



# ISF English Programme

## Five-Year Strategic Plan

### Executive Summary

Since its inception in 2006, ISF's Education Programme has grown from providing basic English lessons to 15 children to offering the full Khmer curriculum, ICT, life skills, vocational training and English at various levels to more than 650 students. Over the past few years, the programme has undergone significant improvements. Despite this, it has become clear that more needs to be done. In partnership with English Schools Foundation (ESF), the largest provider of English-medium international education in Hong Kong, as well as experienced educational professionals from Australia and the UK, ISF has been working to upscale the quality of the programme. To this end, we hired a new programme head in July 2017 to oversee the academic activities and curriculum across both ISF schools. He carried out a SWOT analysis and drew up a plan to improve the programme in the short term and over the next five years. Taking into account the results of the SWOT analysis, we have identified several areas for improvement, as well as key actions that need to be taken to improve the quality of the programme. These cover four areas: Curriculum, Teaching materials, Staff development and Student engagement.

### Mission

The aim of the English Programme is to provide quality English lessons to students in the various ISF education and employment programmes, enabling them to read, write, listen and communicate effectively in English at school/university and work.

### Objectives

- To provide our students with the English skills required to continue their education directly after finishing high school, without the need for additional 'bridging' lessons.
- To provide our students with the English writing and speaking skills required to access employment.

### Background

In March 2017, the ISF Board approved the request. The new programme head joined ISF in July 2017, and the native English-speaking teachers (one full-time and one part-time) joined us in August 2017.

### Current Programme

ISF currently employs eight English teachers (including two native English speakers) and a programme head who oversees the academic activities and curriculum across both ISF schools.

In Cambodia, English is often a prerequisite for entry into university, and good language skills can lead to enhanced employment opportunities and earning potential. Currently, ISF students who complete high school are unable to continue straight to university because they do not have the required level of English. ISF offers a pre-university English bridging

course but aims to strengthen the English Programme sufficiently so that this course is no longer needed. Most stakeholders, including employers of ISF students, agree that the English Programme is vital but currently weak.

Several donors and trustees indicated in interviews that they believe not every child will be able to learn English or go on to work in a profession where English is required (e.g. plumber, electrician), and that we should not assess the Education Programme based on the level of English students attain. The Khmer curriculum has already enabled them to give up rubbish collecting and offers them a better chance of employment once they leave school. However, feedback from employers indicates that basic English skills are often required, particularly reading and writing, even if a role does not involve speaking English.

We currently run a volunteer programme whereby native English speakers provide assistance during classes. From classroom observation and conversations outside of class, there is evidence that students' confidence has improved since we recruited native English-speaking teachers.

## SWOT Analysis of the English Programme

Since the programme head joined the team, he has been observing classes and reviewing study materials. He carried out a SWOT analysis and drew up a plan to improve the programme in the short term and over the next five years.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The curriculum is already in place.</li> <li>- There are abundant teaching and learning materials.</li> <li>- The teachers love their jobs and the training offered by ESF and find the school environment friendly and conducive to learning.</li> <li>- The students are willing to do all the activities the teachers assign them.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No goals have been set for the whole curriculum or objectives for each level of the curriculum. Neither are there clear objectives for each group of students.</li> <li>- Some of the teachers are not familiar with the curriculum and some courses have no course books to provide guidance.</li> <li>- Lesson plans lack clarity in terms of teaching techniques and lesson objectives; not all teachers plan lessons ahead of delivery.</li> <li>- Lessons are dull, lacking creativity and variation in teaching techniques.</li> <li>- Pronunciation is poor, with some teachers often struggling with their own pronunciation.</li> <li>- The tests used can only assess what is taught, but it is not clear whether what is taught matches students' needs.</li> <li>- Teachers and students usually use Khmer in class.</li> <li>- Most students are unable to express themselves even in basic English.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to work with ESF to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ build staff capacity;</li> <li>+ invite an ESF volunteer teacher to work alongside the programme head for three months.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Continue to take on volunteers to work alongside the Khmer teachers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With the introduction of new courses and an increasing number of students, we may face problems with classroom availability.</li> </ul>

# External Environment for the English Programme

English has become increasingly important in the Cambodian education system. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport recently introduced English into the state curriculum from grade 4 to 12 with the aim of better preparing students for the competitive job market after they finish high school. Furthermore, English is a prerequisite for attending university, and students are required to demonstrate a high level of English in order to support their research, irrespective of their field of study.

## Future Developments of the English Programme

Taking into account the results of the SWOT analysis and the external English-language requirements applicable to our students, we have identified several areas for improvement, as well as key actions that need to be taken to improve the quality of the programme. These are outlined below.

### 1. Curriculum

a. Revise the existing curriculum to align it with the programme's objectives and the needs of the students to learn general English, English for higher education and English for employment.

- Catch-up students are expected to finish at least foundation level III before they go to state school.
- State school students are expected to finish at least lower-intermediate level before they finish high school.
- The summer programme will run during the state school holiday, offering students remedial classes and other English courses to improve their listening, speaking and communication skills.

b. Design course syllabuses for each level including specific time frames, learning outcomes, teaching materials and assessment tools.

### 2. Teaching Materials

a. Based on the curriculum for catch-up students, new course books for the foundation level will be selected, purchased and used in catch-up classes.

b. Based on the curriculum for state school students, new course books will be selected, purchased and used in state school classes.

c. Additional reading materials specific to each level will be added to the school libraries.

### 3. Staff Development

a. Organise regular professional development workshops for teachers. Key focus areas would be: how to write better lesson plans, choose the right techniques and materials to achieve the objectives of the lesson, effectively manage a classroom and actively engage students.

b. Conduct training on how to assess students' performance in line with the programme's goals/objectives including speaking and listening tests.

c. Develop a clear evaluation procedure/method to identify where teachers need to improve their performance and how effective and applicable their teaching is. A monthly/quarterly lesson observation, either scheduled or unannounced, will be implemented.

- d. Continue working with ESF and others to identify teacher training schools where teachers can receive training if needed.
- e. Invite an ESF volunteer teacher to work alongside the programme head for three months.

#### **4. Student Engagement**

- a. Reinforce the habit of speaking English inside and outside classroom.
- b. Boost students' motivation with small incentives and rewards during class activities, in addition to issuing certificates of good performance etc.
- c. Organise English speaking competitions to encourage students to speak English more.
- d. Develop a clear procedure to follow up students' daily attendance with community officers.

## Action Plan

Area development is needed	What will be done	When	Cost
<b>Curriculum</b>	Revise existing general English programme for both catch-up and state school	Quarter 4 (Q4) 2017 - in progress	None
	Design new curriculum for English for academic purposes (EAP) for state school students intending to go into higher education	Q4 2017 Q4 2018	None
	Design a new curriculum for English for specific purposes (ESP) for students wishing to use English for their employment	Q4 2018 Q4 2019	None
<b>Teaching materials</b>	Run pilot project with new software – Chromebook for teaching	Q2 2018	\$600- (included in ISF 2017/2018 budget)
	Select and purchase new course books catch up an state school students	Q4 2017	\$2500(included in ISF 2017/2018 budget)
<b>Staff development</b>	<b>Staff training by head of English Programme</b> - Organise workshops to ensure teachers' deep understanding of the programme's objectives, curricula and syllabuses. - Teacher training on effective teaching methodologies and assessment.	Q1 2018	None
	<b>Staff training by international conference</b> - Offer financial support for teachers to join local conferences such as CAMTESOL.	Every Q2 each year	\$800/year (included in ISF 2017/2018 budget)
	- ESF staff to provide training on new teaching methodology teachers training. - ESF teacher volunteer working alongside the programme head.	Q1 2018	None
	Develop an evaluation procedure to assess teachers' performance and use output to inform annual salary reviews.	Q2 2018	None
	Reinforce the habit of speaking English inside and outside the classroom.	On-going	None
<b>Student engagement</b>			
	Reinforce the habit of speaking English inside and outside the classroom.	In progress	\$200/year (included in ISF 2017/2018 budget)
	Boost students' motivation with small incentives and rewards during class activities and in addition issue certificates for good performance etc.	In progress	\$400/year (included in ISF 2017/2018 budget)
	Organise English speaking competitions to encourage students to speak English more.	Q3 2018	\$500/year (included in ISF 2017/2018 budget)

## **Conclusion**

To ensure the success of the English Programme, ESF and ISF should to continue working together closely to update the curriculum, select teaching materials and train the ISF teachers. Following approval from senior management, the suggested new curriculum and teaching materials will be trialled for one academic year, after which time they will be reviewed and evaluated.