concerned about press freedom and wants to prevent abuses.”<sup>53</sup>

#### FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY ON NEWSPAPERS

We surveyed 24 newspapers during May to September 2002, as follows:

<sup>50</sup> Khieu Kanharith, interview with Publishing in Cambodia, 12 October 2002.

<sup>51</sup> Vong Sokheng, “Journalists seek code change”, *Phnom Penh Post*, Issue 11/10, May 10-23, 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Kuch Naren, “Sam Rainsy files suit against newspaper”, *The Cambodia Daily*, 14 Oct. 2002, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> Yun Samean, “2 journalists arrested for defamation”, and “PM ordered release of detained journalists”, *The Cambodia Daily*, 23 Sept. 2002, p.1 and 24 Sept. 2002, p.12.

## KHMER LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

<i>Areyathor (Civilization)</i>	អរិយធម៌
<i>Chakraval (Universe)</i>	ចក្រវាឡ
<i>Kanychok Sangkum (The Mirror of Society)</i>	កញ្ចក់សង្គម
<i>Khmer Mekong</i>	ខ្មែរមេគង្គ
<i>Meatophoum (Motherland)</i>	មាតុភូមិ
<i>Moneaksekar Khmer (Khmer Conscience)</i>	មនសិការខ្មែរ
<i>Prachea Mati Khmer (Khmer Referendum)</i>	ប្រជាមតិ ខ្មែរ
<i>Proloeng Cheat (National Soul)</i>	ព្រលឹងជាតិ
<i>Proloeng Khmer (Khmer Soul)</i>	ព្រលឹងខ្មែរ
<i>Punleu Khmer (Khmer Light)</i>	ពន្លឺខ្មែរ
<i>Rasmei Kampuchea (The Light of Cambodia)</i>	រស្មីកម្ពុជា
<i>Rasmey Angkor (The Light of Angkor)</i>	រស្មីអង្គរ
<i>Samleng Khmer Snebacheat (The Voice of Khmer Patriots)</i>	សម្លេងខ្មែរ ស្នេហាជាតិ
<i>Samleng Sachak (The Honest Voice)</i>	សម្លេងសច្ចៈ
<i>Samleng Thmey (New Voice)</i>	សម្លេងថ្មី
<i>Samleng Yuvachun Khmer (The Voice of Khmer Youth)</i>	សម្លេងយុវជន ខ្មែរ
<i>Samrek Khmer (The Khmer Cry)</i>	សម្រែកខ្មែរ
<i>Sangkruos Cheat (Save the Nation!)</i>	សង្គ្រោះជាតិ
<i>Sereypeap Thmey (New Freedom)</i>	សេរីភាពថ្មី
<i>Tuossanak Khmer (Khmer Opinion)</i>	ទស្សនៈខ្មែរ
<i>Utdamkati Khmer (Khmer Ideals)</i>	ទុត្តមគតិខ្មែរ

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

*Cambodge Soir* (French)

*Jin Hua* (Chinese)

*Phnom Penh Post* (English)

As can be seen from the above list, we surveyed 21 Khmer language and three foreign language<sup>54</sup> newspapers - one each of English, French and Chinese. Despite the sizeable Vietnamese population, we

<sup>54</sup> *The Cambodia Daily* declined to be interviewed

found no Vietnamese language newspapers published in Cambodia, although we understand that previously there was one. A bookshop in the Association of Overseas Vietnamese in Phnom Penh imports 28 newspapers (average 50 copies each) and 10 magazines (average 3-5 copies each) by tourist bus from Ho Chi Minh City three times a week. The major Thai daily newspapers (English and Thai language) also circulate in hotels and through certain other outlets and individual newspaper sellers.

We came across two photocopied local Korean language publications, *The Cambodia News* and *The Cambodia Christian Times*.

Our interviews were largely with the editor-in-chief or proprietor, although several were with other administrative staff.

For more details on the basic facts regarding each publication, see Table 4.1 at the end of this report. The following represents summary data from the 24 newspapers surveyed.

### *Basic data*

A notable fact regarding newspapers in Cambodia is that, according to our information, none are currently published outside the capital city. Twenty two among the 24 interviewed have their offices in Phnom Penh and two have their offices just outside the city in Kandal province.

The number of staff in the newspaper organisations interviewed range between one and 72 with an average of 15.

The number of pages range between four and 20, with the overwhelming majority (18) being only four pages. Broadsheet (60cm x 84cm) is the most popular size (19), with one each of super size, tabloid and A4, and two of smaller size. Only four among the 24 were printed with some colour.

The frequency of newspapers varied between daily / six days a week (7), twice a week (4), three times a week (2), weekly (7), fortnightly (2) and irregular (2). It should be noted that the newspapers interviewed were selected partly because of their popularity and regularity, so our results are not a reflection of the overall situation of Cambodian newspapers, most of which are highly irregular.

The number of copies printed ranged between 750-18,000 with an average of 3,000 per issue. This average rather overstates the norm, as it is inflated by the print run of *Rasmei Kampuchea* of 18,000. The next highest print run is 4,500 reported by *Jim Hua* and *Khmer Mekong*, with an average of 559 copies per issue returned unsold (ranging between zero for four newspapers and 1,950).

### *Readership*

The interviewees reported that their main readers are: general public (17), students (12), government workers (10), business persons (7), and monks (3). Other types of readers reported include politicians (2), "investors from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong" (1) and "the future elite, NGOs and foreigners" (1). Note that respondents were able to indicate more than one type of main reader.

We asked if the newspaper editors had an estimated average number of readers per copy, and two-thirds of them gave estimates ranging between two and ten, mostly indicating five (6) or four (3) readers per

copy. Of those who gave estimates, only one said it was a guess, while the others cited surveys and analysis including by distributors (2) and by marketing students from the National Institute of Management.

One feature of Cambodian newspaper reading habits is for people without the money, time or inclination to buy instead to rent a newspaper or magazine, generally at a coffee or noodle stall, or simply to stand and read at the kiosk where newspapers are on display hung up by clothes pegs. In our interview we asked the newspaper editors or proprietors what they thought about this practice. 36% were happy and saw that most rentals were not likely to be a lost purchase. The same percentage were neutral, while 18% expressed anger, seeing it as a loss of income, and 9% did not comment.

### *Content*

The selection of what stories to cover was reported as made by the director (9), the editor-in-chief (3), jointly by director and editor-in-chief (3), by the publishing editor (3) and at least sometimes by the individual writer or reporter (2), or these people as a group (3).

It is widely believed that Cambodian newspapers accept payments in return for publishing specific stories, and this is borne out by our interviewees, nine of whom said they follow this practice, while 13 said they did not. During our survey this issue gained some attention in the press, with STAR Kampuchea accused of paying money to journalists to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> Workshop on Election and Equal Rights Information, held on 20 September 2002, although the organisers initially defended themselves saying “it wasn’t for good reviews in local papers: ‘It was for travel [costs]’.”<sup>55</sup> But later, Nhek Sarin, Executive Director of STAR Kampuchea, said that “...it is unfortunately true. Due to low salaries, Cambodian journalists usually demand money to report from workshops and conferences”, and that, after pressure from the participants, they were each given 5,000 riel, but informed that this is the last time that cash will be given.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to the main copy provided by their staff writers, 14 newspapers reported that they accepted copy from freelance writers (of whom six were paid by story, three were paid by words and five were not paid at all). While we did not ask the amounts paid, one Khmer language newspaper reported that it pays around \$5 to \$10 per article and \$1 to \$3 per photograph.

An aspect that was of particular interest to us, as a vehicle for publishing used in the past in Cambodia, as well as today in other countries (such as Indonesia) is the practice of serialisation. Of the Cambodian newspapers surveyed, nine newspapers reported serialising non-fiction books (*Samleng Yuvachun Khmer*, *Utdam Kati Khmer*, *Khmer Mekong*, *Samleng Sachak*, *Pracheacheat Khmer*, *Rasmei Angkor*, *Rasmei Kampuchea* and *Phnom Penh Post*) and five serialising fiction books (*Sangkruos Cheat*, *Arejathor* and *Punleu Khmer*). An additional feature is poetry, which *Koh Santepheap* (not interviewed) publishes frequently, although apparently it has discontinued an earlier attempt at a regular culture section.

*Rasmei Kampuchea* was the only newspaper interviewed to have a substantial section devoted to art, culture and sports, which includes regular serialisation of major and recent titles, especially on Cambodian history.

Of the newspapers surveyed the majority (18) reported translating stories from foreign language sources, with these translated stories amount to up to 40% of the total content of the newspaper. The sources were reported to be "foreign language newspapers" (9) with particular mention made of the *Phnom Penh Post*, *The*

<sup>55</sup> Pin Sisovann, “Some press paid at seminar on free media”, *The Cambodia Daily*, 21-22 Sept. 2002, p.3.

<sup>56</sup> Nhek Sarin, letter to the editor, *The Cambodia Daily*, 26 Sept. 2002, p.15.



*Cambodia Daily*, *The Nation* and the *Bangkok Post*, CNN, *Le Monde* and *Rasmei Kampuchea* (translated into Chinese), as well as news agencies and radio.

All but two of these reported that they did not seek permission from either the original writer or publisher, nor did they even acknowledge the source. Editors of the newspapers from which both written and photographic materials are taken understandably expressed considerable outrage at this practice, and have often complained, at times attempting to seek legal redress and compensation. However, in the absence of an effective copyright regimen in Cambodia, this is seldom forthcoming.

Cambodian newspapers are notorious for their poor quality of (re)production and of content. Misspellings and numerical inaccuracies are rife. More serious is the common practice of publishing unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations against prominent business people and politicians. In response to our questions, ten newspapers reported that the directors or editor-in-chief were totally responsible (including the content and accuracy of each article, spelling and grammar, and for the final issue), while three reported that their editors-in-chief were responsible, six had a group responsible for correcting and checking, and one newspaper followed the practice of asking the individual writers to check for themselves, while the editor-in-chief and proprietor would nevertheless bear legal responsibility under the Press Law.

#### *Price and cost of production*

Despite the wide disparity in format and number of copies printed, the price of the newspapers surveyed was highly consistent, with all the Khmer-language newspapers having a cover price of 700 riel, one (French-language) selling for 1,500 riel and another (English-language) selling for 3,500 riel. Sales revenue was reported as constituting from 13 to 97% of total income. Five newspapers were not prepared to comment about their income, and two were distributed free of charge.

Only three newspapers reported receiving some kind of outside financial support, while 21 reported that they were self-financed (in all but one case by the director) with only one newspaper reporting an operating profit.

Nineteen newspapers reported that they sell spaces for advertisement, and that the revenue from this ranged between three and 80% of their total income. Twelve newspaper organisations have a marketing team (from one to six people) to seek advertisements, ten of whom pay a percentage (up to 30%) of the cost of an advertisement that they secure, while two were paid a monthly salary.

The Open Forum of Cambodia publishes weekly reports in its twin publications *The Mirror* and *Kanychok Sangkum* on advertising in the Khmer language press, indicating the tally of "The Top Ten Companies Advertising in Khmer Language Newspapers" and "The Top Ten Khmer Newspapers in Total Advertising". The latest tally reports on the period 13 to 19 October 2002, showing extreme competition in what is still a small industry of less than ten years in age, but growing fast.

*This past week 84 (9 more than last week) different companies advertised in Khmer language newspapers (excluding classified and real estate advertisements). The total number of column centimetres for all advertisers in all newspapers (excluding classified ads) was 15,286 col.-cm., more than 49 full pages. The top ten advertisers accounted for 41% of all advertising in Khmer newspapers last week (6,274 col.-cm.).*

*Of the 23 newspapers that published any issues last week, 12 (52%) had one or more advertisements, while 11 had no advertisements at all. The top 10 newspapers carried 15,128 col.-cm. of advertising – 99% of all advertising placed with Khmer language newspapers in Phnom Penh. Rasmei Kampuchea alone carried 41% of all advertising.<sup>57</sup>*

Although most of the advertisements are for commercial products and services especially in telecommunications, seventh place in that week was held by the National Institute of Management, reflecting the recent popularity in private tertiary education reported in Chapter Two above.

The small scale of production of most Cambodian newspapers is reflected in the fact that only six were produced in house, while eighteen were sent to outside printing houses, including to Sopheap Mongkul (9), Rasmei Angkor (2), Japan Printing House (1), Entry Meas and Kim Long (1), Santepheap (1) and the Khmer-Chinese Association (1). Some twelve newspapers offered publishing services to private companies and individuals as outside jobs, which accounted on average for 10% of their turnover (ranging between five and 25%)

While publishing of newspapers was wholly restricted to Phnom Penh, there are some limited attempts at distribution at least to the major population centres in the country, as follows:

*Number of newspaper titles distributed, by Province and Municipality:*

Phnom Penh: 24  
 Sihanoukville: 21  
 Siem Reap: 21  
 Battambang: 20  
 Kampong Cham: 21  
 Kandal: 19  
 Banteay Meanchey: 18  
 Kampot: 15  
 Svay Rieng: 13  
 Kampong Chhnang: 13  
 Koh Kong: 13  
 Kampong Speu: 12  
 Kampong Thom: 12  
 Takeo: 12  
 Pailin: 11  
 Pursat: 11  
 Kep: 8  
 Kratie: 8  
 Oddar Meanchey: 6  
 Preah Vihear: 6  
 Prey Veng: 11  
 Mondul Kiri: 4  
 Ratanak Kiri: 4  
 Stung Treng: 4  
 Overseas: 3

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<sup>57</sup> *The Mirror*, 13-19 October 2002, p.15.

The reasons given for not distributing to some provinces include: newspapers do not have agents in those provinces (32%) and difficulty in sending newspapers and collecting the money from the sellers (18%). One newspaper reported having experienced official interference in distribution, but gave no details as to where and when or whether this was an isolated or a regular occurrence.

As to methods of distribution, nine newspapers contract to a distributor, who brings back the money and the remaining unsold newspapers once per week for sales in Phnom Penh, and once per month for sales in the provinces. For this, the newspapers have to outlay on average 15% of the cover price as a distributing fee. By contrast, 13 newspapers undertake distribution by their own staff who bring both unsold newspapers and money back to the office approximately every two issues for Phnom Penh sales, and every one or two months for provincial sales (except one newspaper which does not arrange for the return of unsold newspapers). These distribution staff do not receive any extra fee in addition to their monthly salary.

Subscription services are extremely undeveloped in Cambodia -- not surprising due to almost total absence of secure mechanisms for financial transactions and the almost non-functioning public postal system -- and they are offered in rudimentary form by only seven of the 24 newspapers surveyed. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of Cambodian newspapers have yet to operate in the electronic age. Only three of those surveyed have published an electronic version, while, somewhat more surprisingly, only six gave email addresses, although email has been functioning in Cambodia for over ten years, and is now widely used (estimated number of Internet users in June 2001 was 8,000)<sup>58</sup>.

### *Problems faced*

At the end of our interview with newspaper editors and proprietors, we raised two major areas for more in-depth discussion. Firstly, we asked them to identify what are the principal problems they face. These were identified as: shortage of funds (36%), personal security (36%), intimidation (27%), insufficiently qualified writers (23%), political pressures (18%), the high cost of printing (9%), difficulty of distribution (5%), the high rate of import tax (5%). Other specific problems mentioned included low circulation, the small community of potential French language readers, and the difficulty of arranging interviews with important people.

Those reporting problems relating to security and intimidation may be from newspapers regarded as being in the camp of the opposition to the governing coalition parties, although it should be noted that in our survey we did not ask the political affiliations or opinions of those interviewed, nor did we attempt to assign to the newspapers a label of pro or anti government.

### *Comments or suggestions*

Finally, we asked the interviewees if they had any comments or suggestions regarding newspaper/magazine publications in Cambodia. Comments included:

- To create a printing association for newspapers with the aim to lower printing
- To develop democracy
- To financially assist newspaper publishers

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<sup>58</sup> Khmer Internet: Cambodia case study, p 13.

- To encourage people to understand the need to read
- To improve the standard of living of people so they are able to buy a newspaper
- To encourage the government to support the media
- To hold frequent workshops or training programs for reporters and relevant staff

And, directed at Publishing in Cambodia –

- Please provide some relevant documents to us after your workshop is finished.

## FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY ON MAGAZINES

For the purposes of our research, we classed magazines into one of two categories: general or academic. General magazines include both commercial magazines and magazines financially supported by the governmental budget through their parent institutions.

Excluded from our survey was the large number of internal bulletins or magazines produced by local and international NGOs and some inter-governmental bodies, which are distributed free of charge either internally, or to partner or related agencies, and which are not required to be registered at the Ministry of Information. Most of these bulletins are limited in content to material describing the activity of the organisation, while others, such as the review of the Center for Social Development, include more substantive reports of research. As mentioned in our introduction, the focus of the PIC survey was on potentially commercial publishing as well as scholarly publishing, and so these NGO publications, which are almost totally dependant on the external funds, were not covered. Of course a comprehensive study on publishing in Cambodia would need to include both the serial and monographic publications of these bodies.

### GENERAL MAGAZINES

As mentioned earlier, the general magazines were characterised into two different kinds;

- Governmental Magazines: Our survey included three of this type: *Kampuja*, *Akeak Me Banjeakar*, and *Keila* chosen because they are published more regularly.

- Commercial Magazines: Our survey included six: *Pracheaprey*, *Indradevi*, *Kulhida*, *PC World*, *Moming Mab*, and *Tam Tam*, selected due to their popularity, according to the field research of the students from NIM in 2000.

Before discussing the above magazines, we would like to discuss briefly two periodical publications that were not included in our survey but deserve attention due to the fact that they are, as far as we have been able to ascertain, the only ones produced and largely distributed outside Phnom Penh.

Firstly, the bulletins of the SEILA (rock) program of government decentralisation and socio-economic improvement of the local commune level of administration, funded by UNDP. This program was part of CARERE for the first phase from 1993-6, and was carried out under UNOPS for the second and third phases from 1997-2001 and 2001-5. In this third phase, the donor is providing funds to the SEILA unit of the government under a Partnership For Local Governance, with the UNOPS functioning in an advisory, and no longer an implementing capacity.

The content of the bulletin focuses on the activity of SEILA for rural development, its achievements, technical information on agriculture, public health, and the decentralisation policy, and local information from the communities. They have been issued, beginning in 2000, either under the name of *SEILA Bulletin* or other names, such as *Decentralisation* or *Farmer*, and appear monthly or quarterly in 17 different provinces. These bulletins are disseminated free of charge locally and to other provinces in which the SEILA program operates. However, they are not distributed to all of the communes of the provinces. In 15 provinces they appear monthly, printed locally in black and white, in numbers ranging from 250 copies in Pailin to 2,500 copies in Battambang, while Siem Reap and Pursat issue quarterly colour bulletins printed in Phnom Penh.

Secondly, *Phka Rik*, (Flower in bloom) issued from Pailin since 1997, a quarterly magazine published by the Democratic National Unification Movement of Ieng Sary, former Khmer Rouge leader. The director and editor is Suong Sikœurn, former head of the Voice of Democratic Kampuchea Radio. Our researchers were unable to interview him either at his office in Pailin or his house in Malai in Banteay Mean Chey province, nor later by telephone. The person who received the call was reluctant to give out much information, except that the magazine is printed in Thailand and that the number printed of each issue ranges from 1-3,000 copies. Its contents focuses on the relationship between the leaders of the DNUM and the government, King and Prime Minister, as well as giving information related to the local economy, and to the policy of national unification and development.

#### *Magazines surveyed:*

1- <i>Kambuja កម្ពុជា</i> (Kampuja* -- Cambodia)	commenced in 1984
2- <i>Pracheaprey ប្រជាប្រិយ</i> (The Popular Magazine*)	1994
3- <i>Mom Ning Mab ម៉មនិងម៉ាប់</i>	1994
4- <i>Indradevi ឥន្ទ្រទេវី</i> (The Indradevi*)	1998
5- <i>Kulthida កុលតីតា</i> (The Kulthida Magazine*)	1998
6- <i>Tam Tam តាំតាំ</i>	1998
7- <i>Akeak Me Banjeakar អគ្គមេបញ្ជាការ</i> (Commander-in-Chief)	1999
8- <i>Keila កីឡា</i> (Sports Magazine*)	2001
9- <i>Leisure Cambodia* លែហ្ស័រខាមបូឌា</i>	2001
10- <i>Pordamean Vitya ពតិមាទិវិទ្យា</i> (PC World Cambodia*)	2002

\* spelling/translation used in the publication itself

#### *Personnel*

The number of personnel of each magazine ranges from 2 to 66, with an average of 12-13 employees. They carry out various functions such as reporter, photographer, writer, layout designer, typist, and for few magazines, translator. They mostly were paid a monthly salary.

The government magazines employed a higher number of staff than their commercial counterparts. To show the disparity, at the highest end of the scale 66 staff were employed to produce one 44 page monthly magazine (although that publisher previously also issued a newspaper) compared with a well-known commercial magazine with only 30 employees that publishes three times monthly, with 100 pages on average.

#### *Content*

The main contents of the magazines are generated from the staff in charge of writing, reporting, and translating. Besides their work, some commercial magazines bought articles and information from freelance writers, who are generally paid for each item depending on the importance of the article or

photograph. As for government magazines, they tended not to buy outside news or articles, but rather wait for free news or articles, which relate to the purpose of the magazine and are sent from other places under their supervision. For commercial publications, highly valued stories are those that are current and attract people to read. Such news with an appropriate photograph costs around 10 USD, while less attractive or outdated items might get only 10,000 Riels in remuneration. Beyond the bought information, which range from 1-35% of total content, the magazines received donated copy and also extracted stories from the Internet or from other foreign newspapers or magazines. This external information consists mostly of fiction.

Mostly it was the editors who decided the context and content of the publication, although several magazines reported that their contents were planned by the writers. However, the editors, director, and the writing committee always were in final control of the publication especially spelling and the content.

### *Production*

The magazines were all of A4 size except *Tam Tam*, which was smaller. The number of pages per issue ranged from 24 to 100. There was a wide range in number of copies printed -- from 500 to 25000 copies -- with an average of 8000 copies. Among the ten magazines surveyed, six were issued monthly, two quarterly, one bi-monthly, and one every ten days. The best-selling *Pracheaprey* was both the most frequently published magazine and the one with the highest number of copies printed. The commercial magazines sold almost all copies of each issue, except for 20-50 copies reserved for distributing to their partners and advertisers. The government magazines published smaller numbers of copies, and mostly distributed free of charge to the departments or agencies under or related to the publishing institution.

### *Readership*

Our interviewees reported a range of different target audiences. The most popular targets were general readers, including government employees, ordinary people, and youths. Some focused on special groups such as researchers, students, tourists, soldiers or sport instructors and enthusiasts, and a third target group was children aged from 3-13 years old for the two magazines *Tam Tam* and *Mom Ning Mab*.

The final-year marketing students of the National Institute of Management (NIM) have in recent years conducted opinion surveys of readers of a number of magazines, including four of those included in our survey. They reported that the number of readers of one copy of a magazine ranges from one to eight. Their surveys showed that among a sample of 750 persons, some 98% had read *Pracheaprey*, 77% had read *Indradevi*; and among 900 children 64% had read *Tam Tam* and 57% *Mam ning Mab*.

### *Financial situation*

The government magazines' expenditure was devoted mostly to printing, absorbing 65-80% of the total expenditure. The other main expenditure was for distribution. Although, they had internal distributors, they, at least, had to spend money for gasoline. Aside from support from the government through their parent institution, government magazines did not yet have other revenue because they were rarely sold or sought advertising. Some institutions that had printing machines could generate income from printing jobs from outside, for example, *Kambuja*. By contrast, commercial magazines have to raise all the funds to produce their magazines. They spent from 10-15% on distribution, on employee salary (the estimated amount was not provided), seeking out advertisements 5%, and printing costs from 55-65% of the total amount of expenditure. Exceptionally, *Indradevi* magazine was printed in house.

There was a wide discrepancy between commercial and government magazines regarding income, as the government magazines are distributed free of charge, and they typically received little or no advertising revenue. For the commercial magazines the proportion of total revenue from sales generally ranged from 30-75%, and advertising from 25-40% with *Leisure Cambodia* (2%) and *Tam Tam* (100%) at the outer ends of the range.

Those that accepted outside jobs reported that these jobs provided 8-10% of total revenue.

The stark fact that emerged was that only the commercial magazines were able to cover the costs of printing from either sales or advertising. These form the new breed of image publications meeting the needs of the newly emerging and especially young market.

The continuing life of the other magazines, which serve to advance educational, social and governmental objectives, depended on injection of income from external sources, such as the government, NGOs or the individual publisher /entrepreneur.

### *Problems faced*

The problems faced by both commercial and government magazines were similar. Of the ten magazines interviewed, the count of the specific problems they faced was as follows : inadequate budget (7) ; limited capacity of writers (3) ; high cost of printing (2) ; editor was bored and wanted to change to another job (1) ; difficulty in seeking good copy (1) ; political pressure and intimidation (1); there was a commercial war (1) ; lack of measures to protect intellectual property (1); and low purchasing power (1).

### *Opinions regarding rental of magazines*

Most of the informants who represented the magazines showed anger regarding the practice of renting magazines since it meant that the retailer received income but not the publisher. But they were not overly critical because they all seem to understand that it was due to prevailing low living conditions, and they all agreed if the standard of living of the readers were better, this would not be done any more. They also made the point that if the prices of the magazines were reduced more people could afford to buy them. In any event, they stated that they themselves could not resolve this problem because it involves economic relationships across the entire publishing sector. As publishers of magazines, they spent a lot of money on printing, and so they could not sell at a lower price, as the current sales revenue does not even cover the printing costs. They did not mean to criticise the printers because they understood that the high costs of printing was caused by the high price of printing materials. Therefore, they have no way to solve this problem.

As for the government magazines, the interviewees gave no opinion on the above problem.

### *Opinions on the situation of publishing*

We were presented with many points of view as well as suggestions from the informants, of which the principal were:

- Need to promote collaboration between the related agencies in order to assure the quality of the publications;



- Need to co-operate to reduce the practice of renting magazines, and to charge offenders of copyright violations in order to raise the confidence of writers.
- Use all means to document how to produce magazines and to strengthen the capacity of reporters of newspapers and magazines in their professional work such as training and workshops in country or abroad.
- Encourage people to read more.
- Pornographic books or magazines should be closed down or prohibited from being sold openly. If this is not done, it will have a harmful effect on the youth and will destroy the Khmer tradition within a short time.
- Request to change the words used in the Publishing in Cambodia summary, "Khmer newspapers and magazines have been flourishing..." because s/he saw that many newspapers and magazines were closing or collapsing one by one.

## ACADEMIC JOURNALS

There are very few academic journals in Cambodia despite the presence of a number of universities and institutes of higher education. We surveyed seven magazines, two of which belong to the government.

**1. Kampujasuriya\* កម្ពុជសុរិយា** (*The Sun of Cambodia*): the oldest Khmer intellectual magazine, published by the Buddhist Institute since 1929. Because of the war and political changes, the review was closed for almost 20 years from 1975-93. After the Ministry of Cults and Religions and the Buddhist Institute were re-established, the review began to be published again in 1994. The contents of the publication since then focus on five main categories: Buddhism, literature, anthropology, history, and general events in the Ministry.

**2. Aksar sastr-Monus sastr អក្សរសាស្ត្រមនុស្សសាស្ត្រ**. (*Literature and Humanity*): an academic review published by the Royal University of Phnom Penh since April 1995. Its content focuses on socio-cultural research and development. This review rarely publishes scientific articles, until now only once when requested by a postgraduate student in biology because he needed to have another publication before being permitted to proceed to further study.

**3. Siksâcakra\* សិក្សាច័ក្រ** (*The Wheel of Study*): a research review issued from the Center For Khmer Studies in Siem Reap since January 2000, focusing on the results of study and research by national and international researchers.

**4. Sveng Rok Kapet ស្វែងរកកំរាមពិត** (*Searching for the Truth\**): a specialist magazine for general distribution published by the Documentation Center of Cambodia since January 2000. The content focuses on the crimes committed by the Democratic Kampuchea regime of Pol Pot on Cambodian citizens. Although not published by an institution of higher education, we included it under academic journals because of its research nature.

**5. Tuossanavodei Vityasthaan Pheasa Chiet វិទ្យាស្ថានភាសាជាតិ** (*The Semester Review of the Institute of National Language*): an academic review issued from the Institute of National Language of the Royal Academy of Cambodia since 2000. The content focuses on linguistic, epigraphy, and literature. Its

publication was funded by the government through the parent institution, the Royal Academy of Cambodia.

**6. *Pretabat Nihset Mahavityalai Boranvitya*** ព្រឹត្តិប័ត្រនិស្សិតមហាវិទ្យាល័យបុរាណវិទ្យា (*Bulletin of the Students of the Department of Archaeology*): a bulletin organised by students and graduates of the Department of Archaeology with budgetary and material support from Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture since 2000. The content focuses on the field research of archaeology students with reports from excavation sites, articles on habits and customs, as well as reinterpretations of events in Khmer history.

**7. *Udaya ឌុំឌុំ*** (*Dawn*): a journal of Khmer studies edited by Dr. Ang Choulean and Dr. Ashley Thompson and published by APSARA Authority, issued since 2000. The journal intends to be a tri-lingual forum for articles considering all aspects of Khmer studies. The first issue was a thematic issue on Ceramics while the second and third issues offer a range of articles addressing issues of Khmer archaeology, anthropology, ethnology, and history.

\* transliteration/translation taken from the publication

### *Management*

We found there were three different approaches to management among academic journals:

- Most magazines were headed by a director and an editor (sometimes with a single person carrying out both functions);
- Some bulletins had a production committee of young scholars, with relatively low knowledge and experience as well as an advisory committee of senior researchers;
- One review was headed by an editorial committee (“committee of reading and realisation”), following the style of other academic reviews around the world.

Academic journals had an average of 3-4 staff, but one government review mentions the names of 15 production personnel, although it was reported to us that a single person (a typist) does all the work.

### *Content*

We found two approaches to deciding the content of the articles. Most frequently it was the responsibility of the director and editor, but sometimes the editorial committee, specialists, or the writers and production team themselves were responsible for deciding on content.

These academic journals do not have a policy of paying for articles for publication but several did encourage the researchers to write articles by giving approximately 10,000 riels per one A4 page or 4,000 riels for an-A5 page.

A few magazines serialised long articles, including those re-printed from other sources, either in the original language and/or translated into Khmer.

### *Readership*

Most of these academic journals focused on researchers, teachers, lecturers, and students. Three of those surveyed had a broader target audience -- two including ordinary people, government employees and workers, and the other Buddhist monks and lay-people.

### *Production*

The number of pages for each issue ranges from 36-300 pages with an average of about 100 pages. The magazines were printed in numbers ranging from 200-7,000 copies with an average of about 1,200 copies. Most kept a small number of each issue to give to their writers and to relevant persons and high-ranking officials and libraries in Phnom Penh.

*Kampujasuriya* is the only academic journal printed in house. Others were produced in commercial printing houses such as Japan Printing & Publishing (Japan Printing House), Indradevi, Bayon, Hong Nara, and 3D-Graphics, and one is photocopied because of its small print run.

### *Distribution*

Three magazines were distributed widely to the provinces and countryside, and three were disseminated overseas. *Sveng Rok Kapet* is distributed free of charge to all 1,624 communes and *Aksar sastr - Monus sastr* is disseminated to high schools throughout the country.

It would seem that none of Cambodia's academic journals have anything but an embryonic approach to gaining a solid subscription base, which is normally considered to be the bed rock of such a publishing endeavour. Their irregularity of publication is the first obstacle to be overcome, along with determining clear contact information and methods for payment.

Among the seven academic journals only three have a web site.

### *Financial situation*

As far as we found by interviewing and observing, all the academic journals had more expenses than revenue. People in charge of finances all complained about the imbalance of their business. After trying to explore the reasons for the loss we found there were two causes -- low purchasing power, and large debts by wholesalers and retail sellers (an issue discussed further in chapter 6 below). The continuing life of academic journals even more than of the general magazines is absolutely based on the support of the government, NGOs, the King and other donors.

Most of these academic journals received funds from foundations (such as Heinrich Böll of Germany), local NGOs (such as Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture) or foreign governments (including the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway). One review received money from the King and another from the government. Despite getting grants sufficient to underwrite the publishing costs, some of these magazines are still not able to appear regularly.

*Problems faced*

All seven academic journals reported facing problems, with two revealing that they faced serious difficulties. Problems mentioned were:

- inadequate capital (5);
- high printing costs (4);
- distributing difficulties (4);
- low sales (3);
- high price of the journals, so that readers could not afford to purchase (3);
- technical problems including:
  - lack of qualified staff, especially writers and staff with foreign language capacity or specialist knowledge in law;
  - Cambodia's lack of standardised technical terminology for writing and translation;
  - the lack of a standardised Khmer character set for computers; and
  - particular problems in publishing a journal in several languages.

*Opinions regarding rental of journals:*

Not a single academic journal informant expressed anger about people renting their publication. In contrast to most commercial newspapers and magazines, they expressed positive opinions, such as that the rental of magazines, newspapers or books was a good sign of the development of ideas and promotion of reading. They were very pleased to see people wanting to read. They see the rental situation as a temporary practice, and expect that when the living conditions of the people improve, they will outlay money for reading materials. Their views included the following:

- People are poor, and their low income prevents them spending much time or money on reading
- People do not see the need to keep documents for the long term
- If they are researchers, they would regret renting rather than buying when they find they need to use these documents for their own work.

*Opinions on the situation of publishing*

Six of the seven interviewees made various suggestions to the government, NGOs, relevant institutions, and people as follows:

- The government, relevant NGOs and institutions should allocate money and materials to training national researchers to a level equal to that of foreign researchers. Research activity requires researchers yet in Cambodia they are lacking. The few that do exist do not want to research because of the small income from this work, while others do not have the capacity and ability to do it due to the low number and poor quality of research training institutions
- Persons who are in charge of publishing should take care regarding orthography, grammar, terminology, and translated word usage
- There is an urgent need to standardise a Khmer character set for using in computers
- Both fully qualified and not qualified researchers or authors should show conscientiousness in research and writing in order to improve the quality of their output

In conclusion, although there are a small number of academic journals in Cambodia and most of those, moreover, are published irregularly and are still limited in content and circulation, we consider that their very existence is a hopeful sign regarding academic activity in Cambodia, showing the results of great efforts made in reconstruction of the whole education sector since 1979. The quality of these magazines and the capacity of the authors are improving, as Cambodian academics walk along the same path as their colleagues in other modern countries.

It is to be hoped that some of the weaknesses our respondents have pointed out can be ameliorated by the regularisation of the organisational structure of researchers and teachers under the proposed Higher Education Act. The situation of academic journal publishing in Cambodia would benefit greatly if publishers no longer needed to advance money for articles, and authors were in a position to pay more attention to the quality of their papers to gain the approval of journal editors, as would be the case if in order to gain promotion and higher salary, academics and researchers had to produce more quality research publications, following the aphorism "Publish or Perish".

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Newspapers and magazines have been published in Cambodia for over a century, and Cambodia's press is one of the most vigorous in Asia.

### NEWSPAPERS

Nine newspapers surveyed reported serialising non-fiction books, while only one has a regular culture section. Seldom do Cambodian newspapers seek permission from either the original writer or publisher, nor even acknowledge the source of copied material. Cambodian newspapers are notorious for their poor quality of (re)production and of content, and for unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations against prominent business people and politicians.

No newspapers are published outside the capital city. Phnom Penh is the only part of the country in which all the newspapers surveyed are distributed, and only three other provinces receive more than 20 of the 24 newspapers surveyed. Seven provinces have fewer than ten newspapers.

Subscription services are extremely undeveloped in Cambodia -- not surprising due to almost total absence of secure mechanisms for financial transactions and the almost non-functioning public postal system -- and they are offered in rudimentary form by only seven of the 24 newspapers surveyed.

Similarly, the overwhelming majority of Cambodian newspapers have yet to operate in the electronic age. Only three of those surveyed have published an electronic version, while, somewhat more surprisingly, only six gave email addresses.

## MAGAZINES

Only commercial magazines were able to cover the costs of printing from either sales or advertising. These form the new breed of image publications meeting the needs of the newly emerging and especially young market.

The continuing life of the other magazines, which serve to advance educational, social and governmental objectives, depended on injection of income from external sources, such as the government, NGOs or the individual publisher /entrepreneur.

## ACADEMIC JOURNALS

There are very few academic journals in Cambodia despite the presence of a number of universities and institutes of higher education.

Three of the seven surveyed were distributed widely to the provinces and countryside, and three were disseminated overseas. *Sveng Rok Kapet* is distributed free of charge to all 1,624 communes and *Aksar sastr - Monus sastr* is disseminated to high schools throughout the country.

None of Cambodia's academic journals have anything but an embryonic approach to gaining a solid subscription base, and only three have a web site.

All the academic journals had more expenses than revenue, ascribed to low purchasing power of their potential readers, and large debts by wholesalers and retail sellers. The continuing life of academic journals is absolutely based on the support of the government, NGOs, the King and other donors.

There are a small number of academic journals in Cambodia and most of those are published irregularly and are still limited in content and circulation, but we consider that their very existence is a hopeful sign regarding academic activity in Cambodia. Perhaps the proposed Higher Education Act will regularise the status and salary of academics and researchers, encouraging them to produce more quality research publications, following the aphorism "Publish or Perish".

## Recommendations

- to prepare a catalogue of newspapers deposited with the Ministry and the National Library of Cambodia, supplemented by overseas holdings
- consider development of a co-operative or joint distribution network rather than the present informal small-scale networks
- continue to strengthen the capacity of reporters and other professionals through training and workshops in country or abroad
- support the development of a code of ethics among newspaper editors and reporters
- encourage newspapers and magazines to include reviews of recently published books

- encourage newspapers and magazines to serialise fiction and non-fiction works on and from Cambodia
- improve regularity of publication and determine clear contact points and methods of financial transactions to enable subscriptions
- establish web sites and make listings on appropriate internet directories
- improve orthography, grammar, terminology, and translated word usage
- standardise a Khmer character set for using in computers

## BRIEF DATA

## NEWSPAPERS SURVEYED

	Newspaper name in English	Name in Khmer	Date	Director	Editor	Staff	Copies	Pages	Frequency	Printing House
1	<i>Areyathor</i>	អរិយធម៌	1994	Prom Say	Leang Hy	14	2,500	4	2 issues per week	Angkor Printing House
2	<i>Cambodge Soir</i>	កាំបូដស័រ	1995	Robert Latil	Pierre Gilette	30	2,500	12-20	5 issues per week	Chantrea Printing House
3	<i>Chakraval</i>	ចក្រវាឡ	1993	Keo Sophoan	Nguon Chan Muny		4,000	4	Daily	Printed in house
4	<i>Jian Hua</i>	ជានហ្វា	Aug. 2000	You Lieng	Ling Chea Si	26	4,500	10	Daily	Khmer-Chinese Association
5	<i>Kanychok Sangkum</i>	កញ្ចក់សង្គម	1995	Norbert Klein	Norbert Klein	7	3,500	20	Weekly	Entry Meas, Kim Long
6	<i>Khmer Mekong</i>	ខ្មែរមេគង្គ	Jun. 2002		In Sophanna	14	4,500	8	Bi-weekly	Printed in house
7	<i>Meatophoum</i>	មាតុភូមិ	May 1993	Om Chan Dara	Chan Prakorth	5	1,800	4	Weekly	Sopheak Mongkul
8	<i>Moneaksekar Khmer</i>	មនសិការខ្មែរ	Aug. 1994	Dam Sith	Dam Sith	8	3,500	4	Daily	Sopheak Mongkul
9	<i>Phnom Penh Post</i>	ភ្នំពេញប៉ុស្តិ៍	July 1992	Kathleen O'Keefe	Micheal Hayes	20	3,500	16	Fortnightly	Japan Printing House
10	<i>Prachea Mati Khmer</i>	ប្រជាមតិខ្មែរ	1996	Doth Sadeth	Doth Sadeth	5	1250	4	Weekly	Sopheak Mongkul
11	<i>Proleung Cheat</i>	ព្រលឹងជាតិ	1994	Thuong Bun Thœurn	Thuong Bun Thœurn	1	1,500	4	Irregular	Khemara
12	<i>Proloeng Khmer</i>	ព្រលឹងខ្មែរ	Dec. 2998	Prom Seiha	Roth Veasna	13	1,500	4	Weekly	Sopheak Mongkul
13	<i>Punleu Khmer</i>	ពន្លឺខ្មែរ	May 2002	Hen Pheareak	Sek Rady	6	2,600	4	2 issues per week	Printed in house
14	<i>Rasmei Kampuchea Daily</i>	រស្មីកម្ពុជា	Apr. 1993	Theng Bun Ma	Pen Samitthi	72	18,000	16	Daily	Printed in house
15	<i>Rasmei Angkor</i>	រស្មីអង្គរ	1994	In Chan Sivattha	In Chan Sivattha	12	4,000	4	Every 2 days	Printed in house



16	<i>Samleng Khmer Snehacheat</i>	<i>សម្លេងខ្មែរ ស្នេហាជាតិ</i>	May 1995	Hang Chakra	Hang Chakra	26	3,000	4	2 issues per week	Rasmei Angkor
17	<i>Samleng Sachak</i>	<i>សម្លេងសច្ចៈ</i>	1996	Keo Chan Duong	Keo Chan Duong	7	1,000	4	2-3 weekly	Sopheak Mongkul
18	<i>Samleng Thmey</i>	<i>សម្លេងថ្មី</i>	1994	Khun Ngo	Khun Ngo	10	2,000	4	Weekly	Rasmei Angkor
19	<i>Samleng Yuvachun Khmer</i>	<i>សម្លេងយុវជន ខ្មែរ</i>	Apr. 1998	Tie Then	Chhoem Sarith	13	3,000	4	Daily	Sopheak Mongkul
20	<i>Samrek Khmer</i>	<i>សម្រែកខ្មែរ</i>	2001	Bun Sophal	Bun Sophal	7	1,000	4	Irregular	Sopheak Mongkul
21	<i>Sangkruos Cheat</i>	<i>សង្ក្រាន្តជាតិ</i>	1994	Cheth Sorn	Dam Chea	24	2,700	4	2 issues per week	Printed in house
22	<i>Sereypheap Thmey</i>	<i>សេរីភាពថ្មី</i>	Jun. 1995	Som Vireak	Som Vireak	9	2,000	4	Irrigular	Santipheap
23	<i>Tuossanak Khmer</i>	<i>ទស្សនៈខ្មែរ</i>	1997	Sovann Sokha	Sovann Sokha	10	750	4	Weekly	Sopheak Mongkul
	<i>Utdamkati Khmer</i>	<i>ឧត្តមគតិខ្មែរ</i>	1992	Pov Hour	Pov Hour	9	1,100	4	Daily	Sopheak Mongkul

## GENERAL MAGAZINES SURVEYED

	Magazine Name	Name in Khmer	Est.	Publisher	Editor	Staff	Copies	Pages	Frequency	Cover price	Printing House
1	<i>Kambuja</i>	កម្ពុជា	1984	Ministry of Information	Chhin Yuon	66	1000	44	1 month	free	Printed in house
2	<i>Pracheaprey</i>	ប្រជាប្រិយ	1994	Kak Khvan Hong	Prach Sim	30	25000	100	10 days = 3 times/month	.3,000 riel	Phnom Penh
3	<i>Mom ning Mab</i>	ម៉ែនិងម៉ាប់	1994	Save the Children Norway (Touch Munny)	Im Sarun	2	10000	32	3 month	2,500 riel or \$1	Areyathor
4	<i>Indradevi</i>	ឥន្ទ្រទេវី	1998	Tie Then	Chhim Sarith	14	8500	92	1 month	3,500 riel	Printed in house
5	<i>Kulthida</i>	កុលតីតា	1998	Rov Vuoch Ngo	Rov Vuoch Ngo	7	7500	100	1 month	3,500 riel or \$3.95 (in USA)	Thailand
6	<i>Tam Tam</i>	តាំតាំ	1998	Graphic Roots (Puth Suk Mean)	Singh Makara	5	15000	28	2 months	2,500 riel	Entry Meas
7	<i>Akeak Me Bonjeakar</i>	អគ្គមេបញ្ជាការ	1999	RCAF??? (Son Saramalai)	Hang Suvannara	15	500	40	3 months	free	Punleu Pech
8	<i>Keila</i>	កីឡា	2001	MoEYS (Uk Siddhacheat)	Vat Chamræun	12	2000	52	1 month	free	Entry Meas
9	<i>Leisure Cambodia</i>	លំហូររាយបូនា	2001	Red Dot (Cambodia)	John Seow	7	4500	24	1 month	1,500 riel	Entry Meas, Phnom Penh
10	<i>Pordamean Vitya</i>	ពតិមានវិទ្យា	2002	Pou Huor	Pou Huor	19	5000	88	1 month	3,500 riel	Entry Meas

## ACADEMIC JOURNALS SURVEYED

	Journal Name	Name in Khmer	Est.	Publisher	Editor	Staff	Number Copies	Number of Page	Period	Cover price	Printing House
1	<i>Kampujasuriya</i>	កម្ពុជសុរិយា	1929 1994	Buddhist Institute	Khieu Panhavudh	4	2000	100	3 month	3000 riel	Printed in house
2	<i>Aksar sastr-Monus sastr</i>	អក្សរសាស្ត្រមនុស្សសាស្ត្រ	1995	Royal University of Phnom Penh	Sum Chhumbun	3	1500	52	3 month (irregular)	900 riel	Bayon and Hong Nara
3	<i>Siksácaker</i>	សិក្សាចក្រ	2000	Center for Khmer Studies	Danh Hong	2	1000	36	irregular	\$ 30 annual subscription	JSRC
4	<i>Sveng Rok Kapet</i>	ស្វែងរកការពិត	2000	Documentation Center of Cambodia	Youk Chhang	6	7000	60	1 month	mostly free, some \$2	Indradevi
5	<i>Tuossanavodei Vityasthaan Pheasa Chiet</i>	វិទ្យាស្ថានភាសាជាតិ	2000	Institute of National Language	Editorial Committee	15	200	150	1year (irregular)	6,500 riel	Wat Phnom Photocopy Shop
6	<i>Pretabat Nihset Boramitya</i>	និស្សិតបុរាណវិទ្យា	2000	Reyum	Production Committee	5	1000	80	1year (irregular)	\$ 4 to 5	3D-Graphics
7	<i>Udaya</i>	ឌុទ័យ	2000	Apsara Authority, Dept. of Culture	Ang Choulean and Ashley Thompson	2	2000	300	1year (irregular)	\$ 40	JSRC

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## CHAPTER 5 PUBLISHING & PRINTING

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### PUBLISHING

In Cambodia it is difficult to distinguish publishers as a distinct group, as a conflation of the activities of publishers, wholesalers, printers and individual authors blurs the boundaries between them. To quote Christiane Lalonde, formerly of SIPAR, “in Cambodia publisher means printer, distribution means delivery, and bookshop means a seller of a product, just like vegetables or hardware”.<sup>59</sup>

Many companies claim to be publishers but are in reality printers, which at times become involved to some extent in the layout or design and/or distribution and sale of a book they are printing. While many book wholesalers on the surface appear simply to sell books to retailers, they are in fact involved in commissioning or buying works of Cambodian authors which they prepare for printing.

At this point it may be worthwhile to look at the *Mongolian Book Sector Study* definition of a publisher:

*the business or profession of making and selling books and other printed material including the commissioning of manuscripts, negotiation with authors and their agents, book design and production, publicity and sales through wholesalers and retailers. The publisher's main task is to identify or anticipate the need for certain titles and creative ideas and turn this into attractive titles. Apart from this creative task the publisher will organise the productive and profitable cooperation between various people involved in the creative process of manuscript development, take care of all financial implications, and the process of production and sales. The publisher will often sub contract many parts of the process involved, including printing and sales.(II-11)*

Working with this definition we can conclude that very few independent book publishers operate in Cambodia. Those that come closest to fitting this definition are Non Government Organisations such as Reyum, SIPAR, Domrai Sor, and SVA – all of which do design and publish their own books. But all these NGOs and others depend heavily on donor funds to maintain their publishing activities. Reyum, SIPAR, Domrai Sor are striving towards creating a financially independent publishing arm but the prospect of achieving this status is not too promising.

Commercial publishers, such as Les Éditions du Mekong which began in 1992 and publishes the newspaper *Cambodge Soir*, as well as a small number of quality publications, including *divagations*, and more recently *Le Palais du Roi du Cambodge* have up until now published little and like similar publishers gravitate towards producing books more for the foreign market. In many cases publishers who print high quality publications or large quantities are forced to print outside of Cambodia. Interquess, publisher of the *Cambodian Yellow Pages*, prints overseas, but distributes their publications for free, relying on advertising revenues to generate income. Graphic Roots publishes *Tam Tam*, a bi-monthly magazine targeted at children aged between 4-13 years (and discussed in chapter 4 above). In the past Graphic Roots has relied on Unicef to purchase large quantities of *Tam Tam* to distribute

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<sup>59</sup> Christiane Lalonde, then with SIPAR, interview with Publishing in Cambodia, 21 June 2002.

through NGOs to cluster schools. This arrangement has changed with Unicef no longer purchasing *Tam Tam*, leaving Graphic Roots without a reliable source of income to continue publishing *Tam Tam*, whose very survival is in doubt at the moment.

For many of the above organisations publishing is secondary to other more profitable ventures such as web page design, advertising, computer, and graphic design. The *Cambodia Yellow Pages* is indicative of this fact in its common listing of "Publishers, graphic designers, pre-press etc."

In recent years a small number of single title commercial publishers have emerged producing publications for the growing tourist market. Periodicals such as *Bayon Pearnik*, *Phnom Penh Sihanoukville* and *Siem Reap Angkor Visitors Guide*, *Cambodian Advertising Gazette* and the *Angkor Zen Guide* are just some of the titles which have large print runs, are subsidised by advertising, for free distribution and targeted at the expanding tourist and expatriate markets. An attempt in 2000-2001 to produce a high-quality English language magazine for sale, *Vibe*, unfortunately did not meet with success.

## PUBLISHERS

Time and space do not permit us to examine the profiles and output of a range of other organisations, mostly NGOs or organisations dependent on NGO support, which have publishing programs focusing largely on the children's book market. These include Domrei Sor (White Elephant), Cambokids, Maryknoll, Save the Children Norway, Savannaphoum, Wildlife Conservation Society, Graphic Roots – all of which are featured in the SIPAR catalogue, and discussed in Fukamachi Hideki's *Survey on situation of juvenile book publication* carried out for SVA in 2001. What follows is illustrative of the range of emerging publishers and does not form a comprehensive listing.

### *Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture*

Reyum is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation founded in December 1998 in order to provide a forum for research, preservation and promotion of traditional and contemporary Cambodian arts and culture. It works through exhibitions, events and publications, with the publishing program focused on two areas – scholarly books in Khmer, English and some French in conjunction with their research and exhibitions, and Khmer language books for children. Reyum publications are noted for their elegant design and high quality of content and production, but it is difficult to recover even the production costs from sales in the current Cambodian market. Accordingly, Reyum is making great efforts to reach out to the international market through foreign distributors.

Reyum is supported principally by the Kasumisou Foundation and the Albert Kunstadter Family Foundation, with individual projects funded by the Prince Claus Fund, the Japan Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

### *Soutien à l'Initiative Privée pour l'Aide à la Reconstruction des pays du Sud-Est asiatique (SIPAR)*

SIPAR concentrates its efforts on develop the reading habits among primary age children. It began its work in Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand in 1982, coming to work inside Cambodia in 1990. Its publishing output, Éditions SIPAR, is supported by the European Union and by private and institutional donations from France and other countries. Initially concentrating on picture books for the 5-10 year age group, it has now moved into higher quality books for older children in a series "I

would like to know” (presumably inspired by the long running French series “Que sais-je?”) and beginning with titles on the human body and the environment. These titles were published in high print runs (for Cambodia) of 10,000 copies, and were distributed through kiosks and book stalls as well as directly to schools, with some support from Unicef. Disappointingly, a high proportion of the books mysteriously found their way onto the open market, thereby undermining the program for free distribution in schools. In 2002 SIPAR is trying new market segments, with a coffee table style book on Cambodian dancing published jointly with Editions Jazz in France, and a joint venture with the Center for Khmer Studies to translate and publish David Chandler’s *A History of Cambodia* as well as collaboration with the translation program of the French Department of the Royal University of Phnom Penh to translate *Le Petit Prince* into Khmer.

In addition to its own publishing program, SIPAR is trying to promote the entire sector of publishing by producing a book catalogue twice yearly, the latest one listing the recent lists of 14 publishers.

SIPAR also carries out a library development program as part of its reading promotion activities, and is in 2002 conducting a study of reading habits and non-formal education projects in Kampong Cham and Kratie, and will focus on the street population in Kampong Cham and rural villagers in Kratie.

### *Shanti Volunteer Association*

Funded mainly by Japanese Buddhist associations, SVA began its work in the Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand in the late 1980s. Since 1993 it has been working inside Cambodia, and has a vigorous primary school library development program active in 310 core primary schools in eight provinces. Books and story boards, as well as training for the teacher librarians are provided. SVA distributes their own books and some donated from other Japanese organisations, but has no collaboration with other publishers. The SVA publication program aims to produce five picture books and two story boards per year, with an emphasis on morals and the environment. On average SVA budgets \$3,000 per title with a print run of less than 1,000. One high-level production which was considerably more expensive to produce was *The Life of Buddha* for which the copyright was bought from a Singapore publisher.

There are small groups of dedicated Cambodian writers and other individuals who are committed to the development of the book sector in Cambodia who work without profit to publish Khmer language books. Two such groups are Snadey Khnom (My Works), and the Sowers Association.

Snadey Khnom is a group of five volunteers who publish books for small children. The goal of their first title was to teach Cambodian children to draw and educate them about Cambodian fauna facing extinction. Among the five members of the team, who try to meet every weekend, one is the book designer, three distribute the publication and one works on the conception of the book. They ask an illustrator from the Ministry of Education to prepare drawings for them and pay him from their own funds. They don't receive financial assistance, nor have an office. They rent a computer, scanner and a printer to prepare their manuscripts. They published 5000 copies of their first title, which sold out, receiving 400 riel profit per copy. They claim to have done market research before starting the preparation of the book.

The Sowers Association was created at the end of 1998 with the goal of publishing literary books and promotion of reading. Its members are students from various faculties of the Royal Phnom Penh University. They have published three titles. The first is a collection of poems written by students

from the faculty of literature and human sciences. The second and the third are collections of poems written by Mr. Yin Luoth, a Khmer-American living in the United States, who financed the printing of these two publications. The Sowers Association is preparing a fourth title, *Banana Leaf*, which is now in the printing house. The average print run of around 3000 copies costs \$700 and they have only managed to sell 500 copies of each title. The rest are distributed for free to various institutes, organisations, and acquaintances.

Both organisations face similar problems in their efforts to publish. Aside from continuing financial and distribution problems, they claim that many retailers hesitate to stock new titles and the reading market is small because, in their opinion, Cambodians think knowledge comes from teachers and not from books. Further more, authors and publishers rarely co-operate.

In the absence of any University Press there is very little academic publishing except for a few journals (discussed in Chapter 4 above) and some research and conference reports for limited distribution. Tertiary level textbooks are now starting to be produced by a few of the private universities and institutes, such as Norton University and the International Institute of Cambodia (IIC). The Center of Khmer Studies is moving into academic publishing with the translation into Khmer of David Chandler's *History of Cambodia*.

### *The Buddhist Institute*

The Buddhist Institute now has its own publishing house, developed with support from the Toyota Foundation. The Institute also has a network of libraries in fifteen provinces. Some commercial publishing helps to underwrite the costs of producing religious and other scholarly works, including the journal *Kambujasuriya* (discussed in Chapter 4 above).

SVA works in collaboration with the Buddhist Institute publishing and distributing nation-wide through the *wats*. This program principally reprints Buddhist Institute texts, with print runs of about 5,000, which must try to meet the needs of 50,000 monks in 3,600 *wats* of which 500 have libraries. The Ministry of Cults and Religion decides on the titles and requests SVA to assist in the publication. This program was until recently headed by Yi Thon, who had been in charge of publishing in the Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture in the 1980s and who moved in 1993 to the newly re-established Ministry of Cults and Religion. Yi Thon says that books are handed from house to house and well read. Sometimes they are damaged, and sometimes not returned. A problem is the *wat* tradition of spending donations for building and food etc, but not for books. In addition there is a tradition of keeping books locked in a cabinet, especially the *Tripitaka*.

### *Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI)*

Perhaps the most active research publisher is CDRI, established in 1990 with a focus on capacity building chiefly in the areas of rural development, human resources and economic monitoring. It publishes the *Cambodia Development Review*, commenced in 1998, and has an archive of 23 working papers available for downloading from the Internet.

### *Cambodia Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP)*

A local NGO with a specialist focus and significant publishing programs which describes itself as “a leading policy-oriented think-tank in Cambodia”; is a member of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic

and International Studies; and has published 17 general books, as well as a newsletter and journal, working papers and a distinguished lecture series.

*Cambodian Legal Resources Development Center (CLDRC)*

CLDRC provides an invaluable service in compiling all Cambodia's laws since 1993 (now being re-published in loose leaf binders to allow regular updating) as well as interpretations and introductions to various aspects of Cambodian law, especially commercial law.

*Centre de documentation et de recherche de la civilisation khmère (CEDORECK)*

Another research publisher is CEDORECK (Centre de documentation et de recherche de la civilisation khmère), established in France in 1983 by Nouth Narang, who returned to Cambodia in 1991 and soon thereafter was appointed Minister of Fine Arts and Culture. He is now a Senator. CEDORECK published a journal *Seksa Khmer*, and a number of books, but these are predominately reprints of early works on Cambodia by French authors.

*The International Institute of Cambodia (IIC)*

The IIC is one of the most active of all Cambodian publishers and unquestionably the biggest publisher of Khmer language technical books in Cambodia. IIC has produced approximately 55 titles in Khmer on subjects relating to economics, marketing, tourism, computers, management and finance. A committee of IIC decides on what should be published, and appoints one of IIC's professors to write a book and this is considered part of their duties for their teaching salary, with no royalties or extra payments made. IIC claims it does not make a profit from publishing; rather books are used to raise the profile of IIC and sold to their students as the main textbook of their studies. Books are distributed to retailers around Phnom Penh and in provincial centres where tertiary institutions are located. Usually 1000-3000 copies of a title are printed and retail prices reach up to \$4.00 a copy.

A question mark hangs over the quality of the content and how much of the material used in these publications has been translated straight from foreign language sources without the appropriate acknowledgements, editing, and cross referencing. In many cases, according to the information in the publication itself, the editing and proof-reading of the content is also done by the author of the book! These publications do partially fill the large gap that exists in academic publishing in Cambodia but it is disconcerting to think of these works as the sole resource and reference for Cambodian students.

*Unesco*

The Unesco office in Phnom Penh has over the past several years made a concentrated attempt to encourage publishing by underwriting and facilitating a number of titles, those concerned with culture mainly in conjunction with the Ministry of Fine Arts and Culture or with Japanese funds in trust. Other Unesco programs in education, information and environment have also generated publications. In 2000 several books were published under the Culture of Peace program. In 2001 Unesco supported the publication outside the country of the *Cambodia Arts Directory*, and in 2002 a major achievement was the 4-volume *Ancient inscriptions of Cambodia* (of which Publishing in Cambodia researcher Vong Sotheara was a member of the project team).



The books published and printed in Cambodia have had limited runs of around 2-4,000 (or in the case of *Inscriptions* only 100 copies) most of which are donated to ministries, libraries and schools and universities. Unfortunately, the benefit from these publications is hampered by the fact that many of the receiving officials seem to take the books donated as personal gifts, and few end up on library shelves. Very few Unesco publications are published in large enough numbers to allow distribution via the open market where they could meet a real need, and perhaps generate revenue to allow for re-printing. It seems a loss to see these titles disappear so soon after publication. For instance, Monument Books recently reported that they only received three copies of the *Cambodia Arts Directory*, which one might have expected to be a steady seller, although it was rather highly priced at \$40.

Besides actual involvement in producing books, Unesco also has given grants to individual writers to enable them to bring manuscripts to fruition, and supports a variety of literacy and book promotion programs, in conjunction with the Unesco National Commission and the MOEYS including Education for All, National Literacy Day (and the survey on functional literacy in 1999-2000), and the establishment of Community Learning Centres and Temple Learning Centres.

#### *The Asia Foundation*

An organisation that has had a long interest in books and reading is the United States NGO, The Asia Foundation. Over the past ten years it has underwritten the costs of publishing a number of titles, especially in the legal field. Layout is mainly done in house, with printing contracted out. Funding has also been given to other organisations for publishing of books and journals.

In addition its Books in Asia program (founded in 1946) provides books to libraries in Cambodia to the value of around \$60-\$80,000 per annum. These are mainly donations from US publishers, who get a tax concession on such donations. Some 80% are brand new titles while others are slightly superseded editions. The program also facilitates shipment and identification of appropriate recipient libraries for donations of special collections (especially Cambodiana or serial runs).

Another valuable input from The Asia Foundation has been support for library consultant Margaret Bywater, who has run regular basic training programs for almost all Cambodian libraries, as well as library education programs for students, and particular support to the Hun Sen Library at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Unfortunately in September 2002 The Asia Foundation drastically scaled back its program of activities in Cambodia, and this library support was one of the casualties.

#### *Translation Program of the French Department of the Royal University of Phnom Penh (Programme Traduction DEF-URPP):*

This French Co-operation funded program, created in 1996, and co-ordinated by Christophe Macquet, offers a two year course in translation, interpreting, research, and translation and editing. The course has provided practical translation experience for its students with the translation into Khmer of Tintin's *Le Lotus Bleu* (published By Casterman Editions in 2001), *Le Petit Prince* by Saint-Exupery (to be published at the end of January 2003 by SIPAR) and *La Leçon* by Eugene Ionesco. In addition to this the translation team does research into Khmer poetry, Khmer caricatures, and works closely with Les Édition du Mekong to produce a weekly Khmer language edition of the *Cambodge Soir* newspaper. The program is planning, also with Les Éditions du Mekong, to produce a bi-lingual collection of publications starting with *L'eboué Bassac* and *Le Horla* by Guy de Maupassant.

This program, while promoting French literature amongst Cambodians, is also translating short stories of Cambodian authors into French in an attempt to promote the work of Cambodian authors to a wider audience. These stories will be published in 2003 in the French review *Europe*.

#### WHOLESALEERS/PUBLISHERS

One of the most active but least visible segments of the Cambodian publishing sector is formed by the book wholesalers located in markets, in particular Orussey Market. Most are women who, besides wholesaling books, buy stories from authors which they arrange to print and sell. However, they don't conform completely to our definition of a publisher, since they don't conduct market research or plan their lists of items to be published or promote their publications in any way. Many of the owners of these stalls commission teachers to write teaching materials for children, or buy the rights to an existing manuscript from an author. This is not a new phenomenon for Cambodia, as during the 1960s and early 1970s Cambodia writers often had their works published by private booksellers.

In one example a stall holder in Orussey market recently purchased the right to two novels by Yim Samnang, an unpublished prize winning author. She did not make the effort to read the stories beforehand and had little idea of what the stories were about. She offered no cash to him but instead offered him 100 copies of each title, which the author could sell to receive some financial return for his efforts. This was the only form of payment she would offer him, since, as she explained to him, she took the risk to outlay the capital to publish these two novels. She predicted it would take 18 months to two years to sell 1000 copies of the book. The same stall holder also searches for old out of print novels which she retypes and publishes, incidentally leading to a revival of some classic Cambodian novels. She arranges for the keying in and layout of the text, and liaises with the printer, usually a small family owned, unlicensed printing house. An illustrator may be commissioned to design a cover if one does not exist already. Copies of the publication are distributed or exchanged for other books with other wholesalers in the same market.

This is publishing of a rudimentary form.

In a similar example a stall-holder reported that she had published five text book titles for high school. She purchased the right to publish, print, reprint and to distribute from the authors. The price negotiated with authors varied but generally she paid more to well-known authors or school teachers. She commissioned a third party to do the layout.

Another bookseller interviewed by our researchers republishes old comic books as one of her additional activities. She purchased the old film of these comics and had them reprinted but the quality was quite poor. She revealed that these films had been sold and resold by other booksellers before she purchased them as her own property.

The reprinting of old story books bought and found from different sources such as libraries, friends, book stalls, or from the provinces is becoming more widespread. One seller interviewed finds she needs to re-illustrate many of these publications to make them more attractive and appealing. She thought that reprinting old books was more profitable than either buying manuscripts from writers, which she thought was risky since she could not be certain if the books could be sold, or purchasing printed books on credit from the authors directly to resell.

According to our research, most sellers in the market have their own regular authors. After buying manuscripts from them – paying from \$40, to \$80 or to hundreds of dollars depending on the number of pages and the popularity of writers -- they print and distribute that work to the other

books wholesalers in the market. Typically these "publishers" print from 500-1500 copies of each title, mainly novels, both new and reprinted, children's learning materials, and more recently English language books, cook books, and legends.

## PRINTING

### BACKGROUND

In 1974 during the "First Experts Meeting on Typography in Asia", Mr. Hong Them, Deputy Director of the National Institute of Khmerization reported that there existed approximately 100 large and small printing houses in Cambodia. Of these printing houses only eight were equipped with offset machines while the remainder used letter press. The problems they faced then are not so dissimilar from what printers face now. Reports of poorly trained printers, lack of quality ink and paper, the need to have foundries in Japan manufacture matrices for printing presses were common problems in Cambodia during the Khmer Republic. It would seem that the printing industry in Cambodia had not reached great heights. To make matters worse, printing houses had begun to close down in the provinces because of the war.<sup>60</sup>

During the Democratic Kampuchea period the Khmer Rouge made use of the printing presses in Phnom Penh. The type set that was used is the same one used before 1975 in Cambodian newspapers and journals, such as those published by the Buddhist Institute. Prior to taking power in April 1975, the Khmer Rouge handwrote their magazines for reproduction.<sup>61</sup>

According to reports of the Ministry of Information and Culture, only a small number of printing technicians survived the Khmer Rouge period. From 1979-1988 six publishing houses were created, producing 478 book titles and printing 23,688,921 copies. Of the 21 provinces, six provinces were involved in publishing magazines and bulletins. Printing houses grew from three in 1979 to 27 in 1988. Thirteen provinces had a least a small sized printing house. The Ministry of Information and Culture alone had six printing houses. However, all these printing houses used out of date equipment and relied largely on supplies from the former Soviet Union. Some of the equipment used in the provinces was even pre-second world war vintage.<sup>62</sup> Printers had no access to spare parts and they lacked electricity and raw materials. The quality of printing was poor and titles needed to be printed outside of Cambodia, especially in Vietnam.<sup>63</sup>

Touch Chhuong speaks about "contre-publications" -- which were at first copied by hand and later produced by numerous small "local offset" clandestine and illegal presses, copying all kinds of books on demand. "With low cost machines, with limited costs of editing, contraband paper, without paying taxes or duties, or copyright fees, these workshops could do well, except for the risk of police intervention." but they mainly operated with the "complicity of the local authorities, and they spread from one quarter of the city to another and even out into the provinces, as a result of their profits".<sup>64</sup> It is therefore not surprising that with the introduction of an open market economy, privatisation, and the end of state owned provincial publishing that many of the government printing houses

<sup>60</sup> Hong Them, Khem Chhun and Thai Te. Rapport de Mission. Conférence sur la Typographie dans les pays d'Asie. Tokyo, 26 Février - 1 Mars 1974.

<sup>61</sup> George Chigas and Dmitri Mosyakov "Literacy and Education under the Khmer Rouge (Featuring an overview of Revolutionary Flag Magazine)" published on the website of the Cambodian Genocide Program, Yale University

<sup>62</sup> Martin Hadlow. Extract of a UNESCO Report p119

<sup>63</sup> Ministry of Information and Culture. Report on Cultural Information During Ten Years.

<sup>64</sup> Touch Chhuong. Les publications au Cambodge après 1980, p.46-7

would begin to close down, in particular those located in the provinces. The stories we hear from the provinces are similar, "there used to be a state run printing house which closed some years ago for there were no customers, no raw materials and outdated machinery". One can find in the provinces signs advertising printers, but on closer inspection they are either photocopy shops, silk screening, or roneo services. In Siem Reap there is a printing house named Bayon, apparently still owned by the government, which stopped operating in 1997. The Ministry of Finance apparently would not allocate any funds to develop this printing house and the people interviewed feared the printing house and its equipment would soon be sold to private interests. They are hopeful if they had donor support they could reopen the printing house and print Khmer language material for the local population.

Some printing houses have evolved from being fully supported government enterprises to privately owned or semi-autonomous printing houses with strong political party links. From what we have been able to ascertain there now remain only six government printing houses. These are the printing houses of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mines, Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, Police, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, and Royal University of Phnom Penh. Apart from the MOEYS printing house, which is evolving into a semi-independent commercial enterprise, the others barely operate.<sup>65</sup>

In the last 10 years the size and quality of the printing houses in Phnom Penh has changed dramatically. We could not obtain an official list of registered printers, but we were told by a Ministry of Information official that there were approximately 65-70 printers in Cambodia. With reports of there being many unlicensed printers it is difficult to know exactly how many printers operate in Cambodia. The Cambodian Yellow pages lists approximately 70 companies that claim to conduct printing services. One supplier to printing houses calculates there are closer to 100 printers in Phnom Penh. However, many of these could be agents for other printers, or may only have photocopying or silk screening facilities.

Nearly all printing houses operate in Phnom Penh or in the adjoining province of Kandal. Of all the major provincial centres visited by the research team, only two printers were found, one operating in Kampong Cham and the other in Neak Leung, with the latter very rarely printing books. Without any provincial publishing and demand or incentive for local publications and newspapers there is little economic basis for establishing a commercial printing enterprises in the provinces. Without any local press then there is very little means to cultivate interest in reading by the local population.

Many printers are riding on the back of the huge donor community present in Cambodia. With over 150 international NGOs and triple that of local NGOs there exists a huge market for printers. NGOs, embassies, and new companies represent the biggest clientele for printers. It is a clientele suitable for Cambodia's current breed of printers. NGOs have cash, order small print runs and on the face of it are not fussy when it comes to quality. Most of these publications are distributed for free to a limited audience. Research findings, annual reports, community awareness material, inter organisational publications, is what generally make up the bulk of printing jobs from NGOs and embassies.

Other major clients include various Cambodian ministries most of whom print publications using donor money. Without this high concentration of NGOs and donor money there would be little doubt that many of Cambodia's printing houses would not survive.

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<sup>65</sup> A list dated 14 October 2002, provided to Publishing in Cambodia by the Ministry of Information reported the government printing assets as comprising two printing houses (in Siem Reap and Kandal) and 66 silk-screen printing shops (22 in Phnom Penh, 10 in Battambang, 4 in Kampong Cham, 3 in Siem Reap, 2 each in Kampong Cham and Takeo, 1 each in Sihanoukville, Prey Veng and Pursat, as well as 18 in Banteay Meanchey). Whether these assets are still functioning, and what kind of printing they are doing is not made clear.

## PRE PRESS

Up until a few years ago there were only one or two businesses which could offer pre-press services in Cambodia. People who wanted to print a quality publication went to Thailand to have film made. This situation has changed considerably. Cheap pirated computer software, affordable computers and related hardware such as scanners, zip drives, CD burners etc, means that many printers have some degree of pre-press capacity. Of the printers we interviewed 43% possessed image setters, and 81% had plate-making capabilities. Many had the means to prepare camera ready copies of publications.

The problem now is not so much the lack of equipment but the lack of expertise to use and maintain these technologies correctly. The high cost of pre-press material, most of which is imported, remains a problem for printers and publishers.

Easy access to computer technology and software does present problems for pre-press service providers. Many of their clients now prepare publications themselves and present it to the pre-press provider in electronic format. Typically, files will have problems opening, as there can be incompatibility of fonts, images have been scanned at too low a resolution or are blurred, layout is poor, proof reading has not been done, and clients are not willing to provide original documents. In many cases the pre-press provider will need to spend time re-doing the layout and design because of compatibility issues, and this can lead to a changes in the original design.

One significant problem for publishing in Cambodia has been the lack of standardisation regarding Khmer script on computers. In the absence of any national standard, individual companies have developed their own fonts to present an image of the Khmer character on the basis of the underlying ASCII English character. These fonts are mutually incompatible, and use different keys to generate the same character, creating problems for typists as well as for printers and publishers dealing with a variety of incoming files. Furthermore, this interim approach does not permit proper formatting, searching, spell checking and word wrap as expected by users of word processing and database packages, leaving Cambodian publishers and researchers in a parlous state.

In 2000 the government established a Committee for the Standardization of Khmer Characters for Computers, and this body has been liaising with the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) and with Unicode Inc. in developing a Khmer character set to be included as part of the Unicode 4, to be published in late 2002. Meanwhile, rendering engines and applications are being developed, which will bring Khmer character handling in line with international practice.

## PRESS SECTION

It appears that the printing houses interviewed were fairly well equipped with many in possession of off-set machines. Most of the machinery used was purchased second hand from Vietnam in the last 15 years. For the older machines there seems little problem for printers to acquire spare parts from Vietnam and Thailand. The survey did not seek to find out the make or model of these printing presses.

There is sufficient capacity for 1-, 2- and 4 colour work. Overall the quality of equipment being used is improving as printers begin to reinvest profits into their businesses.

The MOEYS Printing House (PH) has arguably the largest printing capacity. With funding from UNICEF 3 large and 4 small off-set sheet printers were purchased which gave the PH a capacity of

1.5-2 million books a year. In 2000 PH, with ADB funds, was able to purchase a one colour web press which raised its printing capacity to 5 million books a year. However, under BETP requirements PH had to sub-contract out 50% of its production to outside printers giving PH unused excess printing capacity.

#### TRAINING IN PRINTING TECHNIQUES

There are two training centres in Cambodia for printers, Don Bosco Technical School and SVA Printing.

Don Bosco technical school was opened in 1993 and the printing course started in 1994. Each year it receives 25 students for its printing course. Persons between 15 and 19 years old who are orphans or from a poor background are given preference. They have to pass a selection test to be able to study at the Don Bosco school.

The training duration is 2 years. Students study theory one week and practice in the workshop of the school the alternate week. The subjects studied are: graphic arts, silk-screen, art design, computer (Page Maker, PhotoShop, Scanning, Quark Xpress, Illustrator, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word), offset printing, binding, lay out, English, Khmer, mathematics. Don Bosco has produced a valuable Khmer language manual for printing technicians which is sold along with other technical manuals they produce.

Students participate in the commercial work of Don Bosco printing house during their training. Until recently 90% of all students who completed the course found work with a printing or related company. Now, only 70% of printing students can find work as there is less demand for printing technicians.

SVA started its technical school in 1992. Each year, SVA technical school receives around 18 students for printing training. The duration of the course is one year. Potential students undergo a selection test. Students are expected to have completed at least grade 9 in school.

The subjects studied are: graphic arts, silk-screen, art-design, computers (Page Maker, PhotoShop, Scanning PC, Quark Xpress, Illustrator, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word), offset printing, binding/sewing, lay out.

Students work in the workshop but don't participate in the commercial activities of SVA Printing House. Students are divided into small groups to study each phase of printing. There are five main working groups in the printing process - computer (lay-out, colour proofing), film making, plate making, testing and printing, work finishing.

When students finish school, 80% of students are said to find work. If a student feels that they are not yet ready to work they can extend their training at the school.

The decline in the number of students finding placements with printing companies would indicate an oversupply of technicians. However, 29% of the printing house interviewed stated they had difficulty finding qualified staff. This situation is due mainly to the demand from printing houses for experienced technicians. There is also the problem that as technology changes, especially in the area of pre-press, the training courses have to struggle to keep pace with these changes. Where there is no training being offered is in the area of machine repair, especially of new model pre-press and printing equipment. Without skilled local repair technicians many printers will need to take the expensive option of bringing in technicians from neighbouring countries.

## QUALITY AND PROBLEMS

Apart from the problems that printers voiced, printers themselves were often criticised by those individuals and organisations that seek to print material in Cambodia. Somehow printers will need to address these problems. Common complaints included poor quality colour and colour separation, blurring of images, inconsistent colouring through different batch runs of the same publication, inability to meet deadlines, poor binding, missing pages. Those printers who were considered to produce good quality publications were criticised for being far too expensive. At times they were accused of being eight times more expensive than printers outside of Cambodia.

Interquess, the publisher of the *Cambodian Yellow Pages*, has just published 30,000 copies of the 2002-2003 edition. In the past they had printed in Thailand and Malaysia and for the 2002 edition they decided to print outside of Cambodia again. If printed in Cambodia it would take 4 months for the project to be completed and would probably be spread amongst a number of printers. If they printed in China it would take only 10 days for the same project, or 1 month in Thailand. They calculated it would be three times more expensive to have it printed in Cambodia even factoring in the costs of transport, import duties and the additional cost of supervising a job at a remote site. They decided to print in Thailand.

An individual author who received a grant to publish his book found the printing of his book to be of extremely poor quality. Smudged pages, faded text, blurred images and poor quality paper ruined the final product. He had not entered into any contract with the printer and did not have the means nor was in a position to force the printer to reprint his book to a more acceptable standard.

Another publisher of a quality publication approached one of Cambodia's more highly regarded young printing companies with their publication. Out of 3000 copies to be printed, 500 were rejected because of blurred pictures, missing and smudged pages.

## PRINTING SUPPLIES

The survey found that virtually all paper, ink, film and plates used in the Cambodian printing industry is imported. The two largest suppliers of ink, paper, and other supplies in Cambodia are Goodhill Enterprise (Cambodia) Ltd and So Sovann. Goodhill, a Singaporean owned company, is perhaps the largest supplier of paper while So Sovann provides the bulk of ink and plates to printers. Other paper suppliers include Singpack (Cambodia) Corporation, and CPI Cam Paper Industries Ltd.

There is only one paper mill in Cambodia, which uses recycled paper to manufacture industrial paper, used for containers. The CODE report of 1992 made reference to three paper mills producing 500 tonnes a year of low quality writing paper and 250 tonnes a year of wrapping paper.<sup>66</sup> It appears that these small enterprises no longer operate.

Unfortunately, we had difficulty in obtaining official figures from the Bureau of Customs for imports of printing materials each year into Cambodia. In the absence of these figures we can only estimate.

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<sup>66</sup> CODE p101.



Our interviews indicate that between 1000 to 1200 tonnes of paper is imported into the country each month. Perhaps a further 20% comes in via illegal channels. According to a Goodhill representative, 80% of all paper imported into Cambodia comes from Indonesia, originating from the Allied Pulp and Paper Mill company. The remainder comes from Thailand, Korea, China and the UK. Prior to 1991 nearly all paper supplies were imported from the former Soviet Union with a reported monthly demand for paper at that time of 450 tonnes.<sup>67</sup>

So-called wood free paper accounts for 50% of all paper imports. The remainder is mainly made up of coated paper, newsprint and photocopy paper.

An estimated 1.2 tonnes of ink is imported each month into Cambodia, mostly ink from Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and China. Good quality ink from Japan or Singapore retails at about \$8 per kilo, while the lower quality ink from China sells for \$2-3 per kilo.

Any shipment valued at over \$4000 is subject to pre-shipment inspection by Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS), with the value of the shipment verified and tax calculated at the point of origin. SGS receives a 0.8% fee for the inspection service paid by the importer in the country of importation. The tax on paper is 17%, of this 7% is duty and 10% value added tax (VAT) and on ink 25%, made up of a duty of 15% and 10% VAT.

There were mixed feelings regarding SGS. One supplier felt that SGS was not necessary while others felt it created a level playing field and released them from the need to deal with local customs officers even though they found that SGS tended to over value some of the products they imported.

According to one supplier, the price of transporting goods from the sea port of Sihanoukville to Phnom Penh was high. Based on his experience one container cost \$580 to transport from the port to Phnom Penh. Actual transport accounted for \$180, while the remaining \$400 was spent on paper work and bribes, often referred to as unofficial taxes.

Considering that all paper and ink is imported into Cambodia the question must be asked as to the possibility of establishing a paper mill in Cambodia to supply local demands. We could not ascertain if there has been a feasibility study done on this issue. According to our interviewees, to establish a paper mill in Cambodia would meet with some difficulties. The biggest obstacle, they say, is the lack of raw materials, in particular wood pulp. Long-term investment would first need to be made in establishing wood plantations to supply the wood pulp before such a mill could become operational. Whether this is actually the case for Cambodia would require extensive study into the economic viability of establishing a pulp and paper mill in Cambodia and to include investigation into other alternatives for raw materials such as bamboo, grasses, bagasse, and straw. Detailed inventories of fibre resource, market surveys and feasibility studies for suitable mills in appropriate locations would also need to be done.

Further obstacles to establishing a paper mill in Cambodia that emerged from our interviews with printing suppliers include those common to all enterprises: the difficulty of obtaining low interest, long term loans for local business people to invest in such a project, a lack of foreign investor confidence, particularly in dealing with the government bureaucracy, and bribes.

Perhaps the biggest cause of high prices for paper and ink is the small market for such products in Cambodia. Cambodia is not a large consumer of ink and paper, and so suppliers here cannot order directly from overseas paper mills and are forced to go through sub-agents of the mills leading to

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<sup>67</sup> CODE p101.

higher priced paper. Larger shipments into Cambodia would also see a corresponding drop in the actual freight costs.

As part of a commodity aid program valued at \$20 million a year the Japanese government provides, amongst other materials, paper to the Ministry of Commerce. The Ministry of Commerce, through a bidding committee, auctions off the paper.

As long as Cambodia is dependent on imports of paper to meet its domestic requirements, liberal tariff and trade policies should be adopted for those categories of paper, such as newsprint, book-paper and boards, considered most essential to national educational, cultural and industrial programs. For example, under the BETP program the MOEYS printing house and its sub contractors do not pay import duty on paper and board.

Any establishment or expansion of local paper manufacture should be facilitated by low tariffs on equipment and other materials.

## FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY ON PRINTERS

This survey interviewed 21 printing houses, all in Phnom Penh and the neighbouring province of Kandal. Only two active printing houses were found in the provinces visited by the survey team one in Kampong Cham and the other in Neak Leung, and it seems unlikely that any exist in the areas not visited by the survey team. Anyone in the province needing to print a publication would either do a photocopy at a local photocopy shop or would have to go to a printing house in Phnom Penh.

We were particularly interested in finding out the pre-press, print and post-press facilities and equipment possessed by each publisher/printer, the source of their supplies, their involvement in the preparation of a book, whether they were involved in the distribution or promotion of books, and the general problems that they face in all these areas.

A common complaint is the high cost of printing in Cambodia compared to neighbouring countries and we asked printers why they thought printing costs were so high. We also asked their opinions on how printing costs could be lowered.

Our researchers noted that they were viewed with suspicion by many of the printers, and often had problems making appointments to meet with printers. Many were reluctant to quote figures or, even if willing could not provide us with accurate figures in particular to the number of titles printed and quantity of ink and paper purchased in one year because of poor or non-existent record keeping.

Of the printing houses interviewed, seventy-one percent were private Cambodian companies, 14% co-operatives, 5% foreign owned and 5% government owned. Of the total number surveyed, 14% stated they received some form of financial support from NGOs and 9% received funds from the government.

The average staff numbers for printing houses is 30 persons, ranging from 2 to 125 staff.

All but one of these printing houses printed books. The main type of materials that these businesses printed were:

Books	95%
Book Covers	81%
Stationery	76%
Name Cards	71%
Calendars/Diaries	71%
Posters	67%
Magazines	67%
Newspapers	52%
Leaflets	10%

Fifty-two percent of printers stated that their most profitable printing activity is books and 14% said posters and calendars were most profitable. On average 30% of a printer's income comes from the printing of books. This would not be representative of the industry as a whole because we tried to seek printing houses that do publish books. Also note that the term "books" can include small runs of internal material for NGOs, companies etc.

The survey asked printers to provide figures on the number of book titles and copies produced for 2001. Thirty-eight percent could not or would not answer how many titles were printed. Most of the remainder are only estimates. In total our interviewees reported 1047 titles as having been printed in 2001. This includes the 100 titles reported by the Ministry of Education Printing House, which also

reported that it printed 6 million books for the year 2001. The closest figure to that by another printing house was 160,000 copies.

Most print runs range on average from 500 - 2500 copies per title with the MOEYS printing house printing between 10,000 - 300,000 copies per title.

Printers reported their major clients to be as follows:

	Responses
NGOs	81%
Other companies	43%
Individual Authors	38%
Ministry Education	33%
Religious Organisations	24%
Other Ministries	24%
Embassies	19%
Ministry of Agriculture	19%
Academic Institutions	10%
Ministry of Health	10%
Council of Ministers	10%

On the question of whether the printer plans what they print or just accepts jobs that are given to them, 76% stated that they do not plan what they published. They accepted whatever jobs were given to them.

Seventy one percent stated that they become involved in some way with the selection or commissioning of illustrations and the same number were involved in some way with the design and layout of the book. However, only 14% played some role in determining the content of the publication. The survey also asked whether the printer took responsibility for editing spelling and grammar. A high proportion, 71%, said they did, however we feel that this is not a true reflection of their involvement in verifying spelling and grammar and rather it indicates that on some occasions they may do this activity.

#### PRE PRESS CAPACITY

Printers were quite flexible in the type of format they were willing to accept material for printing. The major formats accepted were as follows;

Hard Copy	95%
Computer disk	81%
CD	67%
Tracing paper (Kall)	62%
Zip	57%
E-mail	14%

Sixty-seven percent stated they could make the maquette or mock up copy and 76% state they were able to transfer a maquette into camera ready form, either on film (43%) or Kall, a type of tracing paper (33%).

### *Software*

Most printers had access to various types of desktop publishing programs. Most popular were PhotoShop (90%), Corel Publisher (67%), Quark Xpress (57%) Illustrator (29%) and PageMaker (24%).

### *Hardware*

Eighty-six percent of printers possessed a flatbed scanner, 24% had a drum scanner, 81% had plate-making capabilities, 85% had computers. Of these, 55% had both PC and Macs, 33% PCs only and 12% Macs only. Forty-three percent possessed an image setter, a figure we thought would be lower, and is certainly not representative of the entire printing industry. Only one printer had 4 colour film separation capacity.

### *Comments and problems on pre-press activities:*

A number of common problems related to pre-press were evident from our interviews. These can be divided into four groups.

- Lack of skilled staff to draw from, in particular those skilled in using computers and image setters. Generally there is a lack of knowledge of pre press in Cambodia.
- High tax on pre press supplies.
- Lack of skilled technicians in country that can repair equipment such as image setters.
- Problems between client and service provider. These include problems associated with the electronic copies given to them by the client, in particular incompatible fonts, low resolution on images, blurred images. Some clients were unwilling to provide original documents to the printer.

## PRINTING FACILITIES

### *Printing presses*

Of the 21 printers interviewed only the MOEYS Printing House had what could be considered large sized printing machinery, i.e. web press<sup>68</sup>. Eighty-six percent of printers used offset sheet fed printing machines. One printer used an offset roll-fed printer. Only 19% had the capacity to carry out 4 colour printing and 48% 2 colour printing in one pass. Note that this may be overstated as some may print two passes of two colours but claim to do four colour printing.

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<sup>68</sup> The categorisation of printing equipment into big machinery such as four colour printing machines and web presses, small machinery such as off-set machines, letter press printing machines is adopted from, *Mongolia: Access to Books and Other Printed Materials. A Discussion Paper 2001*.

### *Quality Control*

The question of the quality control of books was divided into three parts: What the printer checked before printing; what they checked during printing; and what they checked after printing.

Ninety percent said they carried out quality control of their books. These figures should be taken with some degree of scepticism as printers may wish to give the most positive image of their work. Certainly the observed quality of books and comments by authors and publishers would suggest these were overstated.

### *Quality Before Printing*

Before printing 48% reported that they checked the layout of the publication, 42% would check spelling and grammar, 19% proofed colour, 14% checked illustrations, and the same number checked the film.

### *Quality Control During Printing*

During printing, 52% of printers stated they checked the colour, 28% checked page order, 19% checked ink and 5% illustrations, and removing damaged paper

### *Quality Control After printing*

After printing 47% reported checking page numbering and order, 38% checked for damaged paper, 19% inspected illustrations, 14% looked for repeated pages, 5% the glue on the binding, 5% alignment and registration, 5% if the publication was complete.

## POST PRESS

Post press facilities were divided into four groups: binding, coating, cutting and folding, and wrapping. Of the 21 printers surveyed 10% stated they had no post press facilities.

### *Binding*

Of the printers surveyed 76% carried out thread and glue binding, 71% stapling, 52% perfect binding, 52% ring-binding, 33% saddle stitching, and 14% stitch binding.

### *Coating*

Sixty-seven percent had facilities for gloss coating of paper, 57% had matt coating, 57% had laminating facilities, 14% did PVC coating and 14% UV coating of paper.

### *Cutting and Folding*

Fifty-seven percent of printers cut and trimmed paper by machine and the same number used folding machines, the remainder doing it manually.

### *Wrapping*

Only 14% of printers had shrink wrapping equipment.

### *Marketing of Books*

The survey found that 86% of printers did not sell the books they printed. Those that did sell their own books include the Ministry of Education Printing House, and Don Bosco vocational training school.

## PROBLEMS FACED BY PRINTERS

### *General Problems*

Printers were asked to tell us about the problems they faced as in Cambodia. A wide range of problems were reported. Most common amongst the responses was the problem of high taxes and duties (34%), insufficiently qualified staff (29%), shortage of funds or capital (24%), unused capacity (24%), unpaid bills (24%). Other problems included the difficulty in repairing machinery when it breaks down and the high cost and unreliability of electricity. A few printers spoke of problems of government officials putting pressure on printers as the following quote illustrates:

*Some Government ministries put pressure on us under the pretext that they are not satisfied with the quality of our printing so we have to pay bribe to them so that we can get their approval for that quality.*

One printer complained of the problem of trying to keep costs low while producing high quality products. He could not compete with family businesses who used poor materials and lacked good quality control.

### *The High Cost of Printing*

Printers were asked if they thought the cost of printing was high in Cambodia compared to other countries, if so why, and how could it be reduced. Of the printers who answered this question 75% felt that printing costs were high in Cambodia. Half felt that the costs were high because printing supplies such as paper and ink had to be imported into Cambodia. They felt that if paper and ink were manufactured in Cambodia the cost of printing would become cheaper. Twelve percent felt the high cost of utilities also led to higher printing costs.

*The cost of printing is high because all material for printing such as paper, ink are imported. Also, the cost of water and electricity is high. The raw materials must be produced locally, so that the cost of printing becomes cheaper.*

A small group of printers, 18%, recognised the problem as being the limited market for books, small reading culture, and the small print runs which led to higher prices.

*It can be high because the number customers who need printing is small and the market is small. Because there are not many readers and the level of social economics is still low, the number of books printed is small. If they could print a large number of copies, the printing cost would be lower.*

Other reasons stated were high duties and taxes on imported goods and on the printing business, printers seeking higher profit margins, and the printing process relying too much on manual labour to be competitive with other more technologically developed countries.

#### PRINTERS SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The survey also asked printers if they had any comments or suggestions regarding printing and publishing in Cambodia. This question seemed to expose a new set of problems rather than offering solutions to the problems mentioned in the preceding question.

Some issues that came out strongly were the call for unlicensed printing houses to be closed down, the need to implement copyright law and the need to encourage and support writers.

*We would like unlicensed printing business (tables by the road selling printing services) to be closed down, because they don't pay taxes, they charge cheaper rates than us on the one hand, and they use low quality ink from Vietnam, on the other.*

*Government should pay attention to publishing, including the work of writers and copy right law.*

One printer felt that the government should spread work around to other printers:

*We would like the government to give some work to the printing house to have the jobs to do as the government needs printing without nepotism.*

Continuing on this theme two printers stated they would like to see a fairer bidding system for printing tenders.



Another thought an annual exhibition of the works of publishers and printers should be held. The need to lower the price of utilities and to produce printing supplies locally were also mentioned to a lesser degree.

Two printers saw the problem being that printers should strive more to produce a better quality product.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are few "true" publishers in Cambodia. The idea of what constitutes a publisher is not clear in the minds of many authors, printers, and even those that proclaim to be publishers. The skills that are required to be a publisher are lacking and this is reflected in the quality of publications printed in Cambodia. There is very little support available for struggling independent publishers especially in the areas of the technical aspects of publishing nor is there a programme to strengthen private publishing. Without recognition by donors, authors, printers, and booksellers of the role of the publisher in the book sector there will be little hope for most publishers to become self sufficient or ever rise above their dependence on foreign donors to survive.

Of those involved in the book sector printers have benefited most from Cambodia's evolution to an open market economy. There is no shortage of printers in Phnom Penh and it seems the capacity and quality of their work is slowly improving. The same can not be said for the provinces where printers are almost non existent with photocopy shops partly filling the void. The cost of printing is still unreasonably high due to the high cost of paper and ink, as well as the small print runs ordered by their clients. Overall, print quality is still poor with many printers not carrying out adequate quality control of their publications. Since in many cases the author of the book is dealing directly with the printer the author usually will rely on the printer to ensure a quality publication. As contracts are rarely entered into between printer and client the risk for dispute is high.

Despite there being two training centres for printers the skills students acquire still do not meet the demands of an increasingly sophisticated printing industry.

#### Recommendations

- formation of a publishers association and promotion of the importance of publishers,
- training for publishers to include editing practices, layout, preparing manuscripts, marketing and research etc.
- improved co-operation and co-ordination between organisations involved in publishing,
- regular book reviews through the mass media and radio readings of new books,
- formation of a printers association,
- training for printers in quality control
- training of repair technicians
- import duties to be lifted on books and other publications and materials for printing reading materials
- feasibility study into the viability of establishing a paper mill in Cambodia

### OVERVIEW

In the absence of any legal depository law, ISBN registration, or National Bibliography it is difficult to calculate how many different titles are printed in Cambodia in a given year. Small print runs and limited distribution by individual authors make it more difficult to keep track of titles printed in Cambodia. Compounding the problem are the publications printed by NGOs that are not offered for sale and are distributed to a small group of organisations and individuals, many never to appear on commercial book shelves or in library catalogues.

### BOOK TRADE

To know the number of book retailers and wholesalers is also difficult to determine since there is no official list of these businesses available. There are well over 200 book/newspaper retailers in Phnom Penh alone. They can be divided into the following types: bookshops, market stalls, and roadside kiosks. The main selling venues for books are the market stalls in Orussey, Olympic, and Thmey markets. There are over 150 roadside kiosks as well, spread over Phnom Penh selling newspapers and magazines as well as children's books and English language learning materials. Most are strategically located near schools and markets.

The majority of bookshops and kiosks deal not only in printed material but also sell stationery, postcards, posters, souvenirs as well as providing services such as photocopying and telephone calls in order to make a sufficient profit. Amongst the largest of these book shops are the International Book Shop, Angkor Thom, Chhey Heng and Apsara. Only one of this type of book shop had computerised stock control. Most others had little idea of how many titles and stock they had. They would simply browse their shelves and if they noticed they were running low on one title they would order.

A few of these bookshops also act as wholesalers particularly of English learning books and books in English language from Thailand and Vietnam. In general, the sale of Khmer dictionaries, textbooks and English language learning materials is much higher than Khmer novels. Many of the dictionaries and English language learning material find their way from Vietnam and Thailand to these bookshops through individual salespeople.

According to a survey conducted by Reyum in 2002, an estimated 80% of book titles held by the average bookshop are said to be copies. Of these the best selling are copies of English language books such as *Headway*, *Streamline*, and *Essential English*. Copies of Oxford University Press publications such as *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* and *Oxford Practice Grammar* are also becoming popular. A new wave of publications printed in Cambodia are appearing which are now attracting high sales. This includes revised editions of *Headway English Course* with explanations translated into Khmer. *The Oxford Practice Grammar* on sale in Cambodia has an added foreword in Khmer, and displays the name of Norton University on the cover.

While many people complain of rampant illegal copying of books it appears that the majority of books that are copied are those where the original is printed outside of Cambodia and are usually books of a technical nature. A number of wholesalers we spoke to said that local publications were

usually not pirated unless they have been out of print for some time and there had been no effort by the owner of the works to reprint.

Apart from book wholesalers in the markets, there are very few retailers in Cambodia dedicated to selling books only. The main dedicated book retailers are Monument Books and Mekong Libris. Both can be considered up-market book retailers with Monument Books dealing in English language material and Mekong Libris in French language material. They work together to supply publications to 24 outlets located in hotels, airports, and service stations in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. This entire network is aimed squarely at the tourist and expatriate market with the majority of their publications imported into Cambodia. Meng Hieng of Monument Books estimates that 75% of their clientele are tourists, 20% resident expatriates and only 5% Cambodians. Monument Books and Mekong Libris have by far the finest selection of foreign language books on Cambodia in the country. However, very few of their publications on display are actually printed in the country. With the high cost of transport and import duties the books become too expensive for the average Cambodian.

Monument Books has noted the growing class of people with a higher disposable income and the increasing numbers of tertiary level students, and plans to begin supplying local book shops and market stalls with books from overseas. The initiative will involve Monument Books obtaining exclusive distribution rights with various well know publishers overseas to distribute discounted books in Cambodia. The strategy involves using their exclusive rights to try to prevent illegal copies of their books being sold in the market place, while working with overseas publishers to provide publications at a price low enough that people would buy the original publication over an illegal copy. To gauge the response of students Monument Books held a small book fair at the Banana Center and found many students eager to buy books, especially those priced between 3-5 dollars.

Mekong Libris is involved in a French government initiative called Program Plus, to develop reading and sale of French publications in Cambodia and Vietnam. Involving the French Ministries of Culture and Cooperation, Centre National de Libre and Centre de l'édition, this program which originally operated in Africa, encourages French publishers to print extra copies for overseas to be sold at 50% discount, especially books in law and economics aimed at students. It began with 50 titles but the program will soon expand to 300 titles.

The London Book Center is the only second hand book shop in Phnom Penh catering mainly for the expatriate and tourist market.

All the major markets in Phnom Penh have stalls that sell books. As described in chapter 5 above, many of the bookstalls in Orussey market are wholesalers/publishers who buy the rights to manuscripts which they publish themselves. Many of the sellers in this market have their own regular authors. After buying a manuscript from them they print it and distribute it among the other wholesalers in the market.

Typically sellers earned around 200-500 riel on a book that did not have a set price. For publications marked with a set price, including newspapers and magazines, the profit for the retailer is usually between 14-20% of the cover price. Most publications are paid for on delivery and very few are returnable to the supplier. Consignment of books is confined generally to publications such as *Tam Tam*, *Mom ning Mab*, and Sipar publications with many sellers saying they wished for more publications to be made available on consignment where payment is made later on a "sale and return" basis. But such an arrangement requires the publisher or distributor to have confidence that the book will not be damaged while in the stall or that the retailer will not simply disappear with the consignment, a problem that the distributors of Tam Tam have experienced. Such a lack of confidence is a prevailing handicap in the Cambodian business sector.

## TEXTBOOKS

MOEYS has its own sales outlet and also allows retailers to sell their text books under contract. Contracts have been entered into with agents in 13 different provinces: Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng (Neak Loeung), Svay Rieng, Kandal, Takeo, Kampot, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, and Phnom Penh. These vendors have their contracts renewed annually and are responsible for the marketing of textbooks in the province. In 2001 MOEYS Distribution Office reported that 290,000 textbooks were sold through their agents. The MOEYS Publishing and Distribution House (PDH) has its own bookshop which they report has low sales of textbooks because of its poor location and insufficient funds for producing advertising materials, catalogues, and display shelves and other equipment.

The Education Quality Improvement Project (EQIP), a Cambodian Government program implemented through MOEYS and funded by a loan from the International Development Association of the World Bank, aims to develop a model for improving primary education by empowering local school communities to identify their own needs. Directors of cluster schools will be able to apply for their budgets directly to the project. Typically a cluster school may receive \$4500 for the year, with the director earmarking 10-15% for improving the school library. In collaboration with Sipar, EQIP plans to begin the trial of a wholesale shop/display centre for textbooks, teachers manuals, sports equipment etc, in Takeo province. The goal is to train staff in these centres to assist school Directors to see what is available and how to obtain it without the need for a journey to Phnom Penh.

Theoretically, such an enterprise would allow other publishers to display their materials in these centres with the possibility of creating a larger market for the publications. If successful this model will be reproduced in other provinces. The showroom, opposite the POE, is fine and in the doorway, visible from the street, was the glass display cabinet with vertical displays of the covers of interesting books and stacks of backup copies behind.

It is worth looking at the progress of this trial shop/display centre as it illustrates quite well how people adapt to conditions of Cambodia. The manager of the shop also has a bookstall at the local market. She noticed that people have the habit of shopping in the market. In response she moved most of her stock from the shop to her stall in the market. This stall lacked any form of useful system of book display. As Vin McNamara explains, "there is no other serious bookshop in the market - just one which sells a few comics - and Sovannaphoum books only. So the agent is the "rival" shop which is taking all the business. In effect she maintains the showroom to please us (EQUIP) and the market stall to make money".

At the time of writing this report a public exhibition of the growing wealth of innovative learning materials appearing on the market was being organised by EDUCAM. The objective was to have a display in place in advance of the 2002 Water Festival and to attract not only Phnom Penh residents but visitors from the provinces in town for the Festival. Advance publicity would alert visiting provincial teachers to the learning materials show. If the display proves popular, arrangements will be considered for taking the exhibition on tour, province by province, with the assistance of provincial authorities.

## DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS IN CAMBODIA

Perhaps one of the weakest links in the Cambodian book continuum is distribution. The extent of Cambodia's distribution network is very much restricted by its road network. While 80% of Cambodia's population live in rural areas, the roads linking them to provincial centres are in poor condition. Poor roads and non-existent marketing of publications, combined with the low literacy rate and low purchasing power of the rural population, and an unreliable postal system, provide little motivation for distributors to work outside of the existing but limited distribution network. However, Cambodia's transport infrastructure is improving and the prospects for a more reliable distribution system in the future is encouraging.

### BACKGROUND

Prior to 1985 the distribution of trade books was the responsibility of Ministry of Information and Culture's *Compagnie de la Diffusion des Livres (CDL)* which supplied the provinces with books but did very little to collect revenue from the provinces. According to the CODE report, after 1985 CDL became an autonomous state body. Later CDL became responsible for its own economic survival and ceased receiving financial support from the Ministry of Culture. Instead it had to survive from revenue generated from sales.<sup>69</sup>

During the 1980s of the total books distributed by CDL, 80% were books from the Soviet Union in various languages including Khmer, and 20% were published in Cambodia. In 1989, 695,000 copies came from the former Soviet Union. In an annual report of the Ministry of Information and Culture distribution suffered from a "lack of communication between the distribution section and the provincial or town establishments... At present there are many thousands of book stores throughout the country. But not many books published by the Department are put out for sale at these stores. There are insufficient books for readers at the town library, district and suburban establishments."<sup>70</sup>

By 1991 only six book titles, totalling 21,000 copies, were produced by the Ministry of Information and Culture. Together with imported books 354,283 copies were distributed. The Ministry was at that time concerned by the growing number of small printing houses and silk screening businesses that were producing books themselves. By 1991, provincial bookstores, which at the time were the responsibility of the provincial government, were hugely in debt to CDL. There was no organised marketing or promotion of books, and all transactions were done on a cash basis. In such a position there was no way it could survive and shortly afterwards CDL collapsed leaving Cambodia without an large-scale distributor, apart from the Ministry of Education.

### CURRENT SITUATION OF DISTRIBUTION IN CAMBODIA.

Besides the MOEYS distribution house there is no central or large scale book distribution company in Cambodia nor a central organising body for distributors. A regular distribution system for publications to the provinces is confined to newspapers and magazines, organised by a number of different individuals who distribute to towns located along the major national highways. Books tend to be distributed to the provinces by roving salespeople, individual authors, or sent directly to the

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<sup>69</sup> CODE. p119

<sup>70</sup> Annual Report Ministry of Information and Culture 1990.

provinces by wholesalers. In brief the current business of distributing Cambodian publications can be characterised as an undeveloped, risky, low profit business.

The populous centres of Sihanoukville on National Route 4, Kampong Cham, on National Route 7, Kampong Thom, and Siem Reap on National route 6 and Kampong Chhnang, Battambang, and Banteay Meanchey on National Route 5 are well serviced by taxis and trucks and are easily accessible from Phnom Penh. The use of the fast boat is the preferred option for getting publications to Kratie and it is also used for Siem Reap. Stung Treng also is serviced by boat, however, its small population and long distance beyond Kratie makes it less economical for distributors. Oddar Meanchey, Ratanak Kiri, Mondul Kiri, Preah Vihear receive very few publications because of their distance from Phnom Penh, small number of commuters and potential readers, and poor roads. The situation for Koh Kong should improve as the road that links it to National Route 4 is now being upgraded by the Thai Government.

While Phnom Penh and the main provincial centres are well supplied with publications, one only needs to go 10 kilometres out of Phnom Penh to find that it is almost impossible to purchase a current newspaper, or magazine. Any village or small town located on a secondary route has little hope of having magazines or newspapers distributed to them. Our researchers visited a number of villages located near provincial centres only to find on many occasions they could not find a single newspaper for sale. There were some businesses that sold a few book titles but these were mainly limited to photocopied English language learning materials.

Distribution services of publications can be divided into the following groups;

- Distribution of newspapers and magazines,
- Distribution of trade books,
- Distribution of textbooks,
- Distribution of NGO publications.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, AND ACADEMIC JOURNALS.

Through our interviews the survey identified seven major distributors of newspapers and magazines to the provinces. The number may be higher since we did not interview all newspaper and magazine publishers. When our researchers approached kiosk owners and asked them who they received their publications from, most could not provide a name or contact details. Retailers knew surprisingly little about the distributors who supplied them with newspapers and magazines stating that they only knew that "somebody" came to bring and take publications.

Generally, a distributor has the right to distribute a number (usually three-four) different titles of a particular political tendency. One distributor carried 19 newspaper paper titles, but these were titles with small print runs of only 500-700 copies. Publications are distributed in Phnom Penh by motorcycle and sent to provincial towns by taxi or boat. There they are received by an agent of the distributor who then distributes to the other kiosks and book shops in the town. Usually, the agent is a kiosk or book shop owner also. Distribution of publications generally does not extend outside of the provincial centre. People living outside of a provincial town need to travel to the town themselves to purchase a newspaper or magazine or ask a taxi driver or a friend to bring one back for them.

To provide some examples, the distributor of the magazines, *Leisure Cambodia* (circulation of 4000 copies), *Angkor Thom* (6000 copies), and *Kolap* (5000 copies), distributes both in Phnom Penh by motorcycle, and to the provinces by taxi and boat. Out of the total circulation of each of these magazines, 400 copies of *Leisure Cambodia*, 2000 copies of *Angkor Thom*, 1500 copies of *Kolap* go to the provinces. This means that approximately one third of these publications are available for the 80% of Cambodia's population that live in the provinces. These publications like many others do not even reach Kep, Mondulhiri, Stung Treng, Oddar Meanchey, Rattank Kiri, and Svay Rieng.

*Angkor Thom* retails at 2500 riel per copy. The distributor buys it for 1800 riel a copy and sells it to his agent for 2100 riel, a commission of 300 riel or 16%. The remaining 400 riel is split between the agent and retailer. The distributor must then deduct the cost of transport from his earnings, approximately \$15 per issue for each title. Also he is expected to cover the costs for any material that is damaged, stolen, or lost during transport to the provinces, apparently quite a regular occurrence.

In the case of the distributor of *Procheaprey* (Popular) magazine, Cambodia's most popular magazine, he distributes 20,000 -25,000 copies and receives 6% of the wholesale price. For the one newspaper title he distributes he receives 21% of the wholesale price.

The distributor of the *Rasmei Kampuchea*, Cambodia's best selling newspaper, with a circulation of 20,000 copies, pays 480 riel per copy and sells to her agents for 570 riel a copy, a mark up of 19%.

Most unsold magazines could be returned except for *Procheaprey* (Popular) and *Indradevi*.

Distributors of newspapers and magazines stated a number of common problems. There were complaints by distributors that because their agents were also retailers the agents at times paid little attention to ensuring that publications were distributed to other retailers in the town. It was also quite common for retailers to change locations or close down altogether leaving behind unpaid bills. Distributors of daily publications found distribution to the provinces difficult because of poor roads, flooding and high cost of transport. In one instance the distributor for *Rasmei Kampuchea* lost 1000 copies when her regular taxi driver was not available and she had to use a driver she was unfamiliar with.

Of the academic journals, only three titles were distributed to the provinces which used a combinations of taxis, friends or agents, and NGOs to get their publications out.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF TRADE BOOKS

Distribution of trade books within Cambodia operates by a number of different means. These are:

##### *Direct Book Distribution*

This distribution system is what one might expect to find in an organised book sector. This system is operated jointly by Mekong Libris (French language) and Monument Books (English titles). The distribution network extends to 24 selling points in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, hotels, airports, service stations, and some pharmacies and supermarkets. The majority of books they distribute are books imported into Cambodia which are aimed at the expatriate and tourists market. For books imported into Cambodia they must pay import duty of 17.5%. At this stage neither distribute to small bookshops, market stalls and kiosks, although this may change in the future.

### *Wholesale Distribution*

The second system is more similar to warehouse/wholesale sales than a distribution system. However, it is the most predominant system used in Cambodia for getting trade books to urban and provincial book retailers. The largest group of book wholesalers in Cambodia can be found at Orussey Market and to a lesser extent Olympic Market and Thmey Market (New Market). In Orussey Market there are over 30, 1-2 person (mostly women), operated market stalls. (*For more information of retailers see section on sellers*) Most Khmer novels and Khmer language material originate from here and it is where most book retailers buy books for their stock. Reference and language books, mostly pirated publications from Vietnam and Thailand, are also found here.

Typically, a provincial retailer will send a relative, or make a telephone order, to the wholesaler. Orders are usually sent to the provinces by taxi, the cost of which is carried by the retailer. Urban retailers will come directly to the wholesaler, usually paying cash up front.

Donor funded publications marked "Not for Sale" are displayed openly in these markets. These publications are usually extra copies that a printer has sold or copies that have been stolen at some point in the distribution network between the warehouse and the receiver. UNICEF purchased thousands of copies of *Tam Tam*, which is published by Graphic Roots, to distribute to cluster schools. According to estimates by Graphic Roots staff, 50% end up in the market. Sellers are not afraid to sell these publications, with one seller stating "why should I be afraid if the person who sold them to me is not afraid". Another seller remarked that she believed that these publications were sold to the markets to raise money for petrol to cover transport costs or are sold by school principals to raise money to buy other materials for their school.

### *Salespeople*

Independent salespeople carry out another form of book distribution. They fall into two groups; a group of people selling publications of NGOs and small publishers; and the second, individuals who bring publications overland from Vietnam and Thailand, selling directly to wholesalers and retailers.

An example of the first group is the distribution to the provinces of Graphic Roots' publication *Tam Tam* by four sales persons working on a commission basis. They are led by a salaried staff member of Graphic Roots. As well as this title they distribute Sipar's *Khnom Chong Dang, Air Magazine* (Phnom Penh only) and *Cambodian Bird News*. They travel to the provinces by taxi and leave publications with the retailers, returning a few weeks later to collect money. In Phnom Penh they distribute to 11 organisations, 32 bookshops, 8 wholesalers in the markets, and 146 kiosks, as well as 14 bookshops in the provinces.

Less is known about those salespeople who peddle books from Vietnam and to a lesser extent Thailand. Most of the books they deal in are English language books particular children's books, dictionaries, and learning materials such as *Headway* and *Streamline*. They leave their books on consignment and return at least once a month to collect money.

As with the problems faced by newspaper and magazine distributors, it is not uncommon for these distributors to return and find that a kiosk owner has moved, or has been replaced by a new owner who refuses to pay for the magazines in their possession. Others will not sell the publication unless they are given a larger commission.



With a very small market outside of Cambodia for Khmer language books there is almost no distribution of books to clients outside of Cambodia. Reyum is making an effort to distribute its English language books to Thailand, the United States and to Europe. Without any reliable overland transport companies to take books to Thailand, prohibitively high airfreight charges, and small profit margins, the printing of books in Cambodia for an overseas market is not economically appealing.

Some magazines and newspapers such as *Popular*, *Indradevi*, and *Rasmei Kampuchea* are sent to the USA, France, Canada, and Australia on an informal and irregular basis. Indradevi reports that 1000 copies of each issue are sent abroad by individuals who may have relatives in the above countries. They are carried personally or sent by post.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF TEXTBOOKS

The distribution of textbooks is undertaken by the Distribution Office (DO) of the Printing and Distribution House of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MOEYS). MOEYS distribution system has 3 officials in each province and 2 each in each of the 186 districts, covering nearly 6000 schools throughout Cambodia. There are approximately 2.3 million primary, 240,000 junior high school, and 110,000 senior high school students. DO is responsible for ensuring that over 5.7 million books are distributed from its central warehouse to these schools.<sup>71</sup> It also distributes posters and publications for other organisations, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, PASEC, CAMSET, FINMAPS. Other educational materials produced by NGOs are distributed under different means. (See section on Distribution of NGO Publications)

DO has three trucks and a pickup which they use to deliver books to Provincial Education Offices (PEO) and District Education Offices (DEO). In theory DO distributes textbooks to PEOs which store them for a short time and then distributes to DEOs. DEOs will either transport them to the schools or have the schools come to collect them.

DO reported that it has a capacity to distribute 6 million textbooks to schools annually. In 2001 it was able to distribute 6,279,633 books indicating that despite problems with flooding, poor roads and trucks breaking down, it was able to operate effectively.

For 5 years the BETP had paid a fee of 300 riel (7.5 cents) per copy distributed. However, this was reported as only providing enough revenue to cover operating costs and did not provide the resources to establish monitoring systems for checking stock at each point in the distribution chain, from printing stage to delivery to the student.

According to DO the warehousing capacity in the provinces is poor and 100 warehouses need to be built or upgraded in order to facilitate the distribution of textbooks. Storage facilities at the school level are even worse where books are stored on floors, tables, and chairs in converted classrooms. Unicef has provided metal storage boxes to many schools in an attempt to alleviate this problem.

In 1992 CODE reported on the high proportion of theft and damage to books. The situation has improved but the theft of books, which end up for sale in the market place continues. It is a problem that the DO has been unable to solve, even with the issue of a circular by the Ministry of Interior authorising the police to confiscate state property that has found its way into private hands.

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<sup>71</sup> More detailed information on textbook distribution can be found in the reports of the Basic Education Textbook (BETP) study, in particular; *BETP Research Component, Policy Studies. Final Report. 1999* and *Textbook Availability and Utilisation Study 1999-2001. Summary Report.*

#### DISTRIBUTION OF NGO PUBLICATIONS

International NGOs such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and IRRI that print materials to support programs in sectors such as literacy, health, agriculture etc usually use an informal network of local NGOs, embassies, and ministries to get their publications out to the provinces. In 2000 UNESCO published 9600 copies of "The Heart of Asia". These were distributed through MOEYS and other NGOs. Whether all these publications got to their intended destinations is not clear. This system is not an entirely reliable one with many of the publishing NGOs not verifying that their publications are getting to their intended audience.

Shanti Volunteer Association distributes to libraries in 310 core cluster schools in eight provinces. Distribution is linked to workshops on storytelling and library activities organised by SVA. On the last day of the workshop books are distributed to the participants. SVA also has a Culture and Tradition section which co-operates with the Ministry for Religious Affairs and its provincial offices, as well as the Buddhist Institute to distribute reprints of Buddhist texts to temples throughout Cambodia. They reported that they conduct visits to the provinces to see if publications are being received by the relevant temples.

## FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY ON BOOK RETAILERS

We surveyed representatives of three main types of book retailers; bookshops, kiosks, and market stalls. Since very little writing, publishing and printing of books is done in the provinces we decided to conduct a greater proportion of our sellers survey in the provinces where there is a comparably larger number of books sellers. Ninety sellers were interviewed, 83 of whom were located in the provinces. Of these 40 were market stalls, 18 kiosks, and 32 bookshops. Wholesalers were not covered in this survey and instead more in-depth interviews were conducted with a selected number of wholesalers in Phnom Penh.

As well as our own survey we also referred to the survey of book sellers conducted by Reyum in 2002 and the SIPAR survey into the distribution of books in Phnom Penh done in 2000.

### BOOK STOCK

We were interested in knowing the total number of Khmer titles and number of foreign language titles each interviewee had in stock and how many copies on average they kept of each title. This would give an idea of how well stocked and how much is invested into a bookshop. Asking this question also acted as a gauge to how well managed the shop was and what level of inventory control was used by the seller.

Our researchers noted that nearly all sellers interviewed did not refer to any inventory records. Many did not keep records of their stock and in many cases only provided rough estimates while some actually counted their titles in stock.

Including all three groups of sellers, each seller held on average 206 different Khmer titles with an average total number of copies of 1653. This is a ratio of 8 copies per title. The average number of foreign titles on hand was 74 with an average total number of copies of 610, a ratio of 8.2 copies per foreign title.

Bookshops on average held 321 Khmer titles, with a total of 2241 copies and a title to copies ratio of 7; and an average of 139 foreign language, an average total number of copies of 844 and a title to copies ratio of 6.

Market stalls held an average of 147 different Khmer titles, with an average total number of copies of 1352 and a title to copies ratio of 9.2. For foreign language titles they had on average 34 different titles, with a total of 403 copies and a title to copies ratio of 11.8.

Kiosks had on average 98 different Khmer titles, with an average total number of copies of 696 and a title to copies ratio of 7, while for foreign language titles they held on average 46 different titles with an average total number of copies of 397 and a title to copies ratio of 8.6.

The Reyum survey asked sellers what percentage of their stock was copied and original. Almost 80% of sellers said that 80% or more of their stock was copied material, i.e. not original. Only 4% stated that all their publications were original.

	Avg no. Khmer titles	Avg total no. of copies	Ratio titles to copies	Avg no. of foreign titles	Avg no. of copies foreign language titles	Ratio foreign titles to no. copies
Bookshops	321	2241	7	139	844	6
Market Stalls	147	1352	9.2	34	403	11.8
Kiosks	98	693	7	46	397	8.6
Overall Avg	206	1653	8	74	610	8.2

Table 1 Average number of titles and copies held in stock by sellers

## BEST SELLING TITLES

We asked what were the best selling titles in the following categories: Khmer language novels, Khmer language children's books, other Khmer language books, and foreign language books. We also asked what the seller thought was the overall best selling book.

### *Khmer Novel*

Sixteen percent of sellers interviewed did not sell Khmer novels. Of those that did 35% could not name a popular selling Khmer novel. Of those novels named; ផ្កាស្រពោន (Wilted Flower) by Nou Hach, written in 1941, was named by 24% of sellers as the most popular novel; 17% named ភ្នំលាប ប៉ៃលិន (Rose of Pailin) by Nhok Them, published in 1943; 15% ទុំទាវ (Tum Teav) by Phikhu Som written in 1915; 10% ព្រះអាទិត្យថ្មីរះលើផែនដីចាស់ (The New Sun Shines on the Old Territory) by Suon Sorin, written in 1961; 8% ភូមិពិរទ្ធាន (Cruel Village) by brothers Doek Keam and Doeurk Am written in the 1960s; 7% ថៅកែចិត្តចោរ (Boss With the Mind of a Thief) in 1956. Other novels named include តាមសងបេះដូង (Follow to Win Back the Heart) published 2000, which had won the Khmer Writers Association award in 1997; គូលីកំណែន (Mobilized Coolies) written by Im Thok in 1956; and មាលាដួងចិត្ត (Mea Lea My Darling) written in 1952.

This clearly illustrated the popularity of reprinted novels, many of which were required reading in junior and high school during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum period and the 1980s. It also shows some inconsistency with the results of the readers survey where the three most popular authors named by readers do not figure in these results.

### *Children's Book*

Of those interviewed, 18% did not sell children's books. Of those that did sell children's books, 22% said they didn't have a best selling children's book. A further 20% did not name a particular title, only saying that short stories for children were popular. Of named titles 18% chose *Mom and Mab* as the most popular children's book, 12% *Tam Tam*, 12% Cambodian Folktales and 11% school text books.

### *Foreign Language Books*

The overwhelming majority of books named as best selling foreign titles were various English language learning materials. The best selling titles were *New Headway* 46%, *Essential English Book* 42%, *Headway* 36%, *Streamline* 22%, *English for Children* 12%, and *English for Cambodia* 8%.

### *Translated Works.*

Sellers were asked to name a popular publication translated from another language into Khmer. The only titles named were those of dictionaries and conversation books. The most popular title was *English Conversation By Yourself in 63 Hours*. Thai-Khmer dictionaries and conversation books also were stated as being popular. *Headway*, with instructions translated into Khmer is a new publication that is becoming popular.

### *Overall Best Selling*

According to the sellers, the overall most popular selling books were English language learning books, in particular *Headway*, *Streamline*, and *Essential English*. Also popular were school text books and answer books for exams. Other types of books that sold well were song books, legends, novels, Thai language learning materials, poetry, and dictionaries.

## SOURCE OF PUBLICATIONS

To further clarify book distribution, in particular to the provinces, we asked a series of questions to on the sources of their stock and whether they dealt directly with distributors from Vietnam and Thailand.

Sellers in Phnom Penh and in the provinces too were asked from which wholesaler they purchased their books. The majority of sellers, 73%, stated that they purchased their books from Orussey Market in Phnom Penh. The Olympic Market was the source of books for 19% of sellers followed by Chbar Ampeou Market 6%, and Thmey Market 5%; all located in Phnom Penh. Sellers in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, particularly those not located in the provincial centre, relied also on local bookshops such as Ponleu Vitya and Tang Kong in Battambang, and Apsara and Ponleu Angkor bookshops in Banteay Meanchey.

The survey also asked whether sellers were approached directly by salespeople. If they were we asked whether they were individual authors, sales representatives of Cambodian business, or salespeople bringing books from Vietnam or Thailand. Only one seller said they were approached by salespeople selling books from Vietnam, none from Thailand, and 11% of sellers said they were approached by authors directly. Surprisingly, only 17% reported buying publications printed in Cambodia directly from salespeople.

## PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES BY SELLERS

Our research showed that it was not unusual for a book dealers, especially wholesalers, to publish their own books or purchase the rights from an author to publish. We asked sellers if they had ever

printed or published any works themselves to determine if this practice was also carried out by retailers in the provinces.

Of those surveyed in the provinces 85% have never published a book themselves. Of the 15% that had at one time published, they published amongst others, books on morality, astrology, question and answer books for school grades nine and twelve, and English language learning books. But one should be aware that a seller claiming "to have published" generally meant choosing a title to be photocopied and then sold in their bookshop and seldom means they had conceived something original which they published.

Four of the sellers asked this question stated they wanted to print their own books but could not outlay the initial capital to do it or had no local printing capacity. One provincial seller stated, "I have published before but the market here is too small and it is hopeless to try to make a profit, moreover there is no copyright law".

#### ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARKED PRICE ON BOOKS

The majority of books sold in markets and kiosks do not have a set price. The survey asked sellers whether they thought displaying a set price was a good idea or not, and why.

Seventy percent of sellers thought it was a good idea to display the price of a book. Most stated that it made it easier for them to sell the books by eliminating the practice of bargaining and making it easier for the seller to remember the price of the book. Some felt that by having a set price customers were more likely to believe that this was the true value of the book. However, of those that answered they agreed with the practice they warned that prices should only be set at a rate that gives a reasonable profit for the seller.

Of the 30% that did not agree with displaying a set price 67% felt that if prices were set they would not be able to make a reasonable profit, especially for those who operate in the provinces and have the additional outlay for transport costs from the city to the province. For those that paid for their stock in dollars or baht and sold in riel, setting the price was a concern especially over the long term when there were fluctuations in the exchange rate. A further 10% thought the practice would actually make it more difficult to sell books. As one seller stated, "It is not a good idea. There is no need to set the price of a book because there is not much profit provided. This makes it hard to earn from an already poor way of living. For example, MOEYS text books with a fixed price of 3,800 riel give the retailer a profit of only 200 riel"

#### AVERAGE PROFIT ON BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS

Sellers were asked the average profit they received from one book. Of those that answered, 20% earned a profit of between 50-150 riel, 56% received between 200-300 riel, 22% between 350-500 riel per book. Only four respondents gave their answers in percentages. Two answered 5% and the others 10% on the cover price of the book. Books not marked with prices are generally open to bargaining.

For magazines and newspapers the profit for retailers is usually between 14-20% of the cover price. According to the Reyum survey of booksellers in Phnom Penh, retailers receive between 10-20% of the cover price, with some publications as high as 37%. The Sipar survey showed that 65% of interviewees expected a margin of 20% of the selling price.

#### OTHER MERCHANDISE SOLD

While we call these interviewees booksellers the majority would in fact sell more than just books. We wanted to know what else they needed to sell to help supplement their income.

The survey asked sellers to describe the types of merchandise they sold besides books, newspapers and magazines. None of the sellers surveyed were dedicated book sellers. Nearly all sold stationery, half sold postcards and posters, 38% gifts or souvenirs, 30% sold goods, 28% sold maps, 23% cosmetics, while 17% provided photocopying services, 16% telephone services, and 16% offered computer training or related services. Other products sold by book sellers include cigarettes, shoes, watches, petrol, medicine, and games for children.

#### PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

To complete the interview we encouraged sellers to tell us about the problems they faced and whether they had any suggestions for improving the book trade.

Sellers spoke quite freely about the many problems they face as book sellers. The general feeling amongst sellers was that the market for books in Cambodia was small with a large number of sellers competing in this small market. They were unable to make a sufficient living from selling books alone. A lot of a seller's capital was tied up in stock which moved very slowly and which could not be returned to the wholesaler. Many wished they could move to better locations and expand their businesses to be able to hold a wider range of books and other merchandise but they lacked the capital to do this.

With many retailers stocking MOEYS textbooks, it was not surprising to hear that a large number of the complaints focused on the issue of textbooks. Sellers (34) felt that the set price advertised on the textbook forced them to accept a very small profit margin. Also of concern was when the school curriculum changes it leaves sellers with old stock that MOEYS will not take back. Authorised sellers also have to compete with other retailers selling cheap textbooks marked "not for sale".

Book sellers (12) complained about the high cost associated with operating a book shop. They said they had to pay authorities operating fees, taxes, fees to police, commerce officials, fire fighting officials, sanitation officials and Ministry of Information license fees. For example, in some areas, sellers had to pay 200 riel per day operating fee and 30,000 riels per month tax. Combined with the high costs of power, water, and rental, what little income they made was quickly absorbed. Related to this is the problem of outstanding debts. Sellers, particularly those that act as wholesalers in the provinces, reported long outstanding debts of retailers.

The problem of poor quality publications was raised by 9 sellers. Missing pages, pages stuck together, poor illustrations, missing text, pages out of order, and poor spelling were some of the problems cited by sellers. This makes it harder to sell books and in many cases the seller has to return the book to the wholesaler which takes time, effort, and money.

A consistent theme that arose from our interviews with sellers is that they found that books, magazines or newspapers that were of high quality, with illustrations, and affordable always sold well and that there should be more effort made to produce publications that reflect the needs of the people and Khmer culture. By attracting more buyers the price of the publication could drop.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our survey and interviews with book sellers indicates that booksellers cannot make a living from selling books only. Nearly all had to sell other merchandise to supplement the small profits made from book sales. Sellers, in general, also seemed not to possess the necessary skills for effective management of a book shop, with many not keeping records of stock or being aware of the value of effective book display and arrangement. While wholesalers were also involved in publishing they did not actively or openly promote their new publications.

Sellers were apprehensive of buying too much stock, since many publications were non returnable, and not available on consignment. Without efficient legal means to recover outstanding debts many publishers and wholesalers are reluctant to give credit to the clients.

Apart from word of mouth there is no way of knowing what was being published and by whom. Publishing catalogues are not being produced (apart from the Sipar catalogue), there is no ISBN or ISSN registration system in place and the National Library is not compiling the National Bibliography for Cambodia, making it increasingly difficult for sellers to order books.

Distribution in Cambodia is still hampered by poor postal systems and inadequate road networks. This situation should improve as Cambodia continues to receive funds and loans to develop its transport infrastructure, but at this point distributors are unwilling to distribute outside of provincial centres. As well as the financial risks where they perceive there are few readers and people with income to purchase publications. However, if the market is to grow and reading is to be promoted long term encouragement must be given in the form of subsidies for publishers and distributors to distribute and market publications to these areas.

Distributors must look towards co-ordinating their activities and perhaps investigate the possibility of working with the MOEYS Distribution Office, which is at this time at a crossroads as it attempts to become semi autonomous. NGOs that may publish as a secondary activity and need to distribute to rural areas should consider the possibility of utilising private distributors rather than the usual ad hoc system of other NGOs and organisations.

We recommend;

- Implementation of ISBN and ISSN registration for Cambodia.
- Implementation of Legal Depository law and the completion of a National Bibliography.
- Encouragement through subsidies from the Government and private sector to market and distribute books outside of major provincial centres.
- Regular book fairs be held in urban and regional centres to promote books.
- Training courses for sellers and distributors in stock control and management, book display, and marketing.
- Development and distribution of free software for sellers to assist in inventory control.
- Publishers to be encouraged to market their publications more aggressively.
- Creation of a Booksellers Association.
- Study be made in collaboration with, NGOs, publishers and distributors, including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' Distribution Office, to look at ways of improving and managing distribution of publications in Cambodia.



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**CHAPTER 7 READING AND LITERACY IN CAMBODIA**

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It is quite common to hear people say that Cambodians do not have the habit of reading. People put forward various reasons with some arguing that Cambodia is historically a literate society with a long tradition of writing and that the problems related to reading are more recent, while others argue that Cambodian society is largely an oral society which has never placed great value on the written word and reading. The impact and distraction of television and videos, unappealing publications and poor school curricula, are other reasons put forward why Cambodians do not like to read. While many of these may be valid arguments the reasons behind why people read or do not read are numerous and complex. We should also bear in mind that the problem of why people do not read is not an isolated problem, but a global phenomenon that is affecting even the most developed of societies.

It is not within the scope of this report to go into the social, historical, and psychological arguments of why reading may or may not be habitual throughout Cambodia. However, what is evident is that there are obstacles in Cambodia today that lead to high illiteracy and hinder people's access to reading materials. Some of the most prevalent problems are the country's low literacy rate and low purchasing power - deeply interrelated problems – as well as inadequate library services. The high cost of books and the poor distribution systems are other reasons why literacy is low and a reading culture is difficult to develop in Cambodia.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1962 an estimated 41% of the population 15 years and older, were considered functionally literate. Concerned with this low literacy rate the Cambodian government lead by Head of State Norodom Sihanouk initiated a mass literacy campaign that involved recruiting the services of civil servants to conduct evening classes in reading and writing. The campaign was conducted between 1964-1966. By the 1970s the figure for literacy had risen to close to 60%. The project was considered such a success that Cambodia was awarded the Gold Medal of Reza Pahlevi for Literacy, an award created by the Shah of Iran.<sup>72</sup>

The effect on literacy of the war in the late 1960s and early 1970s, followed by the 3 years, 8 months and 20 days of the Khmer Rouge regime of Democratic Kampuchea cannot be overestimated. Of those who survived, a whole generation missed out on schooling and except for a tiny elite the entire population was deprived of reading. The achievements in literacy in the 1960s were wiped out, as in so many other fields of human endeavour, and the new government had to try and rebuild with pitiful human and material resources to hand.

Between 1980 and 1986 the National Committee for Literacy and Complementary Education launched two more literacy campaigns through which an estimated 1.2 million adults became literate. Socio-economic surveys conducted by the Ministry of Planning in 1993 and 1996 put the literacy rate of the adult population as 65.3% and 65.9% respectively. The 1998 national census, the first to be conducted in Cambodia since 1962, showed the figure for adult literacy to be 67.3%.<sup>73</sup>

The census states "a person is literate who can, with understanding in both reading and writing, make a short simple statement on his/her everyday life." Based on this definition we can assume the

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<sup>72</sup> Sulak Sivaraksa. Problems of Indigenous Publishing in Burma, Vietnam, and Cambodia. *Solidarity. Special issue The crisis and Challenges of Book Publishing in Asia*. Nos 135-136. July-December 1992. p56.

<sup>73</sup> MoEYS. *Report on the Assessment of the Functional Levels of the Adult Population in Cambodia*. May 2000. pV

number of people that are actually capable of reading more substantial literary materials is lower than the figures for basic literacy.

UNESCO and UNDP both recognised the inherent problems in the census figures on literacy. In order to provide more reliable and accurate data they supported the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to carry out a National Literacy Survey. In 2000 the *Report on the Assessment of the Functional Literacy Levels of the Adult Population in Cambodia* was released which provides us with more reliable information on different levels of adult literacy. In this study respondents were classified into three categories; illiterate, semi-literate, and literate. The literate were further divided into three groups; the basic level, the medium level and the self-learning level.

The results were as follows.

<i>Total Population: 11.4 million (National Census 1998)</i>	
<i>Adult Population: 6.5 million</i>	
<b><i>By Category of literacy</i></b>	
<i>Complete illiterate:</i>	<b>36.3%</b>
<i>Semi-illiterate:</i>	<b>26.6%</b>
<i>Literate</i>	<b>37.1%</b>
<b><i>By level of literacy:</i></b>	
<i>Basic level:</i>	<b>11.3%</b>
<i>Medium-level:</i>	<b>64%</b>
<i>Self-learning level</i>	<b>24.7%</b>

Adding the 36.3% of illiterates and the 26.6% of semi literates together gives us a figure of 62.9% of the population 15 years and over which are not really literate. This figure paints a much more alarming picture of the problem of illiteracy in Cambodia than the 1998 census figures portray.

That percentage of the population that was considered literate were further divided into three groups;

1. **Basic Level of literacy:** 11.3% of the literate respondents were able to read and write simple words, paragraphs or other types of written statements without help;
2. **Medium Level of Literacy:** 64% of the literate respondents had the ability to apply basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills to real life situations;
3. **Self-learning Level of Literacy:** 24.7% of the literate respondents can study independently and are able to read all kinds of materials in search of new knowledge.

If we need to know the major reason why many more people do not read in Cambodia we do not need to look much further than these figures, which show that only 25% of the population is able to read comfortably.

The problem of literacy is worse for the provincial regions of Cambodia. It is clear from national literacy figures that literacy rates are very low in rural and remote areas. Provinces ranked by literacy are as follows:

Province/Municipality	Percentile Ranking
Phnom Penh	57.9
Prey Veng	48.2
Stung Treng	47.8
Kandal	42.7
Kampong Chhnang	40.6
Takeo	40
Kratie	39.7
Kampot	39.7
Kampong Thom	38.7
Svay Rieng	37.6
Battambang	37.2
Koh Kong	36.8
Oddar Meanchey	33.3
Kampong Cham	32.5
Kampong Speu	31.5
Sihanoukville	30.3
Pursat	26.2
Banteay Meanchey	24.8
Siem Reap	17.8
Preah Vihear	14.5
Pailin	7.7
Ratanak Kiri	7.4
Kep	6.3
Mondul Kiri	5.3

*Table 7-1. Provinces ranked by literacy level. Source. Report on the Assessment of the Functional Literacy Levels of the Adult Population in Cambodia.*

The situation appears not to be improving. According to Mok Phoeum, the Director of the Non-Formal Education Department,

*the rate of illiteracy is increasing year by year, because of the number of children who are not attending school or who drop out. As a result, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, non-governmental organisations, international organisations, and the community have been able to help only 30,000 to 40,000 people a year to become literate, whereas the newly illiterate are increasing at a rate of 40,000 to 50,000 each year.*

According to the *Literacy 2000* report, of the adults surveyed, 80% of males and 60% of females had attended school at one time. Of this group, 10% of males and 16.5% of females relapsed into illiteracy. This highlights the need, particularly in small provincial communities, to provide people with continuing access to reading materials if one hopes to maintain new-found literacy. The problem is compounded by poorly stocked and maintained libraries. New libraries are not being built and libraries lack funds to purchase new titles.

Among the many recommendations put forward in the *Literacy 2000* report one suggestion stood out:

*Regularly launch short, sharp literacy campaigns to produce quick and effective impact against illiteracy, but each of them needs to be followed up by post-literacy activities while public awareness, especially adult illiterates, on the existence of the literacy programmes should be made through local governments, non-governmental organisations, community leaders, pagodas, newspapers, magazines, radio and television.*

The eradication of illiteracy is one of the key activities of the Non-Formal Education programs of MOEYS. These programs aim to increase literacy rate by 20% within the 15 year period from 2001 to 2015 and to ensure that NFE programs will contribute to poverty alleviation through the increase of functional literacy and life skills among the disadvantaged groups which form 36% of the total population. In conjunction literacy programs need to be implemented that encourage and promote reading through reading competitions for children and adults coinciding with the book festivals.

One distributor of newspapers to the provinces commented that from his experience efforts should be made to distribute free reading materials to the remote areas. He noticed that people who could read would read if they were given newspapers free. This view was supported by another distributor who noticed when he went to Battambang or Banteay Meanchey with old newspapers and gave them to the people free of charge, "they gathered together and read a lot." As he stated

*It seems they are interested in reading but they cannot afford to buy newspapers to read with their low daily income. Some people can hardly support their daily living so how can they have money to buy newspapers to read. Instead of spending 700 riel per copy daily for a newspaper, they can use this amount to cover half of their meals for the day.*

Another newspaper distributor commented that people should be encouraged to read by awarding prizes to people in poor communities who could answer questions regarding stories published in the newspapers.

These anecdotal references to reading from our interviews conform closely to the findings of our reading survey which suggested that most people that could read, liked to do so, but many simply did not have access to, or the funds needed to purchase reading materials. Borrowing or renting publications to read, in particular newspapers and magazines was not at all uncommon. Despite the relative poor state of libraries in Cambodia, readers, in particular students did utilise them, and the numbers would be higher if libraries would be better stocked and promoted, and open outside of normal working hours.

There is huge potential to develop a strong reading culture which would help foster a vibrant publishing industry if resources are placed in the right areas. Awareness campaigns aimed at promoting reading, especially in provincial areas are sadly lacking. Many children may learn to read, but without encouragement, especially from their parents, it is all too easy for them to lose their literacy skills. Government agencies can do a lot more to encourage book production. The image of reading and books needs to be improved. While there are literacy programs in the provinces there must be an attempt to widen these programs and to ensure the continuing availability of reading materials to neo-literates so they can maintain and improve on the reading skills. (Note: this topic is also discussed in Chapter 3 above)

### FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY ON READING HABITS

Two self-administered questionnaires for readers were prepared. One was to be placed in libraries, in particular libraries located within academic/research institutions in which the library users were expected to be mainly students of the institution or university. The second was a general questionnaire to be filled in by people in the work place or in social settings.

#### PRESENTATION OF DATA - READERS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The library/academic questionnaire was designed to be filled in quickly by the respondent and consisted of 12 questions. What we were trying to gain through these questions was a clearer understanding of what students liked to read, whether they could identify authors or book titles, their buying habits both for books considered to be for study and for pleasure, how many books they owned and what they would be willing to pay for a book. As well as looking at the reading patterns of the library user some questions were asked that we hoped would provide us with a greater understanding of library use and what people felt their libraries lacked.

Students are normally the highest users of books in society and therefore represent the largest potential market for academic books, as well as for books considered to be for reading pleasure. We felt it would be useful to know how much time students spent reading books and whether this reading was confined only to those needed for their studies. It is often said that in Cambodia students will only read what they have to. As the major potential user of books, it was also important to attempt to resolve how much students were willing to pay for a book and whether they were in the habit of buying books, an important question to answer to help publishers in determining how much a book should be sold for.

Readers questionnaires were left at the libraries of the following institutions,

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Royal University Phnom Penh	150
Provincial Libraries	100
Faculty of Law & Economics	95
National Institute of Management	91
CDRI	84
Institute Languages	76
Buddhist Institute	52
Center for Khmer Studies	31
Prek Leap Agricultural College	28
Royal University Fine Arts	25
Royal Academy of Cambodia	22
Faculty Medicine	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>756</b>

*Table 7-2. Institutions that participated in library survey and the number of respondents*

Seven hundred and fifty six people filled in the questionnaire, 66% male and 34% female. The average age of our respondents was 21 years, ranging from 14 - 75 years of age.

Most respondents were students studying the following subjects;

Course	Number of Respondents
Economics	70
French	69
Law	52
Accounting	46
Management	42
Literature	42
Archaeology	24
Physics	22
Mathematics	21
Secondary School	17
Khmer-moral	17
Agriculture	16
Computer	16
English	16
Marketing	16
Philosophy	14
Psychology	13
Finance & Banking	13
Business	12
Sociology	12
Housekeeping	9
Tourism	9
Forestry	8
Chemistry	7
Informatics	6
Geography	6
History	6
Biology	5
Veterinarian	4
Cultural Tourism	4
Environment	4
Fisheries	2
Medicine	2
Education Science	1
Finance	1
Sciences	1
Social Science	1

*Table 7-3. Subjects studied by respondents*

When analysing the results of the survey one should take into consideration the courses being done by the respondents, since the courses they study will probably strongly influence the type of books they read and buy.

The questions asked and the results that we received are as follows;

1. Do you like to read books in your spare time? How many times a week and where do you read? If no, why not?

All but 11 of the respondents, all males, said they like to read books in their spare time. The percentage of people that stated they did not like to read was lower than those in the General Readers survey. The survey did not seek to clarify whether people read books cover to cover or merely referred to sections in the publication.

Number of Males Interviewed	498	Number of Males that like to read	489
Number of Females Interviewed	255	Number of Females that like to read	255
<b>Total Interviewed</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>Total That Like To Read</b>	<b>744</b>

Table 7-4. Number of people interviewed and those that like to read

On the question on how many times in a week the library user reads, 73 did not provide an answer. Of those that did 52% read between 3-5 times a week and 25% read between 6-7 times a week.

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
No Answer	73	62	11
Frequently	43	26	17
Not sure	6	3	3
Infrequently	11	10	1
Every week	1	1	
1	20	15	5
2	44	27	17
3	105	67	38
4	122	79	43
5	130	67	61
6	82	64	17
7	110	74	35
9	1	1	
10	6	4	2
15	1	1	
20	1	1	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>255</b>

Table 7-5. How often people read in a week.

Those that did not like to read in their spare time stated their reasons as being that books on the market were not so good and clear, or that reading makes them fall asleep.

When asked where they liked to read, many respondents named more than one place. Of the most common stated answers for where people like to read 70% preferred reading in libraries, and/or 43% liked reading at home.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Library	530
Home	326
School	44
Buddhist Institute	34
Office	8
Public Place	7
Museum	5
Wat	4

<b>Quiet Place</b>	3
<b>Garden</b>	1
<b>Anywhere</b>	1

Table 7-6. Where people preferred to read

### 2. What type of books do you like to read?

Many of our respondents named more than one type of book they liked to read. The survey received over 1690 answers in 90 different categories of books that those surveyed like to read. Most popular were history (28% of those surveyed), romance (23%), society (12%), science, economics, and English books, (10%) each.

<i>Type of Book</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>As % of those surveyed</i>
<b>History</b>	212	28.04%
<b>Romance</b>	173	22.88%
<b>Society</b>	89	11.77%
<b>Science</b>	78	10.32%
<b>Economic</b>	77	10.19%
<b>English Book</b>	74	9.79%
<b>General knowledge</b>	64	8.47%
<b>Education</b>	55	7.28%
<b>Art/Culture</b>	54	7.14%
<b>Philosophy</b>	51	6.75%
<b>Law</b>	48	6.35%
<b>Legend</b>	46	6.08%
<b>Politics</b>	40	5.29%
<b>Business</b>	39	5.16%

Table 7-7. Type of books interviewees like to read

Analysing the figures further reveals that history books were preferred by those students studying French (22 responses), literature (18), law (15) and archaeology (15). Romance was preferred mainly by students of French (51), followed by students of literature (22), accounting (12) and physics (9).

Students of French were more familiar with authors and different titles over a wider range of subjects than other students were. These results highlight the efforts of the French professors to actively encourage students to read books on a regular basis as part of their course work, something that seems not to be done with other students

### 3. Do you have a favourite book and/or author? Which ones?

This question elicited a range of different responses, including foreign authors and titles as well as Khmer authors. We divided the answers according to whether the author or title named was Khmer or foreign.

The Khmer author with the most votes was Kong Bun Chhoeurn កង់ ប៉ុនឈឿន named by 52 people followed by Nhoc Them ញ៉ក់ ថែម with 47, Krom Ngoy ក្រម ងុយ 37, and Nou Hach ណូ ហាច 32. All four of these authors are fiction writers. The next four writers on the list are non-fiction writers. These are, Troeung Ngea ត្រឹង ង៉ា 26 responses, Vandy Kaonn វ៉ាន់ឌី កាអុន 17, Keng Vannsak កេង វ៉ាន់សាក់ 11, and Ros Chantrabot រស់ ចន្រ្ទាបុត្រ 10.

More than 100 different Khmer authors were named by the respondents. Analysing these figures further we find that the most popular 20 fiction writers were named by 234 respondents, 41 academic



writers named by 149 respondents, 17 non-fiction writers by 30 respondents, and 5 technical writers by 16 respondents. Twenty four writers could not be identified by our researchers.

Of the Khmer language titles that were chosen by respondents only seven titles received more than one response. The most popular title was ផ្កាស្រពោន (Wilted Flower) with 12 responses and ក្លូលាបប៉ៃលិន (Rose of Pailin) with 11 choices. Other titles include ពុទ្ធប្រវត្តិ (The Life of Buddha), នីតិវដ្តបាលទូទៅ (General Administrative Procedures), បំភ្លេចមិនបាន (Never Forget), មាលាដួងចិត្ត (My Darling Mealea), ជីវិតគ្មានន័យ (Life With No Meaning).

The list of favourite foreign authors revealed an interesting list of names, with Victor Hugo as the most popular with 13 choices, followed by William Shakespeare with 7, and George Coedès (5). Many names we could only guess at, such as Wikiri (Vickery?).

The list of favourite foreign language titles were less revealing, with only *Les Misérables* and *Visual Basic* getting more than one vote, and the list ranging from dictionaries and mathematics to *Korean Pictorial Accounting*.

A notable point is that almost all of the fiction writers and books names date from the 1940s to 1960s. One must ask whether these are the names that respondents can readily recall or do they truly reflect reading preferences? The reports given by book sellers tend to corroborate these data.

4. *Have you bought any books in the last 12 months? How many for study? How many for pleasure? No. Why not?*

On this question an unexpectedly high 89% of interviewees stated that they had purchased books in the last 12 months. More people reported buying between 1-5 books a year for pleasure and a similar figure was recorded for books purchased for study. Overall more people buy books for study than for pleasure, as shown below:

<i>Number of people that purchased between</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Female</i>
<b>1-5 books</b>	359	222	136
<b>6-10 books</b>	114	71	42
<b>11-15 books</b>	17	10	7
<b>16-20 books</b>	20	15	5
<b>Greater than 21 books</b>	20	19	1
<b>Total number of interviewees</b>	530	337	191

*Table 7-8. Books purchased for pleasure in the last 12 months*

<i>Number of people that purchased between</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Female</i>
<b>1-5 books</b>	246	151	95
<b>6-10 books</b>	189	126	62
<b>11-15 books</b>	67	48	19
<b>16-20 books</b>	64	42	22
<b>Greater than 21 books</b>	58	46	1
<b>Total number of interviewees</b>	624	413	209

*Table 7-9. Books purchased for study in the last 12 months*

Of the reasons given by the 11% that didn't buy books the most common was, they used libraries to access and read books (37%) and/or they did not have the funds to purchase books (34%).

5. *How many books do you own?*

Thirty four percent of respondents reported owning between 1 and 20 books, and a further 19% owned 21-40 books.

<i>Number of people that own between</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<b>1 and 20 books</b>	<b>259</b>	153	105
<b>21 and 40 books</b>	<b>144</b>	100	44
<b>41 and 60 books</b>	<b>96</b>	68	28
<b>61 and 80 books</b>	<b>28</b>	19	9
<b>81 and 100 books</b>	<b>47</b>	35	12
<b>101 and 150 books</b>	<b>13</b>	13	0
<b>more than 151 books</b>	<b>32</b>	24	8

*Table 7-10. Book ownership*

Book ownership seemed to be particularly high amongst students of computer science, education, English, tourism, sociology and psychology. However, the number of respondents studying those subjects was small and it perhaps tends to reflect the large collection of one or two individuals in the group. Of those groups well represented in the survey, students of law, accounting, management, economics, French, and literature said they owned on average 70 books each.

*6. How much would you be willing to pay for a book that you wanted?*

The survey received answers from 79% of participants. Of these, 36% felt that a fair price to pay for a book that they wanted would be between 500-5000 riel. A further 18% would pay as high as 10 000 riel.

<i>Number of people that would pay between</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<b>500 - 5000 riel</b>	<b>215</b>	127	86
<b>5001 - 10000 riel</b>	<b>109</b>	78	31
<b>10001 - 15000 riel</b>	<b>28</b>	20	8
<b>15001 - 20000 riel</b>	<b>62</b>	41	21
<b>20001 - 30000 riel</b>	<b>15</b>	10	5
<b>30001 - 50000 riel</b>	<b>68</b>	43	25
<b>50001 - 100000 riel</b>	<b>38</b>	27	11
<b>more than 100,000 riel</b>	<b>30</b>	20	10
<b>Total number of interviewees that answered</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>207</b>

*Table 7-11. What was considered a fair price to pay for a book*

*7. Why do you use this library?*

On the question of why people use the library there were no surprises with research, and/or reading and borrowing books being stated as the major reasons for using the library.

<i>Reasons for using library</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Research</b>	<b>531</b>
<b>Reading and Borrowing</b>	<b>417</b>
<b>Pleasure</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Information</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Meeting Friends</b>	<b>4</b>

*Table 7-12. Reasons for using the library*

*8. How many times a month do you come to this library?*

It appears from our survey that people visited the library quite frequently. The reported average number of visits to a library per month was 13. Of the 644 people that answered this question 24% visited between 1-5 times a month, and a further 21% visited between 6-10 times a month.

<i>Number of people that visit the library between</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<b>1 and 5 times a month</b>	<b>157</b>	103	53
<b>6 and 10 times a month</b>	<b>138</b>	90	47
<b>11 and 15 times a month</b>	<b>94</b>	59	35
<b>16 and 20 times a month</b>	<b>179</b>	117	62
<b>21 and 25 times a month</b>	<b>43</b>	31	12
<b>26 and 31 times a month</b>	<b>20</b>	14	6
<b>Average number of visits per month</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

*Table 7-13. Number of visits to the library each month*

*9. How long do you stay in the library for each visit on average?*

On average people reported staying for two hours per visit at the library. This would mean that on average a student spends 26 hours per month at a library, indicating the important role that libraries play for students.

<i>Number of people who stay between</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
<b>.5 and 1 hour per visit</b>	<b>170</b>	113	57
<b>1 and 1.5 hour per visit</b>	<b>65</b>	44	21
<b>1.5 and 2 hours per visit</b>	<b>223</b>	143	78
<b>2 and 2.5 hours per visit</b>	<b>88</b>	59	29
<b>2.5 and 3 hours per visit</b>	<b>67</b>	41	26
<b>3 and 4 hours per visit</b>	<b>61</b>	41	20
<b>more than 4 hours per visit</b>	<b>16</b>	14	2
<b>Average stay per visit in hours</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.95</b>

*Table 7-14. Average stay per visit to the library*

*10. What type of books do you need for your studies but are unavailable in this library or in the market?*

Library users were asked to name what type of books they felt they needed but were not available. In contrast to our view of the woeful state of library collections, 16% of respondents felt that the library they used did not need any more books. Of those books people thought were needed, history books were the most sought after, followed by law, economics, literature, computers, and others.

<i>Type of Book</i>	<i>No Responses</i>
None	125
History	62
Law	34
Economic	33
Literature	27
Computer	25
English Book	24
Mathematics	23
Management	22
Accounting	22
Tourism	19
Romance	18
Marketing	18
Politics	17
Dictionaries	17
Psychology	16
Language/Grammar	16
Physics	15
Art/Culture	13
Philosophy	13
Agriculture	13
Business	12

Geography	12
Linguistics	10
General knowledge	10

Table 7-15. List of books needed in libraries

11. What other languages can you read in besides Khmer?

A high number of respondents, 87%, stated that they could read in English followed by 26% who could read in French.

<b>Languages</b>	<b>Responses</b>
English	670
French	198
Thai	56
Japanese	41
Chinese	28
Vietnamese	3
German	3
Russian	1

Table 7-16. Other languages read by respondents

12. Do you think reading books is important? Why?

The final question asked was if they thought reading was important and why. This was an open-ended question with no categories suggested on the questionnaire. People gave more than one answer, and of 723 answering the question the large majority, 92%, stated they thought reading was important for improving general knowledge.

<b>Reasons why</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Improve General Knowledge	665
World Current Affairs	69
Social Knowledge	61
Reduce Boredom	28
To Gain Detailed Information	28
New Ideas	25
Improve Language	20
Improve Education	18
Improve Experience	17
New Discoveries	13
Easy to Research	13
Improve Techniques	11
Relation of life	2

Table 7-17. Reasons why reading is important

## PRESENTATION OF DATA - GENERAL READERS

The general readers questionnaire was included as part of the survey to better understand some reading patterns of people randomly selected on the street or in work situations. The questionnaire

was designed to gather information on whether people read newspapers, and/or magazines, how often they read these publications, and which sections of these publications they read. We also asked if they read books, what type and how many types a month they read. In order to better understand the obstacles readers faced which may prevent or hinder them from reading we asked what difficulties they face in reading, assuming, of course, they are literate already.

As in the academic library survey, we tried to create a clearer picture of the purchasing patterns for books, how many books purchased in the last 12 months were books for pleasure or books for study and how many books the average person owned. The question of how much a person would be willing to pay for a book was also asked.

The survey concluded with a question to determine if and how often libraries were used.

The survey was conducted in Phnom Penh and the provinces of Pursat, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, and Kampong Thom, with 390 people participating. Of these 173 were in Phnom Penh. Overall 33% of respondents were females and 67% male.

	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Phnom Penh</i>	<i>Provinces</i>
<b>Male</b>	263	102	161
<b>Female</b>	127	71	56
<b>Total Surveyed</b>	390	173	217

Table 7-17. People surveyed General Readers Survey

While the survey attempted to get a broad cross section of people in different occupations we found that half of our respondents were students and another 31 were teachers. The reader should note that this may have the effect of skewing the results of some questions, in particular those relating to library use, book ownership, and leisure time activities. Sellers, moto taxi drivers, police, soldiers, farmers, and roadside tyre repairers were some of the other occupations represented in the survey.

The questions and results of the survey are as follows;

1. *Do you read newspapers? How many times a week do you read newspapers? Which sections of the paper do you read? Do you usually rent, buy, or borrow the newspapers you read?*

On this question 86% of respondents answered that they did read newspapers. However, reading newspapers was not a daily event for most people. Of those that reported reading newspapers, 28% said they read newspapers twice a week, 20% read once a week, and 19% read three times a week.

The most common reason why newspapers were not read was because they were not available to be bought, followed by no time to read and no money to purchase newspapers.

<i>Times per week</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Did not answer</b>	37	54	<b>91</b>
<b>1</b>	33	18	<b>51</b>
<b>2</b>	47	22	<b>69</b>
<b>3</b>	35	12	<b>47</b>

<b>4</b>	19	11	<b>30</b>
<b>5</b>	17	2	<b>19</b>
<b>6</b>	9	1	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	12	4	<b>16</b>
<b>&gt;7</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	174	71	<b>390</b>

Table 7-188. Number of times newspaper read per week

On the question on what sections of the newspaper they read the most popular section was local news, followed by traffic accidents and crime, international news, business, sport, and looking at pictures. Stories that were serialised were read the least.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Local news	178	81	259
Traffic accidents/crime	148	75	223
International News	146	51	197
business/economy	100	42	142
Sport	103	18	121
Look at the pictures	63	31	94
Other	50	18	69
Serialised stories	15	13	28

Table 7-19. Sections read of newspaper

Just over 50% stated that they purchased the newspapers they read while a further 44% borrowed newspapers, and 6% reported renting them.

2. Do you read magazines? How many different magazines do you read in a month? Which sections of the magazines do you read? Do you usually rent, buy, or borrow the magazines you read?

Ninety two percent of respondents answered that they read magazines, rather surprisingly 10% more than read newspapers. Of those that answered how many magazines they read a month 37% read at least one magazine a month, a further 36% read two magazines a month, and 16% three a month.

<b>No of magazines</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Did not answer</b>	46	26	<b>72</b>
<b>1</b>	73	30	<b>103</b>
<b>2</b>	67	33	<b>100</b>
<b>3</b>	24	21	<b>45</b>
<b>4</b>	9	1	<b>10</b>
<b>5</b>	9	1	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>7</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>10</b>	0	2	<b>2</b>
<b>12</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>15</b>	0	1	<b>1</b>

Table 7-20. No of magazines read in a month

Of those that answered 48% said that they purchased the magazines they read and 46% borrowed the magazines they read. The overall favourite section of magazines was health, followed by culture, local news, and celebrities. Serialised stories were little read, although astrology scored even lower.

<i>Sections</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Health	138	88	226
Culture	138	74	212
Local news	151	49	200
Celebrities	114	65	179
International News	119	41	160
look at the pictures	98	51	149
business/economy	96	37	133
Sport	98	22	120
Beauty	52	65	117
Other	43	20	63
Romance	27	28	55
Serialised stories	11	15	26
Astrology			13

Table 7-21. Favourite section of magazines

The main reasons for not reading magazines were not enough money to buy magazines, no magazines available to read, and no time to read.

2. *Do you like to read books? What type of books do you read?*

Compared to the academic/libraries survey, where almost 100% answered positively, more people answered that they did not like to read books. Of those surveyed 86% like to read books. Sixty different types of books were named by the respondents as the type of book they like to read, with history and romance being the two most popular.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responses</i>
History	66
Romance	56
Legends	43
Education	37
General knowledge	36
Art/Culture	36
English Books	24
Science	17
Foreign Language Books	16
Law	14
Moral	11
Economic	11
Literature	11
Dharma Book	10
Comics	10

Table 7-22. Type of books read

Most of the 14% who reported that they did not read books, gave as their reasons they did not have time to read books or were not interested in reading books. A small number said they did not have books to read or were too busy working.

4. *What difficulties do you face in reading?*

The most common difficulty was that books are considered too expensive, while almost as many people felt that they did not have the time to read.

<i><b>Problem</b></i>	<i><b>Responses</b></i>
Books are too expensive	179
Lack of time to read	156
Lack of books that interest me	136
The language used in books is difficult	112
Other	59

*Table 7-23. Problems related to reading*

Other problems included lack of funds for buying books, poor eyesight, there are too many English or other foreign words mixed in with the Khmer text, it is too difficult to find books to buy and books they have access to are mainly foreign language books which they cannot read.

*5. Have you bought any books in the last 12 months? How many for study? How many for pleasure?*

Seventy eight percent of our respondents answered that they had purchased a book/s in the last 12 months. The average number of books purchased for study in the last 12 months was 10.6 and 7.2 books for pleasure. Both figures were unexpectedly high.

*6. How many books do you own?*

The average number of books owned by an individual is 37 books. Book ownership ranged from 1-500 books

*7. How much would you be willing to pay for a book that you wanted?*

The average price that people were willing to pay for a book they wanted was 15,500 riel. However, this result is slightly skewed because of a number of unusually high prices. The prices given range from 300 to 500,000 riel.. The majority of respondents (70%) would pay 20,000 riel or less. The average price stated by people from provinces was 11,700 riel and for Phnom Penh 20,000 riel.

*8. Do you use any libraries? Which one/s? do you use?*

One should note that this particular survey included 118 students and 19 teachers, which does not give a fair representation of the "average person". Most students would be expected to make use of libraries. Of the respondents 52% stated that they used libraries. The main reasons why people did not visit libraries included that there was no library to use, or they had no time, were busy with work. Considering that most libraries do not open in the evenings or on weekends it is not surprising that people would say they are too busy with work or don't have the time to visit libraries.

Of the 217 respondents from the provinces only 31% said they visited libraries, while in Phnom Penh 77% visited libraries. Libraries visited most were school libraries (54), the National Library of Cambodia (34), Buddhist Institute Library (26), Royal University of Fine Arts Library (22), National Museum Library (19), Hun Sen Library (16), Children's House Library (13), French Cultural Center Library (13) and the Ministry of Education Library (7).



9. *After work in your spare time what do you like doing the most?*

The results we received on this question were unexpected. The high number of responses for reading books as a leisure activity was unanticipated by the survey team. The results should be treated with a degree of caution, as interviewees realise the survey is about reading and may answer to please. It raises the question as to what people may consider to be spare time, and whether studying outside of class or work is considered reading in one's spare time.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Respondents</i>
Read books	287
Watch TV or video	239
Go out with friends	169
Sleep	125
Play games or sport	115
Use internet	48

Table 7-24. *Favourite leisure activities*

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of important points emerge from the survey of readers and literacy. Of greatest concern is the low level of literacy in Cambodia, particularly in the provinces. Despite efforts by the Government and various NGOs working on improving literacy, the rates do not appear to be rising. In fact, it appears, especially among adults, that many people are lapsing back into illiteracy since they have no access to reading materials.

Furthermore, our survey shows that contrary to popular belief people do like to read. It is perhaps time to dispel the myth that Cambodians do not like to read. Many people do not read simply because the majority are illiterate. Otherwise many of those that are literate want to read, and see it as a way of improving their general knowledge, but generally do not have the funds, time, or means to access reading materials. The problem of language is an issue, with many finding books difficult to read in particular because of the high number of English words appearing in texts. Clearly access to cheap or free publications of a wider subject range is needed.

Libraries were shown to be a popular place for people to read, but there are few libraries, especially in the provinces, and the majority are in poor condition, have no acquisition budget, and are closed during those times when people are most likely to want to read.

Book and reading promotion and awareness is lacking in Cambodia which is evident from our survey. While history books and novels were popular amongst our surveyed population, it seemed there was little familiarity with Cambodian titles and authors, except for the best selling novelists and a few novels printed during the 1940s-1960s. People reported buying books, both for pleasure and study, and book ownership appeared to be high although perhaps overstated. Nonetheless, there is a market for books, in particular books priced under 20,000 riel, but people are likely not to be aware of what has been published recently because of poor marketing and distribution, and small print runs leading to the books going rapidly out of print.

Reading magazines is becoming increasingly popular especially the new breed of glossy popular magazines appearing on shelves. Newspapers, where they are available, are also read by many. Both magazines and newspapers, with their short and varied texts, and images are preferred to reading books and are often borrowed by others to read.

We make the following recommendations:

- an intensive study be done into the situation of libraries in Cambodia, in particular provincial libraries with recommendations on the development of community or village reading centres.
- libraries need to develop and promote their collection through activities such as a "Library Week" and encourage citizens to donate books to libraries.
- libraries should find ways to open outside of normal working hours.
- sponsor regularly literacy campaigns followed by post-literacy activities together with public awareness on the existence of literacy programs.
- make available reading materials to neo-literates
- sponsor programs that encourage and promote reading such as reading competitions for children and adults in conjunction with book festivals.
- make efforts to distribute free reading materials to remote areas.
- encourage government agencies to promote the image of reading and books, while using the mass media to introduce books.
- Professors and teachers to have required reading and actively encourage students to read books on a regular basis as part of their course work.

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## CHAPTER 8 WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

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Conclusions and recommendations arising from the specific areas of PIC research were raised at the end of each chapter above, and here the recommendations are synthesised and grouped by theme. In addition to recommendations already raised, a number of broader points that relate to overall policy questions emerged and are presented here for discussion. Many would have to be submitted to the government as policy recommendations, but some are of a nature that could be initiated or advanced by individuals, companies and organisations. The following recommendations should be considered together with Askerud's proposed comprehensive, multi-sector capacity building project (see appendix C).

### CROSS-SECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. draw up the terms of reference and scope for a National Book Council involving representatives from all parts of the publishing sector, both public and private
2. develop a framework for a comprehensive national information policy for Cambodia
3. develop methods to gather ongoing statistics on number of publishers and titles produced, for reporting to international agencies such as Unesco and ISBN, as well as for meeting national requirements
4. establish a national legal depository for all Cambodian publications (both books and serials), and publish a regular national bibliography of items published in and on Cambodia and by Cambodian authors overseas
5. engage in systematic programs to select and stimulate the translation of foreign language material on Cambodia into Khmer
6. encourage the generation of more material in the national language, including a national oral history program
7. collect and compile earlier published national language materials, and develop programs for the selection of items for reprinting
8. establish a literary review and encourage print and electronic media to include reviews of recently published books
9. encourage newspapers and magazines to serialise fiction and non-fiction works on and from Cambodia
10. improve orthography, grammar, terminology, and translated word usage
11. encourage government agencies to promote the image of reading and books, and use the mass media to introduce books.
12. develop applications using the newly standardised Khmer character set for using in computers (Unicode)

13. reduce import duties on material relating to printing and publishing (especially paper and ink)
14. pass and enforce the law on copyright that both protects Cambodian Intellectual Property and provides the maximum access by Cambodians to information generated overseas
15. establish ISBN and ISSN agencies
16. pass and enforce legal deposit legislation
17. pass and enforce archives and records legislation
18. provide basic and ongoing training for development of all types of book professionals -- publishers, writers, editors, illustrators and graphic designers, book sellers, librarians or documentalists
19. educate the entire publishing sector regarding copyright and other relevant legislation
20. form a national body (including NGOs and institution of higher education) to co-ordinate research and prevent duplication
21. carry out a supplementary survey of libraries, archives and documentation centres to complement the present PIC research, and to lay the groundwork for a national information policy

#### **SECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

*(other than those outlined above)*

#### **WRITERS AND WRITING**

22. consider mechanisms as present in many other countries to subsidise competent writers
23. organise more training workshops for writers including film and television script writing, as well as workshops in research techniques and methodology
24. educate publishers, writers and translators on the need to seek permission and provide recompense to the original author
25. school students should be taught creative writing as well as other forms of writing

#### **PUBLISHING AND PRINTING**

26. formation of a publishers association
27. encourage commissioning of manuscripts that meet the needs of the market, including prize winning manuscripts

28. develop model contracts with writers, publishers and printers
29. consider development of co-operative or joint long-term storage facilities to encourage longer print runs and lower unit cost of publications
30. formation of a printers association
31. feasibility study into the viability of establishing a paper mill in Cambodia

#### THE BOOK TRADE

32. consider development of a co-operative or joint distribution network, possibly building on the MOEYS system
33. encouragement through subsidies from the Government and private sector to market and distribute books outside of major provincial centres
34. regular book fairs be held in urban and regional centres to promote books
35. development and distribution of free software and training for sellers to assist in stock control and management, book display, and marketing
36. publishers to be encouraged to market their publications more aggressively
37. creation of a booksellers association

#### READING AND LITERACY

38. regular literacy campaigns followed by post-literacy activities together with public awareness on the existence of literacy programs
39. address the problem of relapsing neo-literates by providing continuing access to reading materials
40. increase the number and quality of libraries and their collections, especially in the provinces
41. libraries need to develop and promote their collection through activities such as a "Library Week" and encourage citizens to donate books to libraries
42. professors and teachers to have required reading and actively encourage students to read books on a regular basis as part of their course work
43. extend the opening hours of existing libraries to enable people to visit out of working hours (lunch time, evenings and weekends)
44. programs that encourage and promote reading through reading competitions for children and adults in conjunction with book festivals
45. efforts made to distribute free reading materials to remote areas

46. consider opening school libraries to the community, or establishing multi-purpose joint-use libraries
47. organise more mobile libraries, including by boat (as in Thailand and Sabah)
48. teachers should promote the importance and necessity of reading, especially at the library, including setting homework related to reading
49. university lecturers should assign more research projects for tertiary level students, give required and recommended reading lists and cut down selling lesson notes to their students, a custom which makes students memorise and follow only the teachers' ideas, without developing independent thinking
50. an educational program for the development of professional librarians and information managers needs to be established within the Cambodian higher education sector

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APPENDIX A - LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

INTERVIEWS WITH KEY PEOPLE IN THE BOOK SECTOR

Pernille Askerud, <i>(by email)</i>	<i>Program</i>
Amanda Bradley, <i>Mlub Baitong</i>	Christophe Maquet, <i>Royal Univeristy Phnom Penh</i>
Margaret Bywater, <i>The Asia Foundation</i>	Meng Hieng, <i>Monument Books</i>
Chhuon Chan Than, <i>International Institute of Cambodia</i>	Kathleen O'Keefe, <i>Phnom Penh Post</i>
Etienne Clement, <i>Unesco</i>	Tim Keller, <i>Digital Divide</i>
Ly Daravuth, <i>Reyum</i>	Pen Samithy, <i>Rasmei Kampuchea</i>
Sebastian Drans, <i>The Asia Foundation</i>	Philippe Peycam, <i>Centre for Khmer Studies</i>
Daniel Dravet, <i>Unicef</i>	Pich Proeung, <i>Domrai Sor</i>
Frank Dulac, <i>Mekong Libris</i>	Put Sokmean, <i>Graphic Roots</i>
Eng Kimly, <i>Department of Pedagogy, MoEYS</i>	Ros Kosal, <i>Prime Minister's Office</i>
Sue Fox, <i>Unesco</i>	Kamakura Sachiko, <i>Shanti Volunteers Association</i>
Mario Geraud, <i>Interquess</i>	John Seow, <i>Red Dot (Cambodia)</i>
Pierre Gilette, <i>Cambodge Soir</i>	Carolina Strandberg, <i>Unicef</i>
Kim Gjemmetstad, <i>Interquess</i>	In The, <i>Department of Non Formal Education, MoEYS</i>
Peter Gyallay-Pap, <i>Buddhist Institute</i>	Masao Tanaka, <i>Japan Printng House</i>
Frank Huffman, <i>U.S. Public Affairs Service</i>	Seng Ton, <i>Distribution Office, MoEYS</i>
Im Sethy, <i>Secretary of State, MoEYS.</i>	Siv Sam Ath, <i>Graphic Roots</i>
Olivier Jeandel, <i>Center Cultural Français</i>	So Sovann, <i>So Sovann Co. Ltd</i>
Khieu Kanharith, <i>Secretary of State, Ministry of Information</i>	Sok Siphana, <i>Secretary of State, Ministry of Commerce</i>
Khlot Vibolla, <i>Department of Books and Reading, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts</i>	Sucipto, <i>Goodhill</i>
Kou Boun Kheang, <i>Save the Children Norway</i>	Teruo Jinnai, <i>Unesco</i>
Norbert Kelin, <i>Open Forum</i>	Touch Mony, <i>Save the Children Norway</i>
Christiane Lalonde, <i>Sipar</i>	They Chanto, <i>Cambokids</i>
Ingrid Muan, <i>Reyum</i>	Ung Sikuong, <i>3D Graphics</i>
Beatrice Montariol, <i>Sipar</i>	Var Sam-At, <i>Khmer Writers Association</i>
Conrado Lagaya, <i>Don Bosco</i>	Yi Thon, <i>Shanti Volunteer Association</i>
Bob McLaughlin, <i>BETP</i>	You Bo, <i>Khmer Writers Association</i>
Vin McNamara, <i>Education Quality Improvement</i>	Youk Chhang, <i>Documentation Center of Cambodia</i>

WRITERS INTERVIEWED

We would like to thank the following writers who gave their time to be interviewed for our writers survey;

Ang Chou Lean	អាំង ជូលាន	Chey Thavy	ជ័យ ថារី
Bou Sorn	ប៊ូ សន	Chhay Yeeheang	ឆយ យីហ៊ាង
Bun Sundro	ប៊ុន សុន្តរោ	Chhey Chap	ជ័យ ចាប
Chea Neng	ជីវ៉ា ណេង	Chhorn Iem	ឈន អៀម

Chin Yahan	ជិន យ៉ាហាន	Oun Sok Heang	អ៊ុន សុខហៀង
Chuon Men	ជួន ម៉ែន	Pal Vannarirak	ប៉ាល វណ្ណារីរក្ស
Hak Numan Borin	ហានុមាន បុរិន្ទ	Pean Sokha	ពាន សុខា
Hean Sahip	ហ៊ាន សាហ៊ីប	Phann Ana	ផាន់ អាណា
Hean Sokhom	ហ៊ាន សុខុម	Poan Chhay	ពាន់ ឆាយ
Heav Veasna	ហៀវ វាស្នា	Pol Pisey	ប៉ុល ពីសី
Heng Mony Chenda	ហេង មុនីចិន្តា	Prum Moal/Marc	ព្រ៉ាំ ម៉ល់
Hing Thoraxy	ហ៊ឹង ថូរ៉ាក់ស៊ី	Ros Chantrabot	រស់ ចន្រ្ទាបុត្រ
Ho Yat	ហូ យ៉ាត	Ros Sina	រស់ ស៊ីណា
Keuk Kim Sour	កឹក គឹមសួរ	Sam Sophearin	សំ សុភារិន្ទ
Khieu Kosal	ខៀវ កុសល	Samkol Sotheavy	សំកុល សុធារី
Khiev Panhavudh	ខៀវ បញ្ញាវុឌ្ឍ	Saray Andaeth	សារាយអណ្តែត
Khloth Thida	ខ្លួត ធីតា	(Ry Saray)	(រីសារាយ)
Khun Samen	យុន សាម៉ែន	Som Somuny	សោម សុមុនី
Long Seam	ឡុង សៀម	Sor Samnang	សិន សំណាង
Mao Ayut	ម៉ៅ អាយុទ្ធ	Sou Chamreun	ស៊ូ ចំរើន
Mao Samnang	ម៉ៅ សំណាង	Sum Chhumbun	ស៊ី ឈុំប៊ុន
Mao Sophoan	ម៉ៅ សោភ័ណ្ណ	Sun Heng Meng Chheang	ស៊ុនហេង ម៉េងឈាង
Miech Ponn	មៀច ប៉ុណ្ណ	Thon Hin	ធន់ ហ៊ិន
Monh Sary	ម៉ុញ សារី	Touch Mony	
Ngeth Soeun	ង៉ែត សៀន	Ven Son	វ៉ែន សុន
Nhim Bak Gnorn	ញឹម បាក់ងន	Vong Chantha	វង្ស ចន្ទា
Nop Nimol	ណុប និមល	Yem Ayu Vatanakvichea	យឹម អាយុវត្សនវិជ្ជា
Nouv Soun	នេវ ស៊ុន	Yim Nimola	យឹម និម៉ូឡា
Ouk Chuon	អ៊ុក ចួន	Yin Kimvan	យីន គឹមវ៉ាន
Oum Chantha	អ៊ុំ ចាន់ថា	Yin Vantha	យីន វ៉ានថា
Oum Chanthavy	អ៊ុំ ចន្ទថាវី	Yiv Seng Vansay	យីវ សេងវណ្ណសាយ
Oum Sophany	អ៊ុំ សុផានី		

## **PRINTERS INTERVIEWED**

3D Graphics  
Ariyathoar Printing House  
Buddhist Institute Printing House.  
Kambuja Printing House  
Chan Rithy  
Damrei Sor  
Donbosco Technical School  
Japan Printing and Publishing  
JSRC printing house  
Kim Long printing house  
Mekong Printing House

Meng Hav Printing House  
Phnom Penh Printing House  
Ponleou Rasmey  
Ponleou Khmer Printing House  
Ponleou Pich  
Ministry of Education Youth and Sports Printing House  
Rasmei Angkor  
Renakse Pithnou Printing House  
Sun Printing House  
Talent Business Cards and Printing House  
TBR Printing

## **NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES AND ACADEMIC JOURNALS**

See Chapter 4 for details.

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## APPENDIX C

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### CAMBODIA - OUTLINE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME FOR BOOK AND INFORMATION CAPACITY BUILDING - PERNILLE ASKERUD

*A. Preliminary situation analysis and needs assessment:*

The main components of a well functioning book sector comprise:

- Publishing capacity for educational materials, general publishing, and the press
- A system for provision of instructional materials to schools and non-formal education programmes
- Library network(s)
- Printing capacity
- Book distribution network(s)
- A market for books and newspapers
- A mechanism for registration of the titles and volumes published in a year (e.g. ISBN or legal deposit)
- A legal framework for the book sector including copyright legislation etc.
- Professional organisations
- Professional training opportunities (certification) for book professionals

In Cambodia today, few of these components function properly or, in some cases, even exist. There are hardly any trained and experienced book professionals - be it publishers, writers, editors, illustrators and designers, lay-outers, book sellers, librarians or documentalists and most importantly no institutions or an infrastructure that can support and sustain the development of national capacity in this respect. Specific publishing skills are almost non-existent and skills like basic layout techniques and pre-press production prohibitively expensive. The quality of the books produced varies widely but 'quality' in general focuses more on form than content – also in terms of presentation.

In spite of attempts to establish library projects this hasn't been possible yet. The library situation is terrible and with a few exceptions such as the Hun Sen Library or the Royal University of Fine Arts Library which receive external support, the libraries overall are in no position to contribute to the development process in Cambodia. A number of community libraries are looked after by various NGO's or as part of project initiatives. MOEYS in cooperation with the World Bank is planning to establish school libraries for 30 % of the schools from next year.

Cambodia has a fair amount of research institutions and, it appears, a number of potential writers. It also would seem that there is a potential market for publishing in Cambodia – at least in the urban areas – but it is difficult to gauge, as the supply of books is so limited for the time being.

The printing sector is doing better than the publishing sector. There are about 35 middle and large-size printing companies in Phnom Penh, 4 of these are large. Some of the printers have been funded by external assistance projects while others have managed to establish themselves on a private commercial basis. Many of the printing presses are purchased second-hand from Viet Nam. There are recurrent training programmes for printing personnel. The same is the case for journalists who may receive training at the Cambodia Communication Institute.

On the other hand, there is not a single company that can be considered a serious professional publisher working in Cambodia today. The companies that call themselves publishers are either printers or NGO's that happen to publish as one of their activities. Quite a number of titles are being published by the authors themselves – or by printers who for example reprint old Khmer titles. A considerable amount of publishing is being done by NGOs, international organisations, and various projects. These publications are funded by external funding and have contributed to an unreasonable price level for various services

related to book production. The publications are typically readers for children and material for various non-formal education programmes and are only to a limited extent offered for sale in the market. Like the publishing by individual authors and printers, this doesn't amount to the establishment of an actual infrastructure for publishing. A major problem is the fact that nobody knows what has been published and whether it is available for other than the original target group.

There is no copyright legislation and authors are complaining that their books are pirated. The good side to this claim is the implicit implication that there might actually be a market for books.

There is at least one NGO that focus on the development of publishing skills in Cambodia in a more systematic and professional manner. With a staff of seven SIPAR is also publishing ... and intends to turn itself into a Cambodian publisher eventually.

SIPAR has compiled a list of titles published in recent years. The catalogue, which is in Khmer is probably not complete but lists 13 'publishers' including Save the Children Norway, UNESCO, Institute Bouddhique, the Wildlife Conservation Society and SIPAR and about 150 titles including two magazines for children published by Save the Children and a company called Graphic Roots.

There are 2 major daily Khmer newspapers, which are circulated in 30.000 copies each and 2-3 smaller daily publications (circulation 10-200,000 copies). All in all there are about 300 registered publications but there are no newspapers published outside Phnom Penh. In the newsstands there will regularly be about 30-40 titles.

There can be no discussion that the availability of reading materials of all kinds is not sufficient to support neither education, nor economic development, or even to sustain a reading habit.

The most important component in the Cambodian book sector today is arguably the project funded Basic Education Textbook Project (BETP), which over the last five years has spent \$30 million on ensuring textbook provision to primary and secondary schools.

The total printing volume for 2001 is planned to be 6.5 million copies of which 300,000 copies are supplementary readers. These readers are basically Khmer readers with an average print-run of 5-10,000 (or one to two copies per school). 90% of these textbooks are intended for distribution free of charge (and marked clearly as such) while the project as an experiment is printing 10% of the total volume for sales to students and teachers.

The project has centered on developing the professional skills needed for this task within the existing State structures, more specifically within the Education Publishing and Distribution House (EPDH) and the Pedagogical Research Institute. The publishing house which holds a monopoly on textbook publishing is intended to become semi-independent by the beginning of 2002 and begin to function according to market mechanisms in competition with other publishing houses. It is however, an open question how other publishing houses can establish themselves and eventually compete with the Education Publishing and Distribution House without similar technical assistance.

The Education Publishing and Distribution House has a staff of more than one hundred – of these 70 are working in the printing unit, 6 work with pre-press production, 20 people work in the editorial departments, 8 in the department for didactic materials, 28 in distribution, 7 in planning and finance, 10 in administration, and 12 are casual workers. The printing unit has 1 web-press, 3 Heidelberg presses (2 x 2 colours, 1 x 1 colour), an image-setter and equipment for colour separation plus of course plate-makers, cutters, and binding equipment. The printing house is very neat and appears to be running very efficiently. It is more questionable to what extent the editorial departments actually functions as a publishing unit as opposed to copy editing and pre-press production of the manuscripts. Under the existing system for textbook development and production, manuscripts for most parts are developed by MoEYS who also commissions and pays for the printing and distribution of all textbooks – a system that leaves very little room for publishing activities on the part of the Education Publishing and Distribution House. Consequently, the Education Publishing and Distribution House operates essentially as a printing and distribution house and is in fact more competent in the printing and production aspect of textbook



provision than in the publishing skills - whether related to manuscript development and book design or more business related skills.

The Education Publishing and Distribution House has a capacity to print about 8 million copies a year but it does, nevertheless, delegate some of the printing to two or three private printing houses as indicated in the table below. According to private printing companies there is no public bidding for the printing jobs that EPDH is sub-contracting. For the time being the cost of textbook production is calculated without any overhead for running costs or for appreciation of machinery and facilities and re-investments. The Education Publishing and Distribution House informs that the price level is about 50% of the cost of producing similar quality in Thailand but with the existing substantive Government subsidy it is impossible to compare price levels.

Printing undertaken	total volume	by EPDH	by other printing houses
Textbooks	5.85 mill. copies	60 %	40 %
<i>Supplementary readers</i>	300,000 copies	50 %	50 %
<i>Additional textbooks for sale</i>	650,000 copies	100 %	0 %

The textbook project has developed a textbook distribution network (with 15 agents so far), which potentially could provide a basis for the development of a combined network for textbook distribution, library exchange, and book/newspaper sales. The distribution system also includes a functioning EMIS for school data. The Education Publishing and Distribution House informs that they actually do not know how many books they can sell – maybe 5,000 copies per title?

In addition, the project has undertaken a series of important surveys on, among other things, book availability and utilization as well as a comprehensive policy study. While the research undertaken by the project focuses on the provision of instructional materials to schools they also provide a very significant basis for a discussion of the development of Cambodian book sector in more general terms.

The requirements for the format of textbooks are very limiting: all textbooks must be the same size. The textbooks in general are neither particularly attractive nor sufficiently solid to withstand repeated use. As for the content a revision is currently underway which will introduce minor corrections but a series of new textbooks are planned to be ready for introduction in schools from 2006.

The project has recently supported the establishment of a Textbook Approval Board. It has also supported teacher orientation programmes related to the introduction of the new curriculum materials. There are several reasons why the book sector has achieved so little sustainable development over the last decade.

Historically, Cambodia was a highly literate society and knowledge and literature were held in high esteem. In the 60s the education level was higher than in many neighbouring countries. However, during the Khmer Rouge regime knowledge was systematically obliterated and all the testimonies to a literate society such as books and libraries, were destroyed. The situation in Cambodia cannot be compared to the situation in a country with for example a similar illiteracy rate because there isn't the elite, and the tradition, the books that one can find in other countries. It is doubtful whether there are even copies of all the books in Khmer that exist in the world, in Cambodia today.

Publishing companies are not typically started or run by 18-year olds. It is not a business that typically generates high profit. It is a profession that requires a high level of knowledge, a network of useful connections, and a great deal of experience. In Cambodia today there is a dearth of skilled and experienced people, and there is a great demand for these people in Government and national institutions. At the same time, externally funded projects and donor agencies have attracted many of the elite that would otherwise dedicate their time to publishing.

A lack of funding and investments as well as a lack of buying power are quoted as reasons for the absence of books, libraries, and publishers. The experience under Khmer Rouge have cultivated a concern for

personal safety which perhaps also make people reluctant to take up professions or engage in activities that traditionally are associated with a critical attitude to the authorities.

Finally, there has until now not been a concerted effort from neither the Government or the international community to recognize the importance of a functioning book and information sector to the process of self discovery and socio-economic development that Cambodia is living through in these years. How can issues like human rights, democracy, and cultural identity be development objectives if Cambodians do not even have the means to express themselves and share their opinions with each other?

*B. Rationale:*

The development of book sector infrastructure and capacity is essential to:

- ✓ All education activities – including non-formal education and literacy programmes
- ✓ Economic and social development
- ✓ The cultivation of a learning environment and a reading habit
- ✓ Participation in a knowledge/information based economy
- ✓ Cultural development – including a rediscovery of national heritage and identity
- ✓ The development of democratic debate
- ✓ The development of Cambodian research and human resource capacity

*C. Potential partners/partner institutions and beneficiaries:*


- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Culture
- Statistical Institutes (EMIS)
- TACIS (EU)
- SME programmes
- Publisher, printers and booksellers
- Ministry of Finance
- Other book sector professionals
- Training institutions including universities, research organisations, and technical/vocational education programmes
- Libraries
- Temples (reading centres)
- NGOs

D. *Proposed strategy:*

To establish a comprehensive, multi-sector capacity building project with the following key features:

- A comprehensive Khmer publishing programme that will publish a minimum of 3,000 (?) titles over a period of five-ten years through Cambodian publishers. The publishers will receive technical assistance through the project. The publishing activities will include translations, adaptations, reprinting, co-publishing, and the development of new titles. The programme will aim at meeting the need for Khmer reading materials at all levels with special emphasis on: higher education materials and reference materials, attractive children's books, cultural heritage, fiction, etc. etc. while at the same time stimulating the development of professional publishing capacity and a market for books.
- The identification of support to a network of libraries or reading centres that will function as the focus for skills development and other project activities – and which will provide a market for the books published under the project.
- A comprehensive training and capacity building programme for the book and information sector.
- A mechanism for coordination and cultivation of all kinds activities in support of book development

E. *Activities:*

 Capacity building for policy makers and decision makers including a wide range of Ministry officials, and staff of NGOs and international organisations:

1. Awareness raising of the role, organisation, and dynamics of a well functioning book sector including:
  - *a definition and description of the book sector*
  - *the book sector's role in development*
  - *the role that textbooks play in the boo sector*
  - *policy development and legislation for book development – issues and problems*
  - *needs assessment, project design and effective implementation*
  - *sustainability*
  - *library development*
  - *IT*
2. Sustainable provision of instructional materials to schools and non-formal education programmes:
  - *how to design textbook projects that support development of the book sector*
  - *needs assessment*
  - *project identification, priorities and design*
  - *coordination, monitoring and evaluation*
  - *import of (Khmer) titles from abroad – options and opportunities*
  - *preparation of tenders and bid*
3. Textbook policy development
4. Institutionalization of training
5. Supporting book development
  - *Review of procedures*
  - *Fundraising*
  - *Book Fairs and other opportunities for Intl cooperation*

Skills Training - addressing a wide range of book professionals from the public and private sphere including interested individuals

1. Making business in the book sector:
  - The business of publishing
  - The business of printing
  - The business of book selling and distribution
  - Electronic inventorying
  
2. Authorship:
  - Children's books
  - Poetry
  - Neo-literate materials including magazines and cartoons
  - Books on national heritage and culture
  - Books for minority cultures
  
3. Book design, graphic design and lay-out :
  - How work creatively within the traditional textbook model
  - Cost-effectiveness in design
  - Supplementary readers
  - Reference books basic learning materials
  
4. Editing:
  - Cooperating with the author
  - Language and orthographic issues in Khmer
  - Copy editing
  
5. Curriculum guidelines and textbook development:
  - How to interpret curriculum guidelines and turn them into effective and attractive textbooks
  - Effective use of fonts of formats for different age-groups
  - Ensuring cohesion between curriculum guidelines, examination requirements and textbooks
  - Teacher guides – options and alternatives
  - Local development of educational materials
  
6. Organisation in the book sector:
  - A national coordination mechanism (eg.a Book Council) – function and potential
  - How to make book organisations work?
  - International cooperation – how and why?
  - Legislation – copyright, legislation pertaining to books and information (a book law)
  - A national bibliography
  
7. IT and the book sector:
  
8. Library development:
  - Planning and project development
  - Training of librarians
  - The functions of the libraries at local level (community information centres)
  
9. Institutionalization of training for book professionals
  - Curriculum development

- Standards and certification
- Training of trainers

10. Copyright, ISBN and other legal instruments

11. Project formulation, costing and financing

*F. Project modality:*

A multi-donor technical assistance programme with many separate components implemented with UNESCO as executing agency and with the participation of other organisation (e.g. the Soros Foundation's publishing programme, SIPAR, ...)

Duration five to ten years (Phase one: 5 years).