



Schools Handout # 4 Poverty in Cambodia



POVERTY

- With a population of around 16 million people, an estimated 23% of Cambodians live below the poverty line, and many families only live slightly above the poverty line
- This means that they earn less than \$1.25USD a day
- When people struggle to have enough money for food, they are more likely to not send their children to school or ask their children to drop out of school and work
- As a result, this continues the cycle of poverty for families, as they are not educated enough to earn a decent wage

LANDMINES

- A landmine is an explosive buried just underneath the ground. When someone stands on the spot where it is buried, the landmine explodes and either kills or severely injures the person
- Millions of landmines were laid by the Vietnamese military and the Khmer Rouge in the 1970's through to the late 1990's
- There is thought to be at least four million unexploded landmines in Cambodia nowadays
- Approximately 40,000 people in Cambodia are amputees
- A landmine costs \$3USD to manufacture but \$1,000USD to remove
- Rural farmers have no choice but to work on potential minefields, as they need to farm to survive. When they are injured or killed from a landmine their family members are pushed into further poverty



WATER & HYGIENE

- Only 1/3 of Cambodians have access to toilets and hand washing facilities
- Almost half of Cambodians don't have access to clean drinking water
- Diarrhoea is one of the leading killers for children under five in Cambodia

DISEASE & HEALTHCARE

- In Cambodia there is only one doctor for every 1,000 people
- Rural Cambodians particularly lack access to quality healthcare. If they fall sick, they have to make the journey to a city to see a doctor, which they often can't afford. If they don't go to the doctor, they might die, leaving the family in a bad situation. If they do go to the doctor, they have to pay a lot of money, putting their family further in debt. It is often a lose/lose situation for villagers
- Cambodia has one of the highest rates of tuberculosis in the world
- Under-nutrition contributes to more than 6,000 child deaths each year
- 40% of children under five are stunting (not growing properly)



EDUCATION

- Public school in Cambodia is supposed to be free, but children have to pay fees to their teachers for 'extra classes'
- In addition to this, it is reported over 60% of primary and secondary school teachers received, at most, secondary education, which compromises the quality of education
- There are currently not enough teachers (though this is changing, with the government planning to overhaul the education system), so classes can have up to 90 students
- Corporal punishment still exists in Cambodia
- Students must wear a school uniform, or they risk punishment from the teacher
- Students must also have one notebook per subject, or they are not allowed to attend class
- They have to pay money each day for photocopied resources
- They must also pay for textbooks and exam papers
- A monthly fee to the teacher is also required
- Approximately 95% of Cambodian children are enrolled in primary school, but that drops to 32% for lower secondary school
- Students are most likely to drop out in grades 7,8 and 9
- Many students have to drop out to help with chores, the family business or to work outside