

# Lotus Kids Club Program Evaluation Report

August 2013



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This Life Cambodia  
Community Research & Consultancy Program

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Photos by Phil Benusa and TLC.

## Acknowledgements

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## Evaluation consultant

The Community Research and Consultancy Program (CRCP) of This Life Cambodia (TLC) were contracted to undertake this evaluation by Senhoa Foundation. This Life Cambodia (TLC) is a not-for-profit, non-government community development organisation, focused on providing opportunities for communities to develop the essential infrastructure, skills and knowledge to make positive change in their lives and break free from poverty. CRCP is financed by philanthropic foundations, private donations, aid organisations and research / evaluation consultancies. The work of CRCP provides a mechanism for the voices of marginalized communities to be heard. In line with TLC's mission to listen to, engage with and advocate alongside communities, CRCP translates voices into new knowledge, which can then be used as a tool to advocate for positive change.

## About Senhoa Foundation

Senhoa Foundation's mission is stated as:

*Senhoa Foundation supports vulnerable persons and survivors of human trafficking through prevention, rehabilitation and advocacy programs. We provide funding and capacity building through long-lasting partnerships to establish sustainable programs that serve underprivileged women and children.*

*Senhoa believes in:*

- *Educational and social programs for intellectual empowerment.*
- *Income generation for women's economic and personal independence.*
- *Using business sensibilities to achieve humanitarian goals.*

The Lotus Kids' Club is part of Senhoa's early intervention strategies to end vulnerabilities through education, family development and community building.

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## Acronyms used in this report

AHC	Angkor Hospital for Children
ARM	American Rehabilitation Ministry
BMI	Body Mass Index
CCPCR	Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Rights
CRCP	Community Research & Consultancy Program (TLC)
ESG	Evaluation Stakeholder Group
LKC	Lotus Kids Club
NGO	Non Government Organisation
TLC	This Life Cambodia
WHO	World Health Organisation



# Executive Summary

## Background

Lotus Kids Club (LKC) is a program that was established in 2010 to provide a pre-school program for Vietnamese and Khmer children aged 3-6 years, from Slorkram Commune in Siem Reap. The program has grown considerably since 2010, and now provides 4 programs for over 60 children and 33 families, including a Pre-School Program, a Sponsorship Program, a Family Program and a Community Drop-In Program. The program is funded by the Senhoa Foundation in the US, and has a local partnership with the Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR), a local Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in Cambodia.

The Community Research and Consultancy Program of This Life Cambodia were contracted to undertake this evaluation for LKC to determine achievements and outcomes of the LKC Program since it began in 2010. The evaluation was conducted to inform future directions for Senhoa and LKC. This is the first evaluation of the LKC Program conducted.

## Evaluation methods

An Evaluation Stakeholder Group (ESG) was established, that involved key stakeholders of LKC, to ensure the evaluation process was transparent and participatory. The ESG were involved in planning and implementation of the evaluation. Ethical guidelines were established to ensure the rights and respect of program beneficiaries were at the forefront of the evaluation.

The evaluation sample included LKC program beneficiaries, including children and parents involved in programs, and LKC staff and key stakeholders. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools were designed to be culturally sensitive and to gather as much useful information from the sample as possible. Individual interviews were conducted with LKC staff and key stakeholders, including Pre-School and Community Drop-In Program teachers, the LKC Social Worker, LKC program volunteers and LKC Sponsorship school teachers. Individual interviews were also conducted with program beneficiaries, including parents and children of the Community Drop-In Program. Focus groups were also conducted with Drop-In Program children, and a drawing activity was conducted with Pre-School Program children. Finally an LKC Program document review was conducted.

Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic coding, and qualitative data was interpreted via SPSS and excel spreadsheets. Evaluators discussed findings with key stakeholders, and recommendations were established.

## Evaluation findings

A number of very important findings have been highlighted by this evaluation. In particular, a number of very positive outcomes have been reported for children and families attending the program.

The cross-cultural component of the LKC program, which involves bringing together Vietnamese and Khmer children and their families to learn and socialize, has proven highly successful. Although this aspect of the program has created some challenges for staff, it has also been one of the most rewarding aspects of the program, with most LKC staff and parents praising this component of the program for creating more harmony and solidarity in the community. Furthermore, the Pre-School Program appears to be very successful in terms of preparing children for entry to primary school, and providing nutritional supplements and health care. The Sponsorship Program, on the other hand, while successfully providing opportunities for Pre-School Program children to continue their schooling, has been shown to require extra resources and support for children and their families to ensure children can stay at school. The Family Program was reported to be very successful in terms of education sessions being useful for participants, and all families appreciating the 16kg of rice

provided monthly, however, all parents reported they would continue to attend education sessions even if they weren't receiving rice. The Community Drop-In Program whilst successfully providing recreational activities for up to 50 children four times a week, does however, have many issues that require addressing in order for this component of the program to be delivered successfully for program beneficiaries. It is recommended that Senhoa and LKC should spend a considerable amount of time and energy focused on clarifying the purpose of this aspect of LKC, to ensure the best possible outcomes for children attending this program. Finally, in terms of program beneficiaries, this evaluation has highlighted how important health care checks have been in determining health issues and prevention, with more than two thirds of children showing dental decay issues, and a third requiring vision re-testing. Ensuring health check processes are consistent and tailored to the needs of program beneficiaries would however improve the outcomes for children.

Findings of this evaluation in regards to strategic program directions and program management of the LKC Program have highlighted a number of gaps and areas for improvement. An LKC Internal Evaluation Report, with recommendations for addressing these, has been presented to the Senhoa Foundation and LKC.



# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Lotus Kids Club

The Lotus Kids Club (LKC) was established in 2010 to provide a safe and secure play and learning environment for Vietnamese and Cambodian children from 'vulnerable' families in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The program began with only 2 staff, and 15 children, providing a space for this group of children to play and socialize. The program has evolved and grown over the last three years, now employing 8 staff and providing programs for over 60 children and 33 families from the villages of Banteay Chas, Boeung Doupa, Mondul 3 and Chung Kaosou in Slorkram Commune in Siem Reap. LKC operates four programs, including a Pre-School Program for children aged 3-6 years, a Sponsorship Program for primary school children who have graduated from the Pre-School Program, a Community Drop-In Program for children aged 3-18 years, and a Family Program for parents of children in the Pre-School and Sponsorship Programs.

LKC was created by and funded via Senhoa Foundation, a non-profit organisation registered and located in California (USA). LKC is currently registered with and managed by a local Cambodian organisation, the Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR).

### 1.2 Purpose of evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine achievements and outcomes (both intended and unintended) of the LKC program, since its inception in 2010. Furthermore, this evaluation aims to identify opportunities for improvement in the work LKC does, to guide future directions of the Program. In particular the evaluation aims to highlight:

- The effectiveness of the project in meeting the needs of the community
- Strengths and weaknesses of the program
- Recommendations to inform future directions for Senhoa and LKC (an internal report has been presented to Senhoa and LKC)

### 1.3 Outline of report

This report outlines background information about LKC, and the purpose of this evaluation. Evaluation methods are described, including evaluation planning tools, ethical considerations, research evaluation samples, recruitment methods, data collection tools and methods, and systems used for data analysis. Descriptions are provided for each activity of the LKC program, including the Pre-School Program, the Sponsorship Program, the Family Program and the Community Drop-In Program. For each program area, the report describes findings from key stakeholders and program beneficiaries, and future recommendations.

# 2

## Methods

### 2.1 LKC Evaluation Stakeholder Group

An Evaluation Stakeholder Group (ESG) was established to ensure the evaluation process was transparent, participatory and meeting the needs of LKC. The ESG was made up of members with a vested interest in the evaluation, including the TLC CRCP evaluation team, and LKC staff. The ESG were involved throughout the planning and implementation of the evaluation, including helping recruit participants, promoting participation of beneficiaries in the evaluation, helping with data collection, and in particular determining and prioritizing key evaluation questions.

LKC Evaluation Working Group members:

- Shelley Walker – CRCP Research Evaluation Officer, TLC (AusAID funded)
- Pisseth Hang – CRCP Coordinator, TLC
- Mono Tuot – CRCP Senior Officer, TLC
- Kimsorn Ngam – CRCP Junior Officer, TLC
- Miriam Sopin-Vilme - Senhoa Country Director
- Sophy Ry - LKC Project Manager
- Steve Mojica - LKC Technical Advisor

Prior to undertaking the evaluation a literature and document review of relevant Senhoa and LKC reports and information was conducted, along with a program mapping exercise with the LKC ESG. This led to the development of evaluation work plans, which were established in consultation with the LKC Evaluation Working Group. The work plans provided a map of the LKC program areas and beneficiaries, areas of inquiry for each program area, potential data samples, impact and outcome indicators and finally evaluation methods and tools for gathering data. See tables 3-6 for program evaluation plans.

### 2.2 Ethical considerations

The conduct of this evaluation was based on a number of guiding principles that placed the rights and respect of program beneficiaries at the forefront of the evaluation. These principals are as follows:

- Evaluation processes need to be relevant and meaningful to the needs of program beneficiaries.
- The process of evaluation should be transparent and findings should be presented back to the community where the evaluation was conducted.
- Evaluation findings should be translated into actions for positive change.
- Evaluation processes need to take account of the cultural context and literacy levels of participants.

Based on these principals, a number of strategies were used to prevent exposure to potential risk for participants engaged in the evaluation. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, evaluation data has been de-identified. To ensure individuals did not feel obliged or coerced to participate, 'Free Prior Informed Consent' (The NGO Forum on Cambodia 2012) was obtained, which is an international concept to acknowledge people's legitimate decision-making authority. This meant that participants were 'FREE' to withdraw consent at any time, without coercion; that the decision to consent was given PRIOR to the conduct of interviews, surveys and focus groups, and that participants were INFORMED with accurate clear information about what it would mean to be involved in the research; before required to consent to participate. Most of the adult beneficiaries of Lotus Kids Club are illiterate; therefore voice signature (verbal) consent was obtained from participants.

### 2.3 Evaluation sample

The sample included LKC program beneficiaries, LKC staff and key stakeholders. See table 1 for evaluation sample summary.

**Table 1: Evaluation sample**

	Evaluation Sample	Research Tool
<b>Program Beneficiaries</b>	17 Pre-School Program children	Drawing activity
	11 Drop-In Program children	Face-to-face surveys
	10 Drop-In Program children	1 male & 1 female focus group
	28 LKC program parents (inclusive of interviewed parents)	Face-to-face survey
	13 LKC program parents	Individual interviews
<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	LKC Manager LKC Technical Advisor Senhoa Country Manager Senhoa Director CCPCR Director	Individual interviews
	3 LKC Teachers & LKC Social Worker	Individual interviews
	5 Sponsorship Student Teachers	Individual surveys
	Nurse working with LKC & Senhoa volunteers	Individual interviews

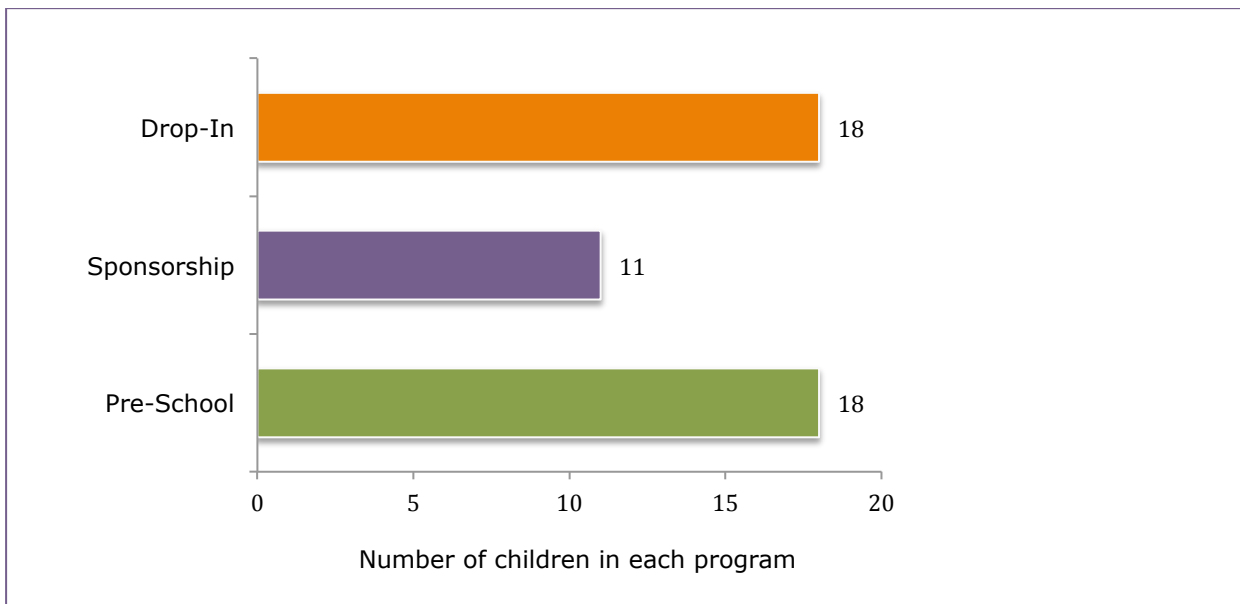
**Program beneficiaries**

Participants included children who attend the Pre-School and Community Drop-In Programs, and children who are participants of the Sponsorship Program.

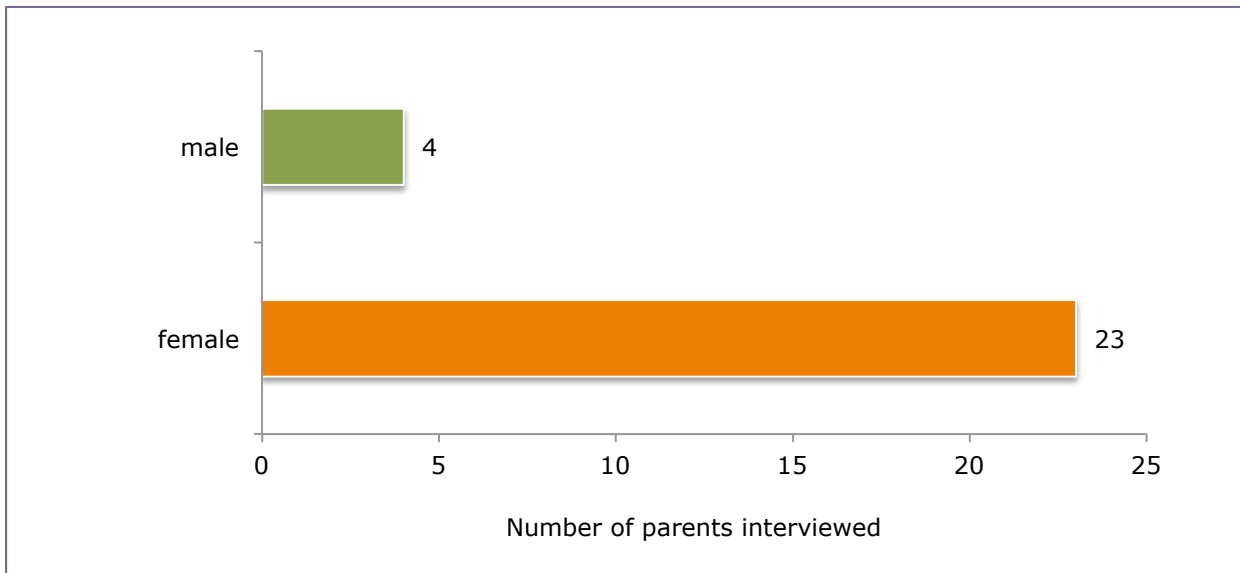
Families of children involved in LKC programs were also involved in surveys and interviews. Face-to-face surveys were conducted with 27 parents (Vietnamese n= 11, Khmer n= 16). 23 parents were female guardians (mother, sister, grandmother); the remaining 4 were fathers, and 6 of the total 28 were single parents. 11 of the surveyed parents had children attending the Sponsorship Program, and 18 had children attending the Pre-School and Drop-In Programs. Some parents had one child and some had two children participating in LKC programs.

See figures 1-4 for a summary of the characteristics of parents involved in surveys and interviews.

**Figure 1: Number of children in each program for parents interviewed**

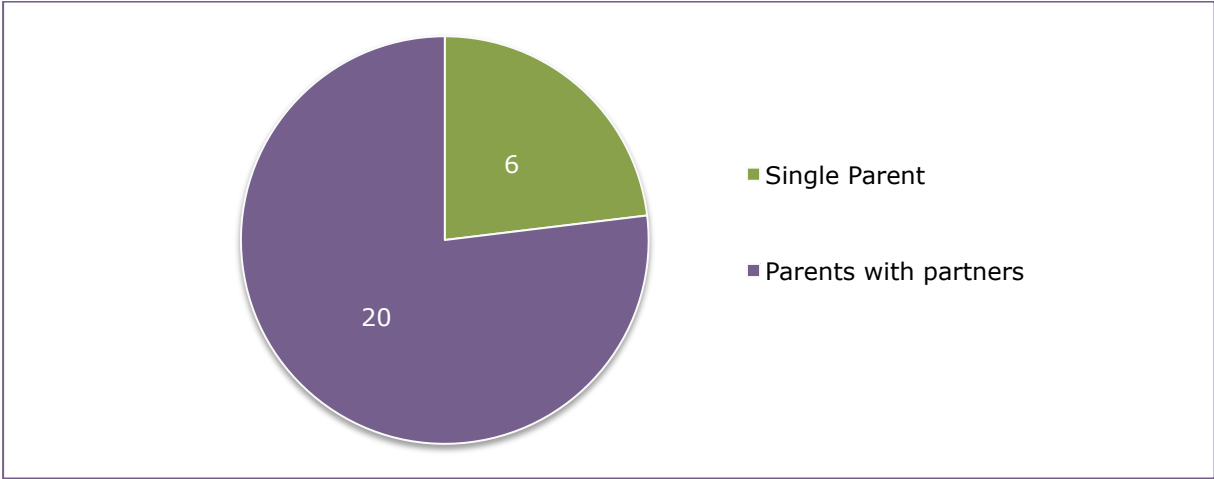


**Figure 2: Gender of parent participants**

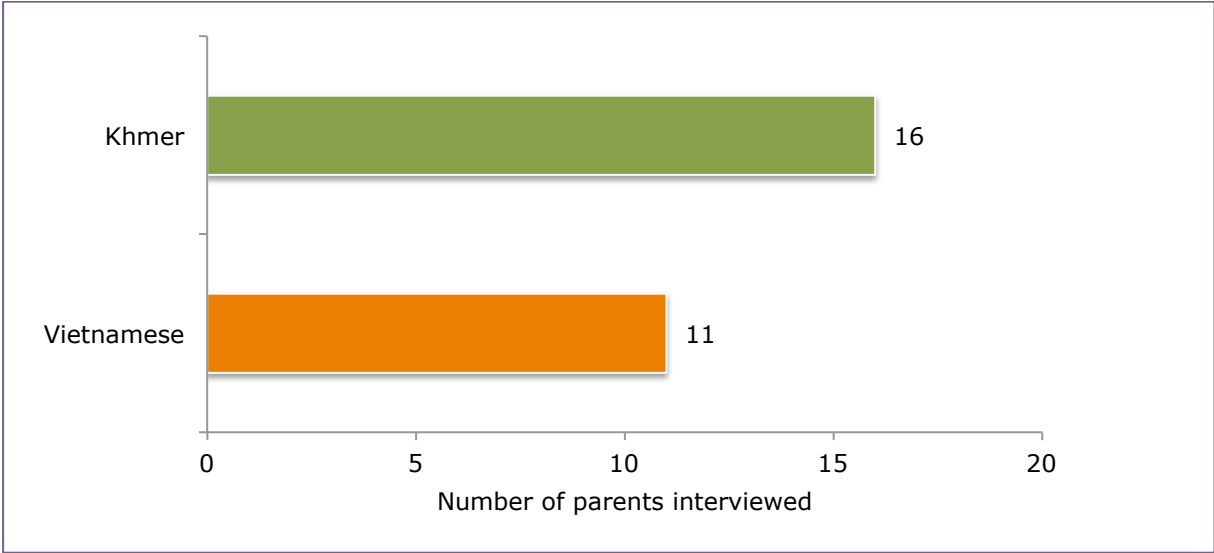




**Figure 3: Interviewed parents with partners**



**Figure 4: Nationality of parents interviewed**



**LKC staff and key stakeholders**

The sample included LKC program staff, including the LKC Program Manager, the LKC Technical Advisor, LKC Pre-School Teachers, the LKC Social Worker and LKC Volunteers. The sample also involved key stakeholders, including program partners, collaborators and supporters, and organisations with a vested interest in the program.

**2.4 Instrument design**

Evaluation tools were developed following a review of program documentation and discussion with the LKC Evaluation Working Group. A range of culturally sensitive and appropriate research tools (taking account of low literacy levels), were designed to gather meaningful data from a range of key stakeholders and beneficiaries of the LKC program; a range of different techniques were used, involving qualitative and quantitative methods.

All research tools were designed in English, however questions were asked in Khmer or Vietnamese. Survey tools and focus group and individual interview schedules for children and parents were simple, and involved both open and closed questions, to capture a breadth of information. Individual interview schedules for LKC staff and key stakeholders served more as guides to prompt discussion with open-ended questions. See appendices for interview and focus group guides, and survey tools.

## 2.5 Data collection

Data collection for this evaluation was completed in July 2013. The LKC Evaluation Working Group helped the evaluation team source appropriate documents and information and an appropriate sample of key stakeholders and program beneficiaries. Names were not recorded on any surveys, interview templates or children’s drawings. All program beneficiaries and key stakeholders were happy and enthusiastic to be interviewed.

### ***LKC staff and key stakeholders***

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with LKC program staff (LKC Country Manager, LKC Manager and LKC Technical Advisor), about their experience of working with LKC, and their views on all aspects of LKC program components and processes. Interviews were also conducted with three LKC teachers and the LKC social worker. Snowball sampling was used to recruit additional stakeholders. Most interviews lasted from 1-1 ½ hours and were conducted in the offices of LKC or in places of most convenience to workers.

**Table 2: Community Drop-In Program evaluation participants**

		Survey	Focus Group
<b>Number of children</b>		Girls (n=8)	Girls (n=5)
		Boys (n=4)	Boys (n=5)
<b>Ethnicity of children</b>		Khmer (n=11)	Khmer (n=8)
		Vietnamese (n=1)	Vietnamese (n=2)
<b>Age of children</b>		6 years (n=1)	10 years (n=2)
		7 years (n=1)	11 years (n=1)
		8 years (n=1)	12 years (n=2)
		10 years (n=1)	13 years (n=2)
		11 years (n=2)	14 years (n=2)
		12 years (n=2)	16 years (n=1)
		13 years (n=2)	
		14 years (n=1)	
	16 years (n=1)		

### ***Program beneficiaries***

Interviewers explained the purpose of the interview and how the information would be used before seeking consent from program beneficiaries.

Vietnamese and Khmer parents were surveyed at a monthly parent education session at LKC, while rice packages were being distributed. Survey interviews lasted from 10-20 minutes to complete. Given at least 28 parents of the 33 beneficiary families were surveyed, it is likely the evaluation sample is representative. Follow-up face-to-face interviews, also taking 10-20 minutes each, were conducted with a sample of 13 LKC families the following week. A Vietnamese translator assisted with surveys and interviews with Vietnamese parents.

Two focus groups of 5 children each, including a male and female group, were conducted with children of the Drop-In Program, in the LKC office. Interviews were conducted in Khmer, with one facilitator guiding the discussion and the other taking notes. Face-to-face surveys were conducted with 11 Drop-In Program children. Data was also gathered from 18 Pre-School Program children via a drawing activity that was conducted with the support of the Pre-School Program Teachers. This activity provided an opportunity for researchers to ask children what they liked about Pre-School, and to observe interactions between children and teachers. Furthermore, individual interviews were conducted with six primary school teachers where sponsorship students attend primary school.

### ***Photographs***

Photographs were taken of tangible program benefits, infrastructure and beneficiaries. Some photos appear in this report.

## **2.6 Evaluation limitations**

Because surveys, interviews and focus groups with program beneficiaries were conducted at the Lotus Kids Club venue, there is a possibility, despite having told participants the interviews were confidential, that this may have discouraged them from speaking freely.

Furthermore, as many of the LKC program beneficiaries are very young children (aged under 6 years), limited valuable information could be obtained from these participants. Despite these limitations, we are confident that the results presented in this report are a fair representation of the LKC program.

A final limitation of this study is that previous baseline evaluation data has not been gathered for the LKC Program, which means we were unable to compare findings for program beneficiaries in terms of educational or health outcomes.

## **2.7 Data analysis**

Most interviews and focus groups were conducted in Khmer or Vietnamese, and translated into English. Simple field reporting forms were used to manage data collection. Once all data was gathered and cleaned to ensure accuracy, it was translated into useable formats for analysis, via spreadsheets, tables and transcripts.

Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic coding. Individual and focus group interview and open-ended survey questions were compiled into MS Word tables, and answers were grouped into major themes, counted and ranked by frequency. This report includes minority views as well as majority views, so that a wide range of opinions is represented. Quantitative survey data was interpreted and statistically analyzed via SPSS and excel spreadsheets. Quantitative closed-ended survey questions were entered into databases and are presented in graph or table format. Evaluators discussed findings and recommendations before this report was submitted.

**Table 3: Evaluation plan for Pre-School Program**

Pre-School Program		
Current program beneficiaries	25 children (3-5 years old) ➢ Level1 pre-school (9 children) ➢ Level 2 pre-school (16 children)	
Evaluation questions	Are children well prepared (academically & socially) for school? Is the program impacting positively on children’s health? What are the strengths of the program? Where could improvements be made? Do program workers have sufficient resources/skills/support? Is the mixing of Khmer & Vietnamese children working?	
Data sample	Indicators – impacts & outcomes	Evaluation methods & tools
LKC program staff LKC teachers LKC social worker Pre-school children Parents Primary school teacher/s	Number of children in program Children prepared for school Parents satisfied with outcomes Children’s nutritional needs, health needs & socio-emotional needs being met	Attendance data Interview Pre-School teacher/s, School teachers, social worker, LKC program staff & parents Observation pre-school session Drawing activity pre-school children LKC & Senhoa documents

**Table 4: Evaluation plan for Sponsorship Program**

Sponsorship Program		
Current program beneficiaries	13 children – all previously graduated from LKC Pre-School Program 12 x 1st grade students / 1 x 2nd grade student. 4 x Vietnamese children / 9 x Khmer children	
Evaluation questions	What are the benefits for children of being sponsored? What difference is sponsorship making for children? What are the strengths of the program Where are opportunities for improvement? Do program workers have sufficient resources/skills/support?	
Data sample	Indicators – impacts & outcomes	Evaluation methods & tools
LKC program staff LKC teachers LKC social worker Sponsorship parents Primary school teachers	No. of students in program No. of students staying in program Student attendance & achievements Parents & students feel good about child’s achievements Students health care needs met Students are enjoying school	Interview LKC program staff & school teacher LKC & Senhoa documents Attendance & achievement data Interview sample of families

**Table 5: Evaluation plan for Family Program**

Family Program		
Current program beneficiaries	33 families	
Evaluation questions	Would families attend education sessions if they were not receiving rice? How do the families use the rice? Do parents attend and enjoy the info sessions? Are parents learning/gaining knowledge from education sessions Are there other issues/topics parents would like to know more about? Is the parent contract working? Does it need changes? Is delivering education/information this way effective?	
Data sample	Indicators – impacts & outcomes	Evaluation methods & tools
LKC program staff 33 families Food program staff	No. of families receiving rice & condiments Amount of food families receive No. of parents attending education sessions Parents enjoy education sessions Number of families with contracts Increased knowledge for parents	Survey families Interview sample of families Interview LKC staff

**Table 6: Evaluation plan for Community Drop-in Program**

Drop-In Program		
Current program beneficiaries	Children aged 3-18 years 30-40 regular attendees	
Evaluation questions	Are the social emotional needs of children of different ages being met? Are resources being used efficiently and effectively? Have all the recent changes created positive outcomes? What are the strengths of this program? Where could improvements be made? Is this program sustainable into the future?	
Data sample	Indicators – impacts & outcomes	Evaluation methods & tools
LKC program staff 3 teachers Social worker Class teachers Drop-In children	Attendance data Number children attending classes Children learning new skills Children enjoy classes & activities	Interview class teachers & LKC program staff Survey children Focus group with children Program attendance data LKC & Senhoa documents







# 3

## Evaluation Findings

Evaluation findings are presented in the following section, for each component of the Lotus Kids Club Program. Based on a document review and discussions with LKC staff, the following components make up the program evaluation areas:

- Vietnamese-Khmer Cross-Cultural Component
- LKC Pre-School Program
- LKC Sponsorship Program
- LKC Family Program
- LKC Community Drop-In Program

For each component area, a description of current activities is provided, followed by an analysis of evaluation data and program recommendations.

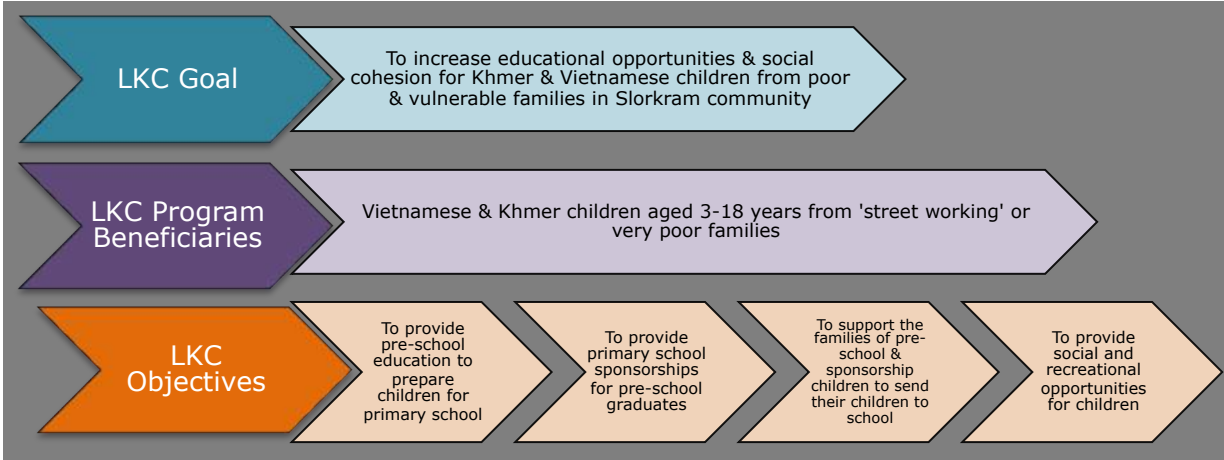
### 3.1 LKC Strategic Directions

The Lotus Kids Club program targets Vietnamese and Khmer children and their families from Slorkram Commune in Siem Reap. LKC operates 4 programs including a Pre-School Program, a primary school Sponsorship Program, a Community Drop-In Program and a Family Program. See figures 6 for a map of LKC programs.

#### ***LKC goals and objectives***

Interviews with LKC staff and key stakeholders and analysis of key LKC documents, has highlighted a previous lack of consistency regarding strategic program directions and intentions of Lotus Kids Club. Interviews with LKC employees, however, do reveal a consistency of views regarding the primary purpose and values of most aspects of the LKC Program, which are reflected in figure 5. The Community Drop-In Program however does require clarification in terms of its purpose and intended target group. Results of this evaluation point to the need for LKC to consolidate their program aims and objectives and ensure they are reflected consistently and transparently across all program documentation and communication. The LKC Internal Evaluation Report provides more detailed information and recommendations regarding these issues.

**Figure 5: Goal, target group and objectives of LKC Program**



**Program beneficiaries**

The Pre-School Program targets poor children and those from 'street working families', in Slorkram Commune in Siem Reap, including a small number of children are orphans<sup>1</sup> (who live with family members). Initial selection is undertaken by the LKC Social Worker, via their own networks with families within the community, and recommendations by families in the program. Once a family has been identified, the Social Worker and LKC Manager visits the family to determine their suitability for the program. Of the 'street working children' and their families, who make up the majority of the current target group of LKC programs, most have a home where they live and sleep at night. For these families the most common income generation activity is scavenging, which includes collecting garbage in the streets, begging and selling and carrying loads. Studies show that child labour is one of the many coping strategies that families adopt when there is food or income deficits, thus LKC children come from poor and vulnerable families.

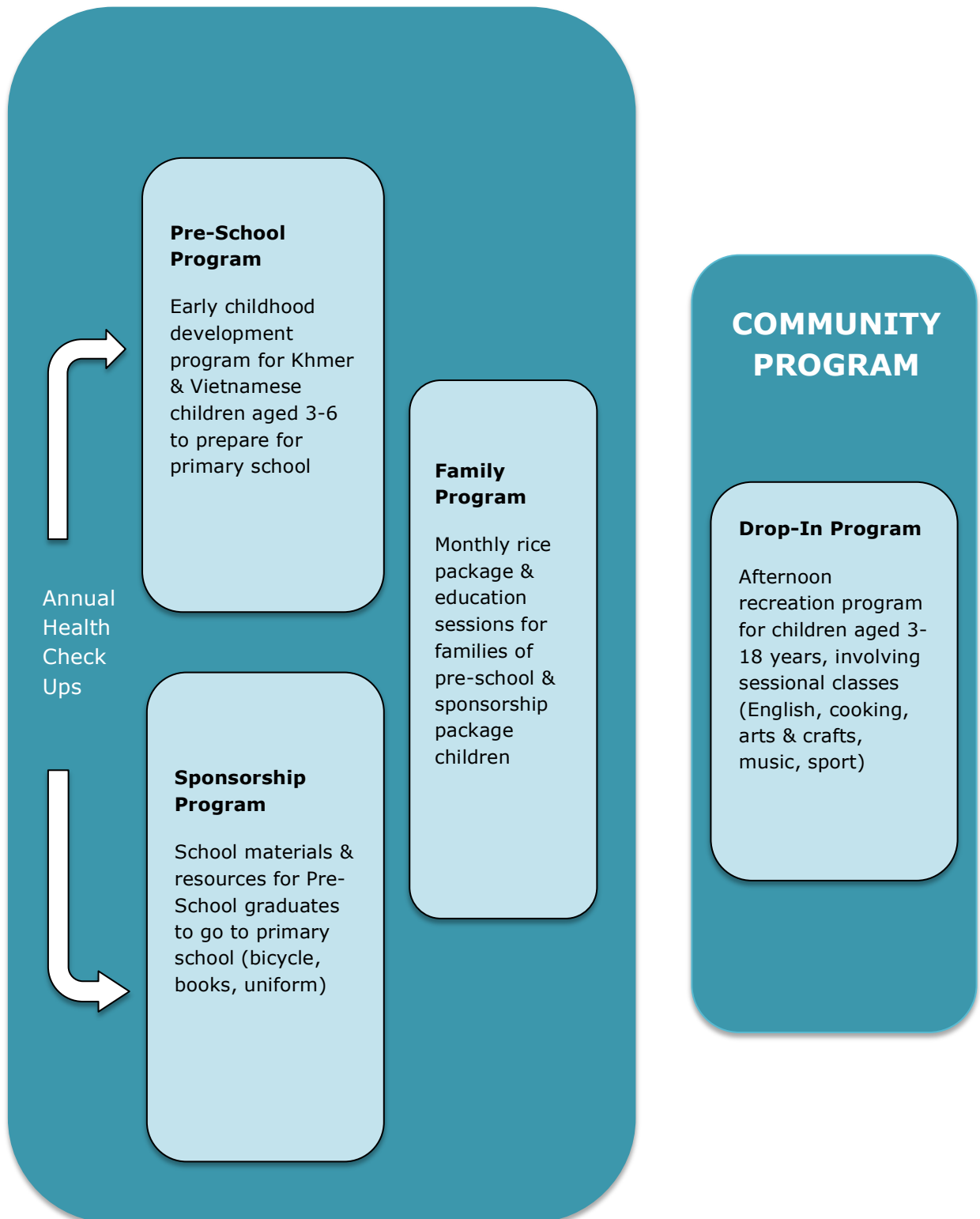
The LKC program addresses malnutrition and school non-attendance, which are primary issues for children of 'street working' families. Recent research by the Cambodian Street Children Network (2011) has shown that up to 40% of street working children and young people suffer from hunger, and given there is a correlation between nutritional deficit and health, malnourished children often lack the nutrients that the body needs to grow, function and to prevent illness. Furthermore, more than half (55%) of street working children have been shown to be not attending school. Both of these issues match current objectives of LKC. Whilst selection criteria for children and families of the LKC program has not previously been documented, interviews with LKC staff and key stakeholders and an LKC document review has revealed the following criteria exists for current Pre-School Program participants.

**Table 7: Current selection criteria for Pre-School Program children**

Current selection criteria for Pre-School Program children	
•	From Khmer or Vietnamese families
▪	From 'Street Working' or poor families
▪	Aged 3-6 years for the Pre-School Program (3-18 for Community Drop-In Program)
▪	From families that value education and want their children to go to school

<sup>1</sup> Orphan refers to children without a mother or father who live with other family members

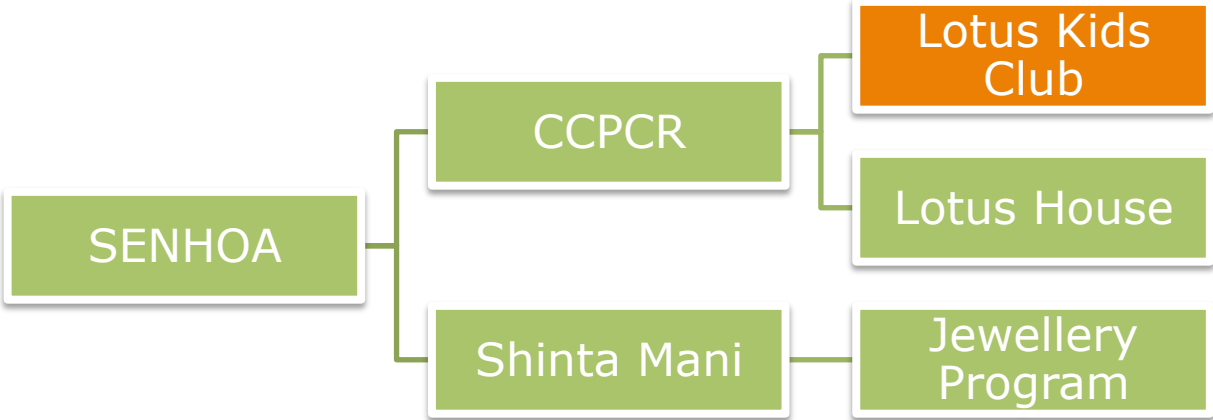
**Figure 6: LKC Program map**



**LKC Management structure**

The management structure of LKC is complex. Currently the Senhoa Foundation, based in California (US), provides funding and technical advice for LKC, whereas legal responsibility for LKC is with a local Cambodian NGO (Non-Government Organisation, Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children’s Rights (CCPCR), based in Phnom Penh. Senhoa Foundation currently funds three programs in Siem Reap, including Lotus Kids Club (LKC), Lotus House and the Senhoa Jewellery Program. CCPCR is legally responsible for Lotus House and LKC, whereas Senhoa’s Jewellery Program is registered with Shinta Mani Foundation, a local Cambodian NGO. See figure 7 for the current Senhoa Foundation Organisational Management structure. More detailed information regarding management structure issues and recommendations are presented in the LKC Internal Evaluation Report.

**Figure 7: Current Senhoa Foundation Organisational Management Structure**



## 3.2 Vietnamese-Khmer Cross-Cultural Component

Most of the Vietnamese families LKC supports are illegal immigrants, having settled in Cambodia after the Vietnamese army overthrew the Khmer Rouge.

The Vietnamese community are one of the most vulnerable minority groups in Cambodia. They are extremely prone to discrimination and violations of their rights. Their status has much to do with the difficult history and relationship between Cambodia and Vietnam, which has helped create animosity and intolerance towards them. Although there are some private schools teaching Vietnamese in Cambodia, the government does not officially sanction them, and currently no government schools in Cambodia provide any form of schooling in Vietnamese. (World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, 2013)

The current citizenship law of Cambodia makes it difficult for many Vietnamese families to prove they are citizens of Cambodia, which excludes their fully participating as equal members in political and economic life of the country. The discriminatory impact of this legislation, the loss or destruction of identity papers, which occurred during the upheavals from the 1970s, and the fact that the Constitution of Cambodia only assigns the protection of human rights to citizens, leaves them particularly vulnerable. Though not due to any official Cambodian government policy, any expression of distinct Vietnamese identity is still occasionally met with violence; people are occasionally set upon if they are heard to speak in Vietnamese.

LKC is one of the few programs in Cambodia that target Vietnamese and Khmer children and their families together. This evaluation has highlighted that this aspect of the program presents some of the greatest challenges for LKC, yet also the greatest rewards. A particular concern for LKC, is that Vietnamese children are unable to undertake 6<sup>th</sup> grade exams, because they do not have Family Books, which they can only obtain if they have a birth certificate.

### **Parent views**

Parents were invited to discuss how they feel about Khmer and Vietnamese children learning and playing together. Almost all parents (96%) believe this is a positive component of the program; only one parent felt unsure about this aspect of LKC.

Many Vietnamese parents talked about the benefits of the program in terms of their children having gained better Khmer language skills as a result of attending programs with Khmer children. Many Khmer and Vietnamese parents also talked about the importance of their children having the opportunity to play and develop friendships with each other, and some Vietnamese parents praised LKC for creating an environment of mutual respect where their children do not receive discrimination or victimisation. Parent comments included:

*I think [the LKC program] is helping to build solidarity and mutual respect between Khmer and Vietnamese children ... there is no tolerance of racism, which is good. (Vietnamese mother of boy aged 7)*

*My daughter is now friends with a [Vietnamese] girl, and she is studying in the public school with her ... this makes me happy. (Khmer father of girl aged 7)*

*My child has improved their Khmer speaking because they are learning from the Khmer children. (Vietnamese mother of girl aged 7)*

*The children are learning to help each other – there is no discrimination. (Khmer mother of girls aged 5 and 9).*

*I have seen my boy playing together with a Vietnamese boy in a brotherly way, which I think is very good. (Khmer mother of boy aged 7)*

*Our children are learning to live together and play together, and that is a really good thing, and now my daughter can speak Khmer. (Vietnamese mother of girl aged 8)*

### **LKC teacher views**

Teachers identified both challenges and strengths of the cross-cultural component of the LKC Pre-School Program.

Teachers felt it would sometimes be easier to have separate classes for Vietnamese and Khmer children, because conflict between students is difficult to manage. Furthermore, teachers discussed challenges they face at the beginning of each year, with very few Vietnamese children speaking Khmer, which means they are required to develop alternative strategies for teaching these children, until their Khmer skills improve.

All teachers and LKC staff did however feel the mixing of Vietnamese and Khmer children was the best thing about the LKC Program, helping to bring Khmer and Vietnamese families together to address discrimination and create more social cohesion in the community. One teacher said,

*It's the biggest issue for the pre-school program. Khmer children don't want to play with Vietnamese children. The Khmer children say bad words to the Vietnamese children, they say, 'You are the Vietnamese children', in a discriminatory manner. It is very tricky for the teachers ... however, the best part of the program is the Vietnamese and Khmer coming together. (LKC Teacher)*

## **3.3 LKC Pre-School Program**

The Pre-School Program aims to prepare children for primary school by developing their socio-emotional and numeracy-literacy skills through play-based learning. Currently there are 25 children enrolled in the Pre-School Program, 16 children aged 4-6 years attend Level 2 Pre-School, and 9 children aged 3-4 years attend Level 1 Pre-School. The program began in 2010 with 15 children. Students attend the program from 7.30am to 11am five days a week. This year (2013), 14 children of a total of 16 passed entry tests for primary school; two children will repeat the Pre-School Program this year. None of the children who have attended the Pre-School Program have dropped out thus far. See figure 8 for a summary of numbers of participants attending the program each year since 2010. For children, the program provides a pre-school educative curriculum, hygiene education, some health care and nutritional support. Families of pre-school children receive parent education, rice packages and some social work support. Three teachers facilitate the Pre-School Program; a Senior LKC Teacher works with Level 2 children aged 4-6 years, and a Junior LKC Teacher works with Level 1 children aged 3-4 years. A Teacher Assistant helps teachers in both of the Pre-School Program groups. Many positive outcomes have been observed for children who attend the Pre-School Program.

### **Pre-School Program selection**

As previously stated, the Pre-School Program targets poor children and those from 'street working families', in Slorkram Commune in Siem Reap. A small number of children are orphans (who live with family members), and some children have been selected based on their level of poverty. Initial selection is undertaken by the LKC Social Worker, via his own networks with families within the community, and recommendations by families in the program. Once a family has been identified, the Social Worker and LKC Manager visits the family to determine their suitability for the program. Children selected currently are from poor families and 'street working families'.

### **Pre-School Curriculum**

The Pre-School Program has evolved since it began. Originally the program was much less structured and mostly focused on play. The program is now based on an Early Childhood Development Curriculum that combines Khmer and US pedagogies focusing largely on play-based learning. One teacher said,

*The Pre-School Program has changed a lot, which is a good thing. Before we were just focused on play, but now we are more focused on learning.*



The primary aim of the program is to prepare children for enrolment into Khmer public schooling. The US component of the curriculum is focused on the 'HeartStart' philosophy (US Dept. of Health & Human Services), which is based on new research that has shown that the social and emotional development of young children plays a critical role in fostering cognitive development. Both the parent-child relationship and the relationships that children develop with other significant caregivers, for example, the pre-school teachers, can have an effect on child development (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2000). The program is therefore, based on a philosophy that recognises that the emotional and social characteristics are what provide children with the skills to learn and the motivation to want to learn. The LKC Pre-School Program provides:

- Basic Khmer and English literacy – including a library which LKC plans to open up for families
- Numeracy skill development
- Social/emotional skill development (manners, social etiquette, cultural education)
- Recreational learning activities (arts and crafts, field trips, outdoor play)

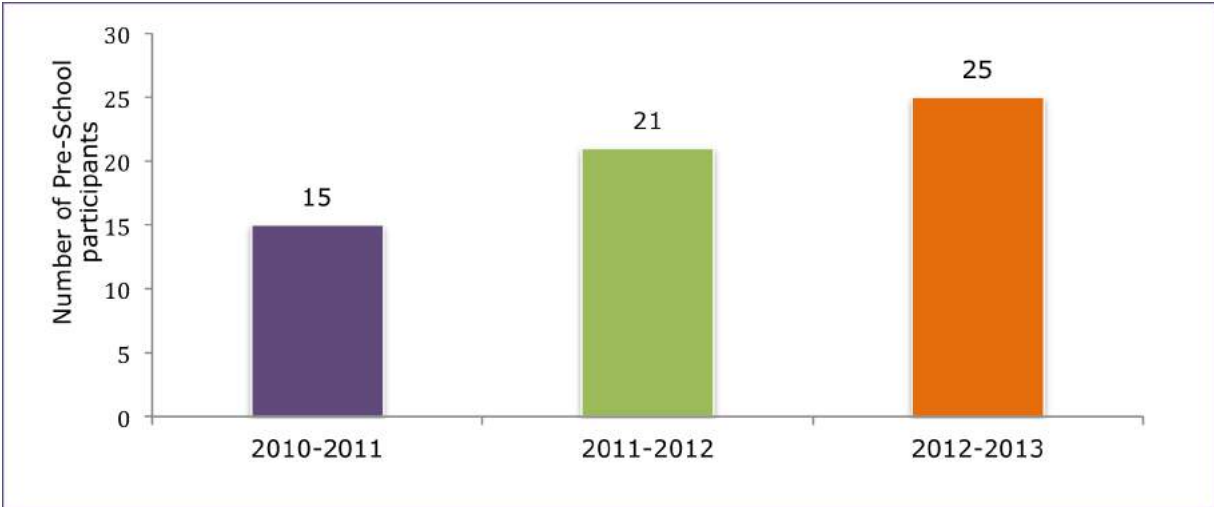
Although LKC teachers support and value the play based Pre-School Program curriculum, there is some concern that children are not receiving sufficient education related to literacy or science. Furthermore, LKC staff reported the challenge of sourcing particular resources to enrich the Pre-School Program (eg. microscopes), due to a lack of funding or because they are difficult to source in Cambodia.

**LKC Teacher views**

Many positive outcomes have been observed for children who attend the Pre-School Program. Vietnamese and Khmer children learn numeracy and literacy skills, and learn to play together and enjoy each other’s company, and Vietnamese children learn to speak Khmer. Furthermore, a significant finding was that children fight less with each other, and treat each other with more respect. One LKC staff member said,

*I have enjoyed watching the children grow. One child did not use to smile, but now he does – and he laughs a lot too. Another child had oppositional behaviour, but now wants to cooperate and even helps to clean up. Some children fought a lot, but now we don’t notice them fighting as much. The rule of respect is really important and makes a difference in our program. (LKC staff member)*

**Figure 8: Number of Pre-School participants from 2009-2013**



**Figure 9: LKC Pre-School Program children's drawings**







## Parent views

All parents of Pre-School Program children, who were interviewed and surveyed, were very happy that their child was able to attend the LKC Program. When asked what their children would be doing if they weren't involved in the Program, only 6 parents reported that their children would be able to attend school, which is probably not surprising given the level of poverty of most participant families. Children of the remaining 21 families could not afford to send their children to pre-school, with some reporting that their children would be collecting junk or scavenging if they weren't participating in the LKC Pre-School Program.

Parents were asked to share the three most important things about their children attending the Pre-School Program. Almost all parents (n=19) reported being pleased that their children were now receiving an education, including that they can now write, draw pictures, read and sing. A few parents mentioned the importance of numeracy skills their children were learning. There were however, some parents who did not view education as the most important thing. The second most important thing for parents was that their children were being fed while at the Pre-School Program. Of least importance was that children had a place to play. See figure 10 for a summary of parent responses.

Over half of the Vietnamese parents (n=6) who were interviewed expressed gratitude that their children's Khmer language skills had improved, and for some children the improvements were enormous.

Just under one third of parents (n=8) also talked about their children being more 'obedient' and respectful towards them as parents, as a result of being involved in the program. Some parents talked about their child's attitude having become more positive.

*My child is happy and wants to go to school all day. She is eager to learn, and now feels more affection for her brothers and sisters. She is now smarter, more industrious and more knowledgeable. (Khmer female parent)*

Some parents talked about the 'good teachers' in the Pre-School Program, who were responsible for giving their children a 'good education'. Some parents discussed their pride in their child's achievements.

*My daughter's education results are good – I am proud. She has received good advice from her teacher and I know this has helped. (Khmer mother of girl aged 4)*

**Table 8: LKC Pre-School Program**

LKC Pre-School Program	
<b>Target group</b>	Khmer & Vietnamese children aged 3-6 years from 'street working' and poor families.
<b>Program aim</b>	To prepare children for entry into Khmer public schools by developing their socio-emotional & numeral-literacy skills
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood development program</li> <li>• Khmer-Western curriculum</li> <li>• Preparing children for primary school</li> <li>• Teaching literacy, numeracy, social &amp; emotional skills</li> <li>• Annual health checks</li> <li>• Nutritional snacks &amp; vitamin supplements</li> </ul>





One of the biggest challenges for teachers is dealing with conflict between students – sometimes between Vietnamese and Khmer children, but not always. Staff reported however, that children’s behaviour does improve over the course of their year with LKC. One teacher said,

*The children did not use to listen, they would often fight and scream, but now they are learning a lot and their behaviour is changing. Their behaviour has improved and they talk more with their teachers.*

This teacher also praised the HeartStart Program, which was introduced by the LKC Technical Advisor, in helping staff to deal with conflict amongst children. She added,

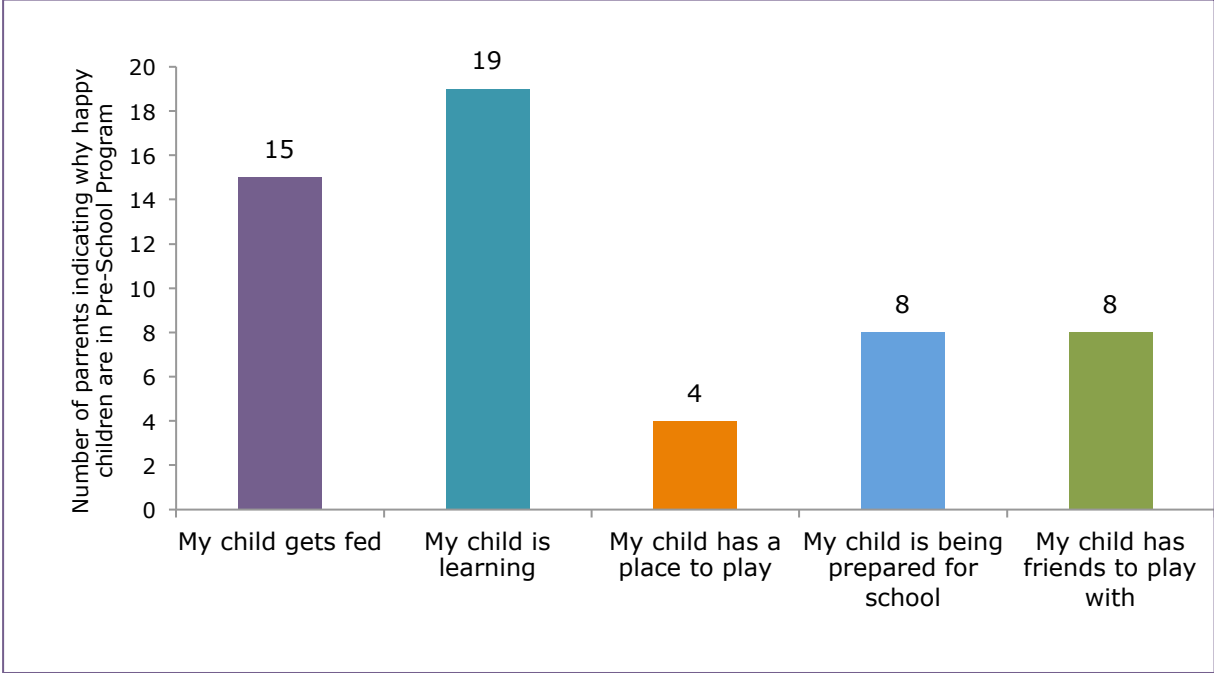
*Some of the children like to fight a lot with the other children, and the HeartStart Program has helped us a lot to work with these children to stop fighting. The program has also helped with getting some children to stop swearing ... children have changed a lot – they now come and talk when they feel angry or sad.*

The HeartStart Program was praised for giving them useful tools to deal with conflict and social-emotional issues in the classroom. As one teacher said,

*We have a rule – if they are fighting, we separate them, then we ask them to sit alone, then we talk about it – but we always get them to control their temper before we start. This works.*

One of the teachers however, discussed the difficulty of having to deal with emotional trauma, when children come to Pre-School hungry or ‘with sadness from home’. She talked about her concern for some children who she believes may not be treated well at home, and not always knowing how to deal with this.

**Figure 10: What parents like most about children attending pre-school**



**Hygiene Education**

The Pre-School Program provides basic hygiene education for children, including:

- Daily teeth brushing and hand washing
- Weekly hair washing and lice checks
- Annual medical check-ups with a healthcare professional

Teachers believe children are learning good hygiene skills, but recognise that once children go home it is difficult to maintain the same level of hygiene because their parents do not necessarily have good hygiene knowledge or skills. However one teacher did state,

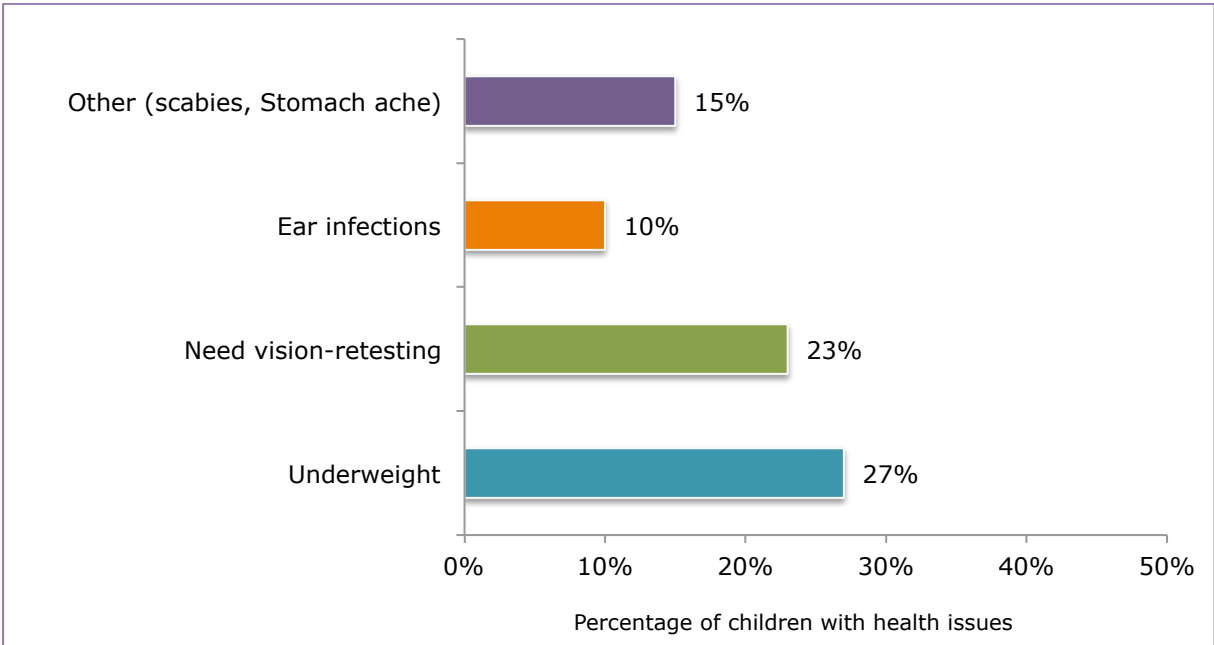
*We teach hygiene every day, and I don't think the children do what we say, at home, because they have to work and play, and they follow what their parents say and do. But I don't think it is a waste of time. I just think it will take time for change to happen.*

**Health Care**

Many children attend Pre-School with ear infections and infected wounds. Teachers have received basic first aid training from the LKC Technical Advisor, and use their skills to clean wounds and ears for children.

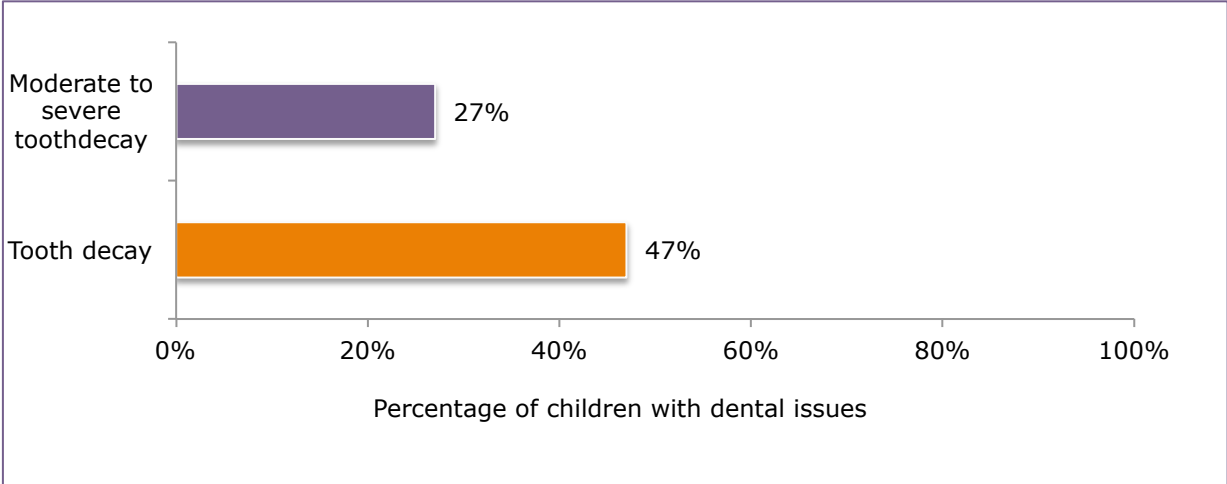
Health checks have been conducted annually for Pre-School and some Sponsorship children. They were conducted by an independent nurse practitioner in November 2011, and by Angkor Hospital for Children (AHC) in June 2012. Another independent nurse practitioner conducted a health check of Pre-School Program children in January 2013. The most recent screening tool was designed to meet the specific needs of LKC children, however previous screening tools have provided much less health data, thus LKC is unable to compare data across the time spans, to see whether there have been improvements in children's health. The more recent tailored health checks by an independent nurse practitioner, however, assessed children's BMI (Body Mass Index) and vision. These checks were able to determine which children were underweight, which children needed vision re-testing, where children with health issues should be referred, including a prioritising of most needed health care follow-ups for children.

**Figure 11: Percentage of children with health issues identified via health checks**



Of the 30 children who completed health checks in January 2013, based on BMI data and WHO Child Growth Standards, eight were considered underweight, seven children required vision re-testing, three were diagnosed with ear infections, one with stomach aches, one with scabies and 22 with dental decay, including eight with moderate to severe tooth decay. See figure 10 for a summary of health issues identified in 2013 health checks for Pre-School Program children. Based on these findings, LKC does plan to commence regular dental checks for all children in the future.

**Figure 12: Number of children with dental issues identified via health checks**



**Nutritional supplements**

Children receive twice daily nutritious snacks and daily multi-vitamin supplements while attending the Pre-School Program, including iron supplements three times a week. Previously food offered to children in the Pre-School Program was not considered culturally appropriate or sufficient to meet children’s nutritional needs. However, recently LKC has employed a cook, who prepares the food for children. Since then, the children enjoy the food more, and receive more culturally appropriate food than was previously being offered; now the children are able to choose what they eat, including regular rice, vegetables and fruit. The children are much happier about the food that is being offered now, and children appear less hungry.



*When they didn't have a cook, they used to buy cheese and bread for the children, but now they have a cook and the food is better – fruit and vegetables – the children like the food a lot.*

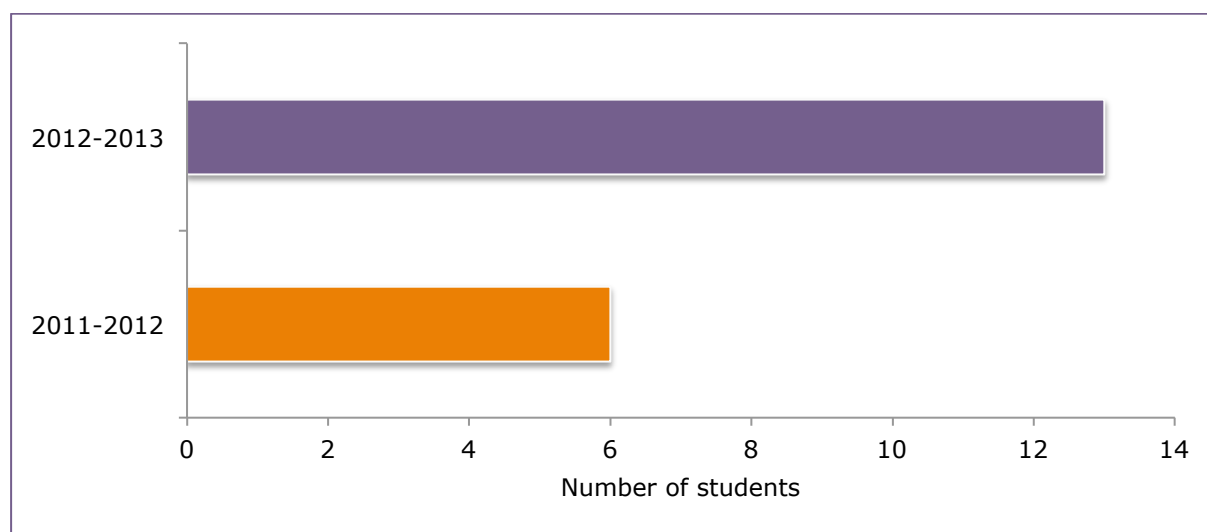
Some LKC staff believe that some children however, still come to Pre-School complaining of hunger, and there is a view that the daily food budget for children should be raised.

*The budget for food should be increased to \$1 per half day per child, and then each child can have a bowl of rice every day, as children really need rice daily.*

### 3.4 LKC Sponsorship Program

The LKC Sponsorship Program was developed to provide a mechanism for continuing to support children who graduate from the LKC Pre-School Program. Children receive sponsorship to attend primary school and continue their education in the form of material and social support. Each child receives a school package containing 2 school uniforms, school books, a backpack, snack money, a bicycle, a helmet and a bicycle lock. Children also receive toothpaste, a toothbrush and a bar of soap every 2 months. The LKC social worker provides some outreach support to these students and their families when required.

**Figure 13: Number of Sponsorship Program children from 2011-2013**



The Sponsorship Program began in 2011 with 6 students. Currently there are 13 children (Vietnamese n=4, Khmer n=9) in the Sponsorship Program; all graduated from the Pre-School Program in July 2012. Sponsorship Program students currently attend three different schools in Siem Reap, including Vatporlankar, Bantay Chas and Wat Bo Primary Schools.

Although none of the Sponsorship Program students have 'dropped out', interviews with 5 teachers of Sponsorship Program students revealed that some of these students are struggling academically. Teachers expressed a concern that these students require extra support with Khmer and literacy. They also expressed concern about the lack of communication and engagement they have with parents of these students. Furthermore, a lack of clarity also exists regarding the role of LKC in relation to support for Scholarship Program students and their families, both socio-emotionally and financially.

It is unclear whether LKC plans to continue to support Sponsorship students all throughout their schooling. This should be determined to ensure sufficient support and resources are available to sustain this initiative into the future.

## Parent views

For those parents who were interviewed or surveyed, with a child now in the Sponsorship Program, all had positive things to say about their child’s involvement in the program. A number of parents appreciated the material and financial support provided by LKC, stating that their child would not be able to attend school if it were not for this support.

*My daughter goes to the public school and is now very good at Khmer, and can read and write well. I am very proud. If it wasn’t for the program – my daughter would just be at home doing work, or going out to find garbage to earn money for the family. My daughter will have a good life future now ... and get a good job. (Vietnamese mother of girl aged 8)*

Although some parents of children in the Sponsorship Program said their children would be attending school without the support of LKC, all said it would be difficult for them financially to do so. Others said their children would be working or staying at home if it weren’t for the support of LKC.

*There are many things that are good about my child being sponsored. They are learning – they can now write and read letters, they listen to the teachers, they are more obedient to old people – and they now have friends to play with, and by being at school, it will give them an education to help reduce our family’s financial burden. (Khmer mother of girl aged 7)*

Many parents talked proudly about their child’s study results, and how hard they felt they were studying.

*I am very proud of my daughter - she can sing in Khmer now, and speak better in our own language too. And she knows how to play with Khmer children. (Vietnamese mother of girl aged 8)*

*I am so happy that my son is learning at school. He loves to study, and I am very proud of his good achievements. (Khmer mother of boy aged 7)*

**Table 9: LKC Sponsorship Program summary**

LKC Sponsorship Program	
<b>Program beneficiaries</b>	Children graduating from LKC Pre-School & Sponsorship Programs
<b>Program aim</b>	To provide support for graduates of the LKC Pre-School Program to continue their education
<b>Program Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Package – includes 2 x school uniforms, school books, bicycle (plus lock &amp; helmet), back pack &amp; snack money</li> <li>• Outreach support from social worker</li> </ul>

### 3.5 LKC Family Program

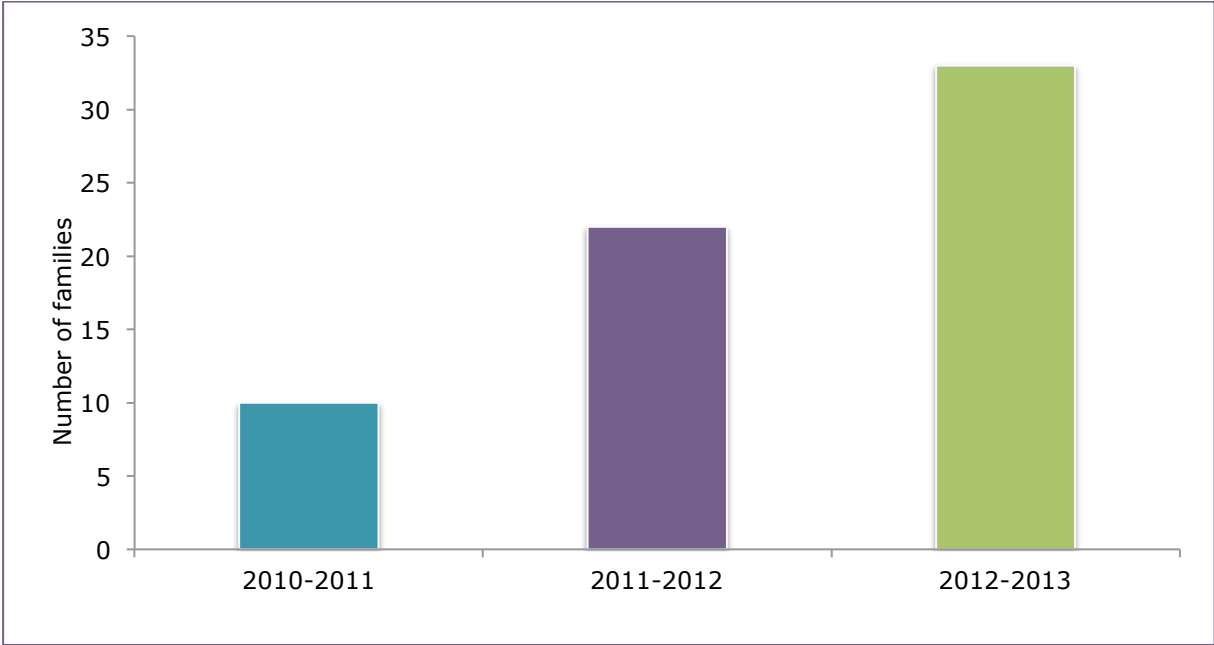
The LKC Family Program provides education, resources and support for families of Pre-School and Sponsorship students. This aspect of the program was initially established to develop relationships with the families of children in the Pre-School Program, to ensure a more holistic approach to supporting children. LKC began supporting 10 families in 2010, and now supports 33 families. Once a month LKC provide 2-hour information/education sessions for parents. Topics have included human trafficking, domestic violence, drug abuse, hygiene and sanitation, yoga, Khmer culture, child rights, childhood development and community collaboration. LKC staff and local NGOs facilitate sessions. At these education sessions each family receives 16kgs of rice and a small selection of condiments. See table 10 for summary of topics.



The purpose of providing rice and condiments has been to encourage parents to attend education sessions, and to encourage them to support their children to attend school regularly. For children to be involved in LKC programs, parents sign a contract agreeing to attend education sessions and support their children to attend school.

An LKC Social Worker also provides outreach support for families, to support their children to continue in the Pre-School and Sponsorship Programs.

**Figure 14: Number of Family Program participants from 2010-2013**



**Parent views**

Of parents who were surveyed or interviewed, all reported having enjoyed and appreciated education sessions. Most parents were able to recall sessions attended. Comments regarding learning outcomes for parents were:

*We learnt how to look after and take care of our children, and to treat them with respect using appropriate and polite words. (Khmer mother)*

*We learnt how to help our children to be healthy. (Vietnamese mother)*

*I learnt how to help my son with study at home, and how to encourage her to go to school regularly. (Vietnamese father)*

*I learnt from LKC what my child is learning [at school], and now I have a better understanding of what education is all about. (Khmer mother)*

**Table 10: Parent education topics**

Education sessions conducted by NGOs	Education sessions conducted by LKC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human trafficking (including sex trafficking, child trafficking)</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> <li>• Drug abuse</li> <li>• Hygiene &amp; sanitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Khmer culture</li> <li>• Child rights</li> <li>• Childhood development</li> <li>• Community collaboration</li> </ul>

Many parents also discussed their appreciation for the 16kg of rice they receive on a monthly basis, as a result of their child participating in the program.

*My child is growing because we are involved in the program - and the program benefits my family too - sometimes we need the rice from LKC when I cannot earn enough money. (Khmer father of girl aged 6)*

Parents were asked if they would continue to attend LKC Education Sessions if they were not receiving rice; all parents indicated they would still attend. Although all appreciate the rice, it was not as important as the fact that their children were receiving an education.

*I am not worried about the rice program, just about my son having a good education - that is all I care about. (Vietnamese mother)*

*I hope my daughter can go to school until she has a good education because it is very important to me. I would be committed to support my child to go to school even if I did not receive rice. (Vietnamese father)*

**Figure 11: LKC Family Program summary**

LKC Family Program	
<b>Program beneficiaries</b>	Families of LKC Pre-School & Sponsorship Programs.
<b>Program aim</b>	To provide education, resources & support for families of Pre-School and Sponsorship Program children, to encourage them to stay in school.
<b>Program Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent education sessions</li> <li>• Once a month (topics include: drug abuse, trafficking, domestic violence, childhood development, etc).</li> <li>• 16kg rice package &amp; condiments once a month</li> <li>• Outreach support from social worker</li> </ul>



Parents were asked if they had ideas or suggestions for changes to the LKC program for themselves or their children. A couple of parents suggested they would like support to start up their own business, to create a sustainable income for their family. Five mothers reported wanting to learn how to make clothes, so that they can generate an income by undertaking tailor work. A few parents talked about the desire for their children and themselves to develop their English language and Computer skills, and one mother reported wanting to learn to dance. One parent would like to have cooking lessons. Finally, one father reported wanting to learn more about his child’s education.





## 3.6 LKC Community Drop-In Program

The LKC Community Drop-In Program was established in 2011 to provide a recreational space for children of the Pre-School Program to play and socialise in the afternoon. It has evolved and grown considerably since the program began. Originally the program was conducted in the Pre-School Program space, including the upstairs and downstairs indoor space and the very small outdoor play area – at this time 10 to 20 children were attending the program. Funding for an outdoor playground was sourced via a private donor, and established in a vacant block directly across the street from LKC in 2013; this meant the program was able to accommodate more children, given there was more space. Play equipment for small children has been erected, and a bigger space is now available for children to play some ball sports. Currently between 30 and 50 children aged 3-18 years attend the program four afternoons a week. Sessions run from 2-4pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

As the program has grown, so too have the activities children can participate in. Each afternoon recreational activities and classes are offered to children. Currently weekly classes include Sewing, Arts and Crafts, Cooking, English and Computers. Football is offered twice a week and once a week a Guitar class is offered.

The Drop-In Program is managed and facilitated by LKC staff, including the Pre-School Teachers, who also facilitate some of the structured sessional activities.

Of the LKC programs, the Community Drop-In Program has presented the most challenges for staff. This evaluation has affirmed there are some critical issues that need to be addressed, for LKC to ensure this program meets the needs of program beneficiaries, utilises program resources most efficiently and fits within the boundaries of LKC's vision and objectives.

One of the biggest issues identified for the Community Drop-In Program, is a lack of clarity regarding the purpose of this program. Currently there is no selection criteria for the Community Drop-In Program, thus some participants do not necessarily fit the same target group as Pre-School and Sponsorship Program children, that is, Vietnamese or Khmer children of poor or 'street working' families. For example, some children who attend the program may come from families with much higher incomes and children may therefore have far greater educational and recreational opportunities outside of the LKC Program. Furthermore, no attendance data is being collected for the Drop-In Program, which makes it difficult to determine who is attending, and how often, including ages of children, and whether children are attendees of Pre-School and Sponsorship Programs or siblings of these children.

Some teachers feel children receive mixed messages about the Drop-In Program. On the one hand the program is promoted as a recreational 'Drop-In' program, where children can play and have fun, outside as well as inside, with limited boundaries or rules. However, English classes are also offered at the Drop-In Program, which require consistency, rules and boundaries, which are sometimes difficult to establish in the current environment.

Furthermore, a concern was raised about the sustainability of the Drop-In Program, in terms of the numbers of children currently attending the program. Numbers of attendees have been steadily rising since the new playground was installed, and sometimes LKC staff and teachers feel it is difficult to safely oversee and manage the groups of children attending.

### ***Children's views***

Focus group and individual survey data from children who attend the Community Drop-in Program highlight that most children attend every day, however some children attend only once or a few days per week. English Language classes, Football, Basketball and Cooking classes were amongst the classes children like best. Of the children aged 10-16 years who attend the Community Drop-In Program, who participated in focus groups, all girls would prefer to play inside, whereas the boys reported enjoying a mixture of activities inside and outside. Some boys talked about 'tug of war' and telling 'ghost stories' as favourite activities.

Of Community Drop-In Program children who were surveyed and interviewed, all shared a like of the teachers at the program. Some reported particularly liking the fact that there was no pressure to attend sessional classes, but rather they could just play if that was what they wanted to do.

*[Teachers] are good at teaching and advising students ... they don't curse students or fight. And it is good that teachers don't make you do classes – you can go out and play if you want. (Vietnamese girl aged 8)*

*LKC does not force children to study - if they don't want to study, they can go out to play – but if you want to study courses every day you can – I like this about LKC. (Khmer boy aged 12)*

Sewing and Arts and Craft classes were the least enjoyed and attended classes amongst participants, with about 4-5 girls regularly attending these classes. Cooking classes were reported to be very popular amongst girls, with some even indicating they do not attend because it is 'too busy'. Some children reported wanting cooking classes offered more often. Amongst boys who were surveyed and interviewed, computer classes were popular; with some boys suggesting these classes should also occur more often. Music classes were also popular amongst boys with some reporting their joy in particular at now being able to learn and play the guitar. The most popular classes amongst all students however, were English classes and Sport activities (in particular football which was a favourite for both girls and boys), with many suggesting these classes and activities should occur everyday. Football is favoured above most other activities, so that when it clashes with any other class, including English, children will choose football over the other activities. Limited space for football however, means this activity happens at an alternative venue.

Children were invited to share ideas and suggestions for improving the Drop-In Program.

A group of teenage girls who participated in a focus group, talked animatedly about their desire for LKC to conduct Apsara dancing lessons. They also shared their annoyance at sometimes having to share the same space as the little children. They suggested it would be good if the space upstairs could be allocated to older children, while the space downstairs could be allocated to younger children. They also shared however, that they would really enjoy the responsibility of helping to take care of the younger children.

**Table 12: Parents reasons for being pleased that children attend Drop-In Program**

Parent reason for being happy that child attends Drop-In Program	Number of parents
They have something to do	1
They are learning	13
They have a place to go	7
They have friends to play with	9
They can play sport	3

Male focus group participants reported their wish for 'a bigger school, with a nice garden, nice flowers and trees'. They also wanted more food, including especially 'more cake'.

Although children had ideas for introducing new classes, or offering some current classes more often or less, it was highlighted by some LKC staff and volunteer teachers, that more classes is not necessarily better. Some key stakeholders shared a concern that LKC should be clearer about the purpose of the Community Drop-In Program, which would help inform which classes should be offered.

**Table 13: LKC Community Drop-In Program activities**

LKC Community Drop-In Program	
<b>Program beneficiaries</b>	Vietnamese & Khmer children aged 3-18 years from Slorkram community.
<b>Program aim</b>	To provide a safe space for children of the Slorkram community, including children of the Pre-School & Sponsorship Programs, to play and socialize. To promote positive social activities for children and young adults.
<b>Program Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational afternoon program 4 days a week</li> <li>• Regular classes in arts &amp; crafts, English, computers, music &amp; sport</li> <li>• Indoor &amp; outdoor play space</li> </ul>

**Parent’s views**

Most parents indicated they had some understanding of what their children did at the LKC Community Drop-In Program, however most had never attended the program. All parents interviewed or surveyed, who had children attending the Drop-In Program, were very happy about the opportunities the program offered their children. Just less than half indicated they liked that their children were learning, with almost as many stating that they liked that their children had ‘friends to play with’, and that they had ‘a place to go’ to play. See figure 12 for summary of responses. Furthermore, some parents with children in the Pre-School and Sponsorship Programs however, had children who could not attend the Drop-In Program because they were required to work for their family.

*The reason [my daughter] cannot go to the afternoon program is because she needs to look after her little sister at home and because I am busy with work - she needs to cook and clean for her family. (Single parent Vietnamese father of girl aged 7).*

# 4

## Discussion

Evaluation findings have highlighted a number of successful outcomes for program beneficiaries of Lotus Kids Club, including children and their families. A number of challenges and issues, however, have also been identified for the program.

### **Strategic directions**

Although a lack of clarity and consistency has been revealed regarding the documentation of strategic directions, aims and the target group of LKC, there is for the most part a general consensus amongst LKC staff and key stakeholders that the primary goal of LKC is to increase educational opportunities and social cohesion for Khmer and Vietnamese children from poor and vulnerable families in Slorkram community. Furthermore, excluding the Community Drop-In Program, LKC staff and key stakeholders do share common views of the objectives of the program, that is, to provide pre-school education to Vietnamese and Khmer children aged 3-6 years, to prepare them for primary school, to provide primary school sponsorships for pre-school graduates, and to support the families of pre-school and sponsorship children to encourage them to send their children to school. There was also, in the most part, a common view that the program currently targets Vietnamese and Khmer children from Slorkram Commune, who are from 'street working' or very poor vulnerable families. Results do however support the need for LKC and Senhoa Foundation to clarify that these are in fact the primary aim and objectives of the program, and if so, to ensure these are documented and promoted consistently throughout all program communication, including on Senhoa Foundation's website.

The complex nature of the management structure of LKC in relation to Senhoa Foundation in the US, and CCPCR in Cambodia, suggests each of these organisations need to work together to determine and/or clarify their organisational roles and responsibilities, and how pathways of communication should function.

### **Vietnamese cross-cultural component of LKC**

LKC is one of the few programs in Cambodia that target Vietnamese and Khmer children and their families, and although this evaluation reveals this part of the program presents some of the greatest challenges, it has also highlighted the many successes of this cross-cultural component of the program. Given Vietnamese children and families in Cambodia are a minority group, who often face discrimination, the overwhelming number of positive comments from parents about this aspect of the program, highlights great success for program beneficiaries. The program is certainly positively working towards creating a mutual environment of friendship and respect between Vietnamese and Khmer children, with many parents speaking positively of relationships between their children.

#### Pre-school program

Evaluation findings reveal that the Pre-School Program is helping prepare children for entry into Khmer public schools, and that children are learning numeral-literacy skills and socio-emotional

skills. That only 2 children of 16 who graduated from the Pre-School Program in 2013, did not meet entry requirements for primary school, is a sign of success. The evolving of the program since it began in 2010, to now encompass a Khmer and US play-based curriculum, is viewed as a positive outcome for the program, however there exist some concerns by some teachers and LKC staff that aspects of the curriculum, including in particular science, are lacking. A view by teachers that students are developing positive socio-emotional skills, for example students fight less, and are more able to control their emotions as the Pre-School year progresses, is considered another success of the Pre-School Program. Finally, that 15 parents, of a total 21 who have children in the Pre-School Program who were interviewed, reported that their children could not attend Pre-School if it were not for the program, is another sign of success. Almost all parents reported being happy that their child was receiving an education, and most Vietnamese parents were pleased that their children were now learning how to speak Khmer.

On the other hand, hygiene education, although considered important for children, was not something LKC teachers felt was necessarily being followed up when children were at home.

Basic analysis of annual Health Check data has highlighted, not surprisingly, a number of health issues for children, including in particular dental issues for Pre-School children. It is of concern however, that there is no evidence of follow-up for children related to these issues, and that the Health-Check screening tool used, has not been consistent across the years of implementation, so it is difficult to compare health data across the years. For this reason, it is recommended that LKC use/modify the most recent tailored Health Check assessment tool consistently into the future to ensure comparisons can be made, and that a system for ensuring follow-up of referrals for all health and dental issues.

LKC staff reported overwhelming support for the new LKC cook, who is providing appropriate nutritious food, that children enjoy eating, however a concern that the budget for daily food is currently insufficient should be reviewed.

## **LKC Sponsorship Program**

Although none of the Sponsorship students have 'dropped out', it is of concern that primary school teachers reported concerns about their academic performance. It is worth noting however that many teachers in Cambodia rely on monies paid by students for extra attention in class, and many teachers also make a living from extra tutoring classes given to students privately. Therefore it may not come as a surprise that those students who have paid for "private tutoring" receive the top grades in class. Furthermore, given LKC Scholarship Program students do not receive private tutoring, it may therefore not be surprising that these students are struggling academically. This evaluation does however reveal a need for LKC to explore opportunities for working more closely with Sponsorship Program families, and clarity is required regarding the role of LKC in regards to academic support for Sponsorship students. All parents did however; share much gratitude that their children were now studying and many shared proud feelings of their child's achievements.

## **LKC Family Program**

The monthly education sessions provided for families of Sponsorship and Pre-School Program children are attended regularly and enjoyed by all families, with most remembering positive things they have learnt from many of the sessions. Regular feedback from participants at each workshop would however, provide useful data for improving these sessions and ideas for future workshops. All families appreciate and use the 16kg of rice provided at these sessions, however all also indicated they would still attend education sessions, even if the rice was not provided, which suggests LKC could review the purpose of donating this rice to families.

## LKC Community Drop-In Program

The LKC Community Drop-In Program, although enjoyed by children who attend, does pose a number of challenges and issues for LKC, which do need attending to. The program has grown considerably since 2011, when 10 to 20 children attended the program; now up to 50 children sometimes attend the program, which is offered four afternoons a week. The new outdoor playground has provided a much-needed outdoor space for children, which has potentially attracted more children to the program, and more and more classes are now being offered to children on a regular basis, including arts and craft activities, music and sport activities and English Language lessons. The biggest issue for this aspect of the program appears to be the lack of clarity around the purpose of the program. A lack of selection criteria for the Drop-In Program means the target group are not necessarily consistent with other beneficiaries of the program, and a lack of attendance data makes it difficult to determine who is attending. These issues should be resolved to assist in determining the purpose of the program. Concerns about the sustainability of the Drop-In Program in terms of numbers of children attending also need to be resolved, especially given there are currently no limits to how many children can attend, and there are only a limited number of teachers available to supervise children. This evaluation highlights an urgent need for LKC to spend time clarifying and determining the aim and purpose of the Community Drop-In Program, including who the program should target, to ensure activities are targeted to the right group of children, and so that outcomes are as successful as possible.





# 5

## Conclusion

This evaluation has highlighted a number of positive outcomes for program beneficiaries of LKC, particularly in regard to the bringing together of Vietnamese and Khmer children and their families, which is addressing discrimination and creating more cohesion amongst these groups. Furthermore, the LKC Pre-School Program is a proven success in terms of providing a very successful play-based childhood development curriculum that prepares children for entry into Khmer public schools. Education sessions and rice packages provided to families have been another success of this program, however the Community Drop-In and Sponsorship Programs of LKC do require attention in terms of ensuring outcomes meet the needs of beneficiaries and the vision and objectives of Senhoa and LKC. For LKC to ensure they are providing a best practice service however, there a number of organisational issues relating to strategic planning and program management that do need to be addressed.



# 6

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# Appendix 1: Survey – Children Community Drop-In Program

Interviewee _____
Interviewer _____
Date of Focus Group _____



**Gender**                      Female                            Male     

**Nationality**              Vietnamese                            Khmer                            **Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**How often do you come to the Community Program?**

Every day

About once a week

Not very often

**Which 3 classes do you like best?**

Sewing <input type="checkbox"/>	Arts & Crafts <input type="checkbox"/>
Guitar <input type="checkbox"/>	English <input type="checkbox"/>
Cooking <input type="checkbox"/>	Music <input type="checkbox"/>

**Where do you enjoy being most at LKC?**

Inside                                     

The outside playground             

**What else would you like to do at LKC?**

**Would you like the Community LKC Program to happen more often?**

Yes                                            No     

**Do your parents know what you do at LKC?**

Yes                                            No     

**Have your parents been to LKC?**

Yes                                            No

## Appendix 2: Focus Group Guide – Children Community Drop-In Program

Interviewee _____
Interviewer _____
Date of Focus Group _____



### Number of Children

\_\_\_\_\_

### Gender

Female

Male

### Age group

Older group

Younger group

### Number of children

Vietnamese

Khmer

1. What's good about the Drop-In Program?
2. Tell us about the classes (computers, cooking, guitar, footy).
3. What's good about the classes?
4. What do you learn in the classes?
5. Tell us about the teachers.
6. What do you like best about the Drop-In Program?
7. What don't you like about the Drop-In Program?
8. What would you change about the program if you could?

## Appendix 3: Survey - LKC Parents

Interviewee _____
Interviewer _____
Date of interview _____



### SECTION A

- Parent** Mother  Father
- Are you a single parent?** Yes  No
- Nationality of parents?** Khmer  Vietnamese

### Children of yours in the LKC programs

PROGRAM	AGE OF CHILD	FEMALE	MALE
Pre-School Program			
Sponsorship Program			
Afternoon Program			

### SECTION B

If you have children in the Pre-School Program

#### 1. PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

1.1 What's good about your child being in the Pre-School Program?

---

1.2 What are the 3 most important things for you?

- My child gets fed
- They are learning
- They have a place to play
- They are getting prepared for school
- They have friends to play with

1.3 What would your child be doing if NOT in pre-school?

- Working
- Staying at home
- Being looked after by someone else
- Other  \_\_\_\_\_

1.4 What new ideas do you have for the pre-school program?

---

#### 2. SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

If you have children in the Sponsorship Program

2.1 What would your children be doing if NOT receiving a sponsorship?

- They would still be at school
- Working
- Staying at home
- Being looked after by someone else
- Other  \_\_\_\_\_

2.2 What is good about your child being in the Sponsorship Program?

---

**3. COMMUNITY AFTERNOON PROGRAM**

If have children in Community Afternoon Program

3.1 Do you know what your child does in the Community Program?

- Yes
- No

3.2 What's good about your child being in the Community Afternoon Program?

- They have something to do
- They are learning
- They have a place to play
- They have friends to play with
- Other  \_\_\_\_\_

**4. RICE PACKAGE & EDUCATION SESSIONS**

4.1 Would you still come along to the education sessions if you weren't receiving rice?

- Yes
- No

4.2 What sessions have you attended?

---

4.3 Are there other things you would like to learn about?

---

**5. CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES**

5.1 How do you feel about Khmer and Vietnamese children learning and playing together?

- It is good
- It is not a good thing
- I am not sure

Why?

---



# Appendix 4: Interview Guide - LKC Parents

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_



**Parent**                                      Mother                                       Father

**How many children involved in LKC** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender of child/ren**                      Female                                       Male

**Age of child/ren** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nationality of parent**                      Vietnamese                                       Khmer

**Type of Program**                                      Pre-School Program

Sponsorship Program

Rice Package

Drop-In Program

1. **Sponsorship Program**
  - How do you feel about your child going to school?
  - How often do your child go to school?
  - Tell us about your child’s academic performance at school.
  - What would your child be doing if they weren’t receiving a sponsorship?
  - What would you like your child to be doing in the future?
  - What’s the best thing about your child receiving Sponsorship?
2. **Pre-School Program**
  - How often does your child go to the Pre-School Program?
  - What changes have you seen in your child since at Pre-School?
  - Tell us about things your child is learning at Pre-School Program?
  - What would your child be doing if not at pre-school?
  - What would you like your child to be doing in the future?
  - What’s the best thing about your child being at Pre-School?
3. **Rice package & education sessions**
  - How is receiving the rice helpful for your family?
    - How do you use the 16 kg of rice?
  - Tell us about the education sessions?
    - What sessions have you attended?
    - What have you learned in these sessions?
    - Are there other things you would like to learn about?
4. **Drop-In Program**
  - How often does your child come to the Drop-In Program?
  - What does your child do at the Drop-In Program?
  - What’s the best thing about your child going to the Drop-In Program?

# Appendix 5: Interview Guide - LKC Social Worker

Interviewee _____
Interviewer _____
Date of interview _____



1. Tell us about your role with LKC.
2. How many families do you work with?
3. What kinds of issues do the families have?
4. What are the changes you notice in the families you are working with?
5. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the LKC Project?
6. How do you feel about your case-load?
7. Do you have any suggestions for changes to the LKC Project?

# Appendix 6: Interview Guide - School Teachers

Interviewee _____
Interviewer _____
Date of interview _____



## 1. Pre-School Children

- Tell us about the preparedness of LKC children when they come to school.
- Tell us about students’ social skills and interactions.
- Tell us about their academic preparedness for school.
- Tell us about their level of understanding of issues related to hygiene.
- Do you have any suggestions for staff of the LKC Project?

## 2. About sponsorship students

- What differences do you notice between the students with a sponsorship and those without?
- Tell us about their academic performance.
- Tell us about their attendance.
- Do you have any suggestions for changes to the Sponsorship Program for LKC?

## 3. Cross cultural issues

- Tell us about the experience of Vietnamese children in the school (do they experience any discrimination, do they mix more with the kids who they came from pre-school with?)
- Are there any issues you notice between the Vietnamese and Khmer children? How do you deal with these issues?

# Appendix 7: Interview Guide - LKC Teachers

Interviewee _____
Interviewer _____
Date of interview _____



## 1. General Information

- Tell us about your work with LKC.
- What do you enjoy most about your work at LKC?
- What do you see as strengths of the LKC Project?
- What are some of the challenges you face in your work at LKC?
- Do you have suggestions for changes to the program?
- How do you feel about responding to health issues and accidents that involve children?
- Are there areas of training or professional development you would like?
- What would you like to be doing in 5 years time?

## 2. Pre-School Program

- Tell us about the Pre-School Program.
- What do you think is the best thing about the Pre-School Program?
- Tell us about the children’s social skills and interactions with each other.
- Tell us about the children’s academic preparedness for school.
- Tell us about their level of understanding of issues related to hygiene.
- What do you think about the food the children receive?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes to the Pre-School Program?

## 3. Community Program

- Tell us about the Community Program.
- What do you think is the best thing about the Community Program?
- Tell us about any challenges of the Community Program.
- Do you have any suggestions for changes to the Community Program?

# Appendix 8: Interview Guide - LKC Program Staff

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_



## 1. About your role

- Tell us about your involvement in LKC.
- What is your role and responsibility within LKC?
- What are the challenges you face in your role?
- What do you really enjoy about your work at LKC?

## 2. About LKC

- What do you think are the strengths & weaknesses of the LKC Project?
- What positive things have you seen achieved for LKC, since it began?
- What do you think the challenges are for LKC?
  - Preschool Program
  - Drop-In Program
  - Sponsorship Program
  - Family Program
- What are the areas where you think there could be improvements?
  - Preschool Program
  - Drop-In Program
  - Sponsorship Program
  - Family Program
- What are your thoughts about the future for LKC?

## 3. Outcomes for Children

- Tell us about outcomes you have observed for the children in the Pre-School and Drop-In Programs.

## 4. Rice Package

- Tell us about the Rice Packages.
- What is the purpose of the contract? Is it working?
- Tell us about the education sessions?
- What benefits for families/parents have you observed from the rice packages or the education sessions?
- Do you have suggestions for changes to this aspect of the LKC Project?

# Appendix 9: Interview Guide - Key Stakeholders

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_



**Partner organisation** Name \_\_\_\_\_

**LKC Executive** Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Founder** Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Other** Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Tell us about your role with the organisation of Senhoa / LKC.
2. If you are a partner, tell us about your partnership relationship.
3. What do you see as the best aspects of the LKC program?
4. What areas can you see need improvement for the LKC program and what challenges do you see for LKC?
5. How do you see the future for LKC?
6. If you are a partner, how do you see the future in terms of your partnership with LKC?