



**Action Plan for the Safeguarding  
of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, a UNESCO Masterpiece of the  
Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity**



**Final Project Report**

With the support of UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust  
(553CMB4000)

**December 2008**



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**Final Narrative Project Report**

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**Copyright:**     **UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh**  
P.O. Box 29, # 38, Samdech Sothearos Blvd., Phnom Penh  
Tel.: (855 23) 426 726 / 217 244  
Fax: (855 23) 426 163 / 217 022  
E-mail: [phnompenh@unesco.org](mailto:phnompenh@unesco.org)  
Website: <http://www.unesco.org/en/phnompenh>

**Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts**  
#227, Preah Norodom Blvd, Phnom Penh  
Tel.: (855 23) 725 747 / 217 648  
Fax: (855 23) 725 749 / 426041  
E-mail: [info@mcfa.gov.kh](mailto:info@mcfa.gov.kh) / [mcfa@cambodia.gov.kh](mailto:mcfa@cambodia.gov.kh)  
Website: <http://www.mcfa.gov.kh>

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***Project Team:***

***Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts***

*H.E. Mr. Meas Sarun, Director-General for Cultural Technique*

*Mr. Vin Laychour, Deputy Director-General for Cultural Technique*

*Mr. Bong Sovath, Project Coordinator*

*Mr. Duong Samut, assistant*

***UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh***

*Mr. Teruo Jinnai, Representative*

*Mr. Philippe Delanghe, Program Specialist for Culture*

*Mr. Keo Sereineath, Program Specialist Assistant*

*Mr. Hong Makara, National Program Officer*

*Mr. Lim Bun Hok, National Program Officer*

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## **1. Introduction**

This report is aimed at giving all aspects of the implementation of the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust project entitled: “**Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity**”.

### **Project Objectives**

- Research and collection of existing documents and Knowledge about the Royal ballet;
- Revitalization of ‘lost’ choreographies and surviving knowledge;
- Assistance provided to older masters and practitioners of the Royal Ballet in their efforts to ensure the transmission of their knowledge to the younger generations;
- Strengthening of capacities of the Faculty of Choreographic Arts and the Department of Performing Arts as the centers for research and training;
- Public awareness raised in particular among younger generations on the significant values and traditions of the Royal Ballet in order to enhance recognition and involvement.

### **Major activities implemented:**

- Training of staff in research methodology and project management skills;
- Research and inventory of the Royal Ballet choreographies;
- Training of current dancers to become teachers;
- Training of provincial and private troupes;
- Revitalization of ‘lost’ choreographies and surviving knowledge through public performances;
- Production of musical instruments;
- Public performance of “lost” choreographies.

### **Key outputs**

- Training of Cambodian researchers to carry out research on oral and intangible heritage and to develop/manage projects in this fields;
- Publication of research results on the Royal ballet to enhance understanding and to raise public awareness on the values of this art form;
- Establishment of an inventory of Royal Ballet choreographies and performing arts of Cambodia made available, including the masters and practitioners;
- Professional skills enhanced and transmission to younger generations ensured;
- A new set of traditional musical instruments produced to improve the artistic performance of the Royal Ballet troupe;
- Lost choreographies revived;
- Public sensitized to the value and the importance of safeguarding the intangible heritage through the public performances of Royal Ballet.

The report will underline the various steps involved in the implementation of each phase and assess the changes to the original goals and the influences, both negative and positive, on the participants and the results.

## **2. Background of the project**

Royal Ballet was declared “a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” on 7 November 2003. The government of Japan decided on 21 July 2005 to support the UNESCO project to ensure the sustainable safeguarding of this intangible heritage of humanity in the framework of the UNESCO-JAPAN Funds-In-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Responding to the Agreement signed on July 26, 2005, between the Director-General of UNESCO and the Royal Government of Cambodia, UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh has been honored to closely collaborate with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) of the Kingdom of Cambodia to implement the Project from November 2005 through December 2008.

## **3. Project Implementation**

### **3.1 Component A**

#### **3.1.1 A1: “Training: research methodology and project management”**

##### **3.1.1.1 Tasks**

- Organize a three-week training seminar of staff on research methodology and project management skills;
- Organize a seven-day study visits during the training sessions in adequate places in ensuring necessary logistical arrangements.

##### **3.1.1.2 Achievements**

- The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts organized a three-week training seminar of staff on research methodology and project management skills on 14 November 2006. The opening ceremony was presided over by H.E. Mr. Him Chhem, Acting Minister of Culture and Fine Arts. The following 13 officials were selected for this initial training:

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Prak Sonnara     | 8. Mr. Prak Born       |
| 2. Ms. Koam Thany       | 9. Mr. Sum Chan Thoeun |
| 3. Mr. Kang Chanthyrith | 10. Mr. Duong Samut    |
| 4. Mr. Kok Ros          | 11. Ms. Va Sayoan      |
| 5. Mr. Ros Samnang      | 12. Mr. Chum Chan Kong |
| 6. Mr. Vay Vibol        | 13. Ms. Chea Leakhena  |
| 7. Mr. Kok Chea Yu Than |                        |

Ten masters were selected to ensure this training:

- |                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. H.E. Prof. Chheng Phon   | 6. Mr. Un Tim      |
| 2. H.E. Mr. Pich Tum Kravil | 7. Mr. Bong Sovath |

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. H.E. Mr. Samraing Kamsan | 8. Dr. Sam Ang Sam       |
| 4. H.E. Ms. Minh Kossany    | 9. Prof. Em Theay        |
| 5. Mr. Meas Sarun           | 10. Mr. Proeurng Chhieng |

- During the first week, trainees were trained at school and went visiting the fields of research at Oudong and Prek Ho.
- During the second week, trainees conducted their own research in the national museum and the Royal University of Fine arts.
- During the last week, trainees learnt how to write a report about their findings after research.
- Finally, each trainee submitted a report about three topics:
  - The values of Khmer Classical Dance
  - Different styles in Khmer Classical Dance
  - Endangered plays and forms of Khmer Classical Dance

### **3.1.2 A2: “Research and inventory of the Royal Ballet”**

#### **3.1.2.1 Tasks**

- In close collaboration with artists and representatives of the Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts, conduct research, collect surviving documents including photographs, interview and document the knowledge of principle masters of the Royal Ballet tradition throughout Cambodia in particular:
  - Performing Arts (Traditional dances/stories/choreographies...)
  - Traditional oral literature (Traditional oral folktales)
  - Traditional costumes
  - Traditional practices
- Compile the inventory of masters and practitioners in order to produce a document of the Royall Ballet including:
  - Brief history and presentation
  - Name of each form
  - Revival history
  - Major stories in the repertory
  - Major masters and practitioners

#### **3.1.2.2 Achievements**

- The Working Group of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts defined and achieved the following works:
  - Selecting surviving documents
  - Identifying principle masters
  - Interviewing principle masters
  - Recording music, songs, gestures, and art styles
- Several provinces were identified and selected for the field research, such as Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Udor Meanchey, Siem reap, Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, Kampong Cham, Kratie, Stung Treng, Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri, Kandal, Prey Veng, and Phnom Penh.
- Two researchers among 13 trainees of the component A1 were selected to continue research and write the report.

- A book on the Royal Ballet (Khmer Classical Dance) has been produced in both languages, Khmer and English.



The book cover in Khmer



The book cover in English

### 3.2 Component B

#### 3.2.1 B1: "Training for current dancers to become teachers"

##### 3.2.1.1 Tasks

- Conduct a training session of Royal Ballet for dancers from the Department and the Faculty of Choreographic Arts

##### 3.2.1.2 Achievements

- Eight masters were selected to give lectures for this training session:

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ms. Om Yu Vandy  | 5. Mr. Soeur Thavarak |
| 2. Ms. Kim Bunthom  | 6. Mr. Proeung Proone |
| 3. Mr. Yan Burin    | 7. Ms. Sok Somali     |
| 4. Ms. Thong Kim An | 8. Ms. Sim Vantha     |

- 22 trainees were nominated to attend this training in Phnom Penh:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Moeurn Srey Pov  | 12. Ms. Hem Linda         |
| 2. Ms. Vuth Chanmoli    | 13. Mr. Phon Sopheap      |
| 3. Ms. Koy Sina         | 14. Mr. Khiev Sovannarith |
| 4. Ms. Pring Sokannarin | 15. Mr. Soeur Sophea      |
| 5. Ms. Prum Reasi       | 16. Mr. Thong Dara        |
| 6. Ms. Meng Kosama      | 17. Ms. Suon Phally       |
| 7. Ms. Theara Chinda    | 18. Ms. Kem Rithy         |
| 8. Ms. Mean Chan thach  | 19. Ms. Bin Samphos       |
| 9. Ms. Chey Chankitya   | 20. Ms. Surya Reaksmeay   |
| 10. Ms. Sam Lim Sothea  | 21. Ms. Tung Sovang       |
| 11. Ms. Khiev Sotheary  | 22. Ms. Pok Khan Thary    |

- The opening ceremony of the training session was held on 18 September 2008 at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and was presided over by H.E. Mr. Him Chhem, Acting Minister of Culture and Fine Arts with masters and trainees mentioned above.



*The opening ceremony of “Training for current dancers to become teachers”*



*Masters and trainees of the component B1*



*Masters demonstrated some training techniques*

- Training activities reported on 5 October 2008: four masters were present: three masters of Khmer traditional dance (two women and one man) and one master (man) of Khmer traditional musics and songs. Twenty-two trainees were present. They were divided into five small groups. One of two researchers from the Component A2 was present as well for continuing his work in documentation. Twenty-two trainees and five masters were divided into five small groups. The number of group members was irregular: The biggest group was composed of seven members and the smallest only two members.

### ***Group 1***

The first group was composed of four trainees (women) and the most famous master of Khmer traditional dance rescued from Khmer Rouge Regime. The activity has the objective to improve the Khmer traditional dance styles previously acquired. The exhaustive correction in training techniques is done in this first group. One by one, trainees practice the authentic styles.



*Master Em Theay with trainees*

### ***Group 2***

Only two trainees and one master of Khmer traditional dance worked in this second group. The master explained in detail the evolution of some styles of the dance. The correction was the most important and urgent, in order to preserve the authenticity of the Royal Ballet. Firstly, all trainees must be aware of this deviation in Khmer traditional dance styles and the correction will follow.



*Master Minh Kossany with trainees*

### ***Group 3***

These three trainees tried to find out the nuance between some styles of the dance that they had practiced during their teaching at dancing school and the new correction proposed by the trainers. One by one, they practiced and corrected each other until they could perform the authentic style. They enjoyed discovering the origin style and tried to memorize the difference.



*Trainees practice*



*Monkey Master with trainee*

#### **Group 4**

The trainee sat down to observe the correction demonstrated by the master. “Monkey” is one of the main characters in Royal Ballet. All styles of the dance must be perfect and authentic. The trainer tried to show slowly the real styles of the “Monkey” character. After, in his turn, the trainee repeated and the master corrected.

#### **Group 5**

Song and music were the most important elements. This famous master of Khmer traditional music and songs can produce the authentic melody. Trainees listened to his song carefully and they had to find out the nuance and tried to sing with a correct melody in their mind. After, trainees practiced and the master corrected.



*Master of music and songs with trainees*

*Her Excellency Ms. Minh Kossany, one of trainers*



“Follow up is our duty. We formed these trainees four or five years ago. Some of them become already teachers of dance, but we still have the duty to follow up their styles of dance, to help them, and to correct them so that we are sure there is no deviation and we can preserve the authentic Royal Ballet. Note that some commercial dancers can not produce the real dance because some styles were modified”.

“In the Royal Ballet dance, there are 4500 different styles. Just for showing a flower, we have more than thirty different styles. This is the body language of dance. For example, this one wants to show that this is a flower, a very beautiful flower”.

*One of two researchers from A2 Component*



“My duty is to film and photograph all training activities and to take notes because I have to collect all information and compile a complete book on this training session. I will need more than two cameras to film all activities from all corners during the performance. If not I will not be able to catch every style or movement of the artists. They will play only one time. I would like to ask UNESCO to lend me some cameras.

- Closing ceremony of the training session for current dancers to become teachers was held on Tuesday 12 February 2008 at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. This important ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Mister Veng Sereyvuth, Senior Minister and Minister of Culture and Fine Arts.



*H.E. Mr. Meas Sarun, during the Closing Ceremony of the training session*



*B1 training Result Show*



Certificates were delivered to 22 trainees by high personalities during the ceremony

**3.2.2 B2: “Training for provincial and private troupes”**

**3.2.2.1 Tasks**

- Conduct another training session for dancers from private troupes in Siem Reap

**3.2.2.2 Achievements**

- Only eight masters, some from the component B1, were selected to ensure the training for provincial and private troupes in Siem Reap.

1. Mr. Buth Channa specialized in classical dance
2. Ms. Meng Kosama specialized in *Neang* (princess)
3. Ms. Khiev Sotheavy specialized in Neayrong (prince)
4. Ms. Koy Sina specialized in *Yeak* (giant)
5. Mr. Soeur Sophea specialized in *Sva* (Monkey)
6. Mr. Bin Sopheak specialized in classical music
7. Ms. Khy Sakhorn specialized in classical song
8. Ms. Lim Mala specialized in traditional dance

- Artists 12 to 28 years old from 19 private troupes attended the training session. Each troupe contains between 15 to 30 artists.

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Leap Roath Apsara Troupe   | 11. Chey Apsara Koulen II Troupe |
| 2. Sorphea Apsara Troupe      | 12. Boran Vichet Troupe          |
| 3. Catholic Troupe            | 13. Mondul Sangkhem Troupe       |
| 4. Phoum Koma Arunreas Troupe | 14. Tep Apsar Angkor Troupe      |
| 5. Koma Kruosa Thmey Troupe   | 15. Apsara Dara Vichet Troupe    |
| 6. Mlis Angkor Troupe         | 16. Morodak Apsara Troupe        |
| 7. Apsara Veasna Troupe       | 17. Apsara Angkor Troupe         |
| 8. Koma Angkor Troupe         | 18. Angkor Century Troupe        |
| 9. Angkor Mondial Troupe      | 19. Apsara Devi Troupe           |
| 10. JEDC Troupe               |                                  |

- Opening ceremony of the training session for private professional troupes was held on Wednesday 20 February 2008 at the Cultural Provincial Department in Siem Reap province. This important ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Mister Meas Sarun, Director General of Cultural Techniques of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.



*Opening ceremony of training session for provincial and private troupe In Siem Reap*



*Masters from Phnom Penh (from Component B1) and Troupe Representatives*

- His Excellency Mister Chheng Phon, former Minister of Culture and Fine Art has kindly provided his center for this training session.

- Objectives of training:

- To provide short term improvement of troupe performing
- To correct some mistakes in dancing styles and in musical performance
- To preserve the authenticity of Khmer classical dance
- To raise awareness of the artists on the value of the authenticity
- To reestablish close links between MCFA and private troupes

## *Training Sessions*



*No mistake has been tolerated during this first session immediately after the opening ceremony*



*At the same time, the Master of music demonstrated how to produce the authentic sound*



*The second group worked outside of the building. All trainees from private professional troupes had a strong motivation. Masters and trainees were working even though it was so hot under the sunshine.*

*The second Training Center*



*This giant training Center was kindly provided by His Excellency Chheng Phon, former Minister of Culture and Fine Arts. This center, which could receive several troupes at the same time, is located at around 3 kilometers in the south of Siem Reap downtown.*



*Masters and artists of traditional dance during the training session*



*Masters and artists of classical dance during the training session*

## *Interviews*

Mr. Buth Channa, 48 years old, master of traditional dance: “They still perform some wrong styles and movements. I am careful to correct in order to improve their performing. They haven’t got the ability to express real sentiments. Sometimes, they are shy. That is a negative point for a professional artist. However, they are all very good learners. They correct their mistakes very quickly”.



*Master Buth Channa*

Ms. Lim Mala, 49 years old, master of traditional dance: “Some trainees have no basic knowledge in traditional dance. It is so hard to correct them. In general, private troupes which perform every day have not a lot of problems. They can catch the correction very quickly. After two or three hours, they are in the right way to perform the authentic traditional gestures”.



*Master Lim Mala*



*Master Bin Sopheak*

Mr. Bin Sopheak, 27 years old, Master of music from B1 Component of the Royal Ballet Project: “Trainees specialized in music have different ways to produce music. Some measures were omitted. Remarkably, they can understand very well what I have explained. That is the reason for which the correction has been very quickly and effectively”.



*Miss So Anna*

Miss So Anna, 20 years old, trainee from Catholic Troupe: “My father didn’t want me to be a traditional dancer. However, I like it very much and I have learned a lot from this training session. I am really happy to see this difference and especially, I could find the correct styles”.

Miss Pek Dany, 17 years old, trainee from Sorphea Apsara troupe: “I studied this Khmer traditional dance since I was young, in my village with masters from the Cultural Provincial Department. My parents were very happy that I started to learn Khmer traditional dance. This training session is very important for me to produce an authentic performing”.



*Miss Pek Dany*

### **3.2.3 B3: “Revitalization of ‘lost’ choreographies and surviving knowledge”**

#### **3.2.3.2 Tasks**

- Conduct a research on two lost stories, ‘lost’ choreographies: Preah Samuth and Vong Sovann Chann Savat<sup>1</sup> in order to make a documentation on the performance history, dance, music and costumes;
- Revitalize the two ‘lost’ choreographies, organize the rehearsal and make presentation to the public;
- Produce costumes and accesaries.

#### **3.2.3.3 Achievements**

- **Work plan:** After several meetings with all members of the working group, under H.E. Mr. Meas Sarun direction, a detailed work plan has been established:
  - 24 August 2007 – 10 May 2008
    - Selection of 3 masters of choreography and 1 master of music
    - Research on Preah Samut
    - Research on Vong Sovann Chann Savat
  - 10 May 2008 – 19 May 2008
    - Selection of three qualified assistants
    - Selection of artists from the Department of Performing Arts and Faculty of Choreography to join the annual performance.
  - 20 May 2008 – 20 June 2008
    - Rehearsal of the Preah Samuth play
  - 21 June 2008 – 21 July 2008
    - Rehearsal of the Pong Sovan Chan Sangvat play

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<sup>1</sup> The Working Group of the Ministry of Culture and Arts replaced Sovannahong story by Sovann Chann Savat because Sovannahong had been revitalized by H.R.M. Princess Norodom Buppha Devi.

- **Appointments:** Four qualified masters from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts have been appointed on 28 August 2008 in order to ensure the research on both stories: Preah Samut and Pong Sovan Chan Sovat.

1. Mr. Mao Keng (Choreographer)
2. Mr. Preung Chhieng (Choreographer)
3. Ms. Him Nala (Choreographer)
4. Mr. Yon Khien (Musician)

- **Performers and musicians:** Artists, musicians, signers, and masters have been selected by the working group to join rehearsals and performances of the two stories Preah Samuth and Pong Sovan Chan Sangvat.

No.	Names	Sex	Function
<b>Master Group</b>			
1	Minh Kossony	F	Leader
2	Mao Keng	M	Vice leader
3	Em Theay	F	Master
4	Sim Montha	F	Master
5	Pen Sok Huorn	F	Master
6	Om Yuvandy	F	Master
7	Sot Somaly	F	Master
8	Ros Yaran	F	Master
9	Ros Kong	F	Master
<b>Performer group</b>			
10	Sam Limsothea	F	Preah Samuth
11	Sam Savin	F	Botsomaly
12	Thong Kim An	F	Botsomaly's father
13	Meng Kossoma	F	Botsomaly's mother
14	Koy Sina	F	Vaykan Giant
15	Pring Sokhanrith	F	Botsomaly's servant
16	Mean Chanthach	F	Botsomaly's servant
17	Nov Ratana	F	Botsomaly's servant
18	Kong Lydimang	F	Botsomaly's servant
19	Sorn Kongkea	F	Botsomaly's servant
20	Saing Phorsda	F	Botsomaly's servant
21	Chhit Uyromanita	F	Ken soldier
22	Sok Lydana	F	Ken soldier
23	Kong Kanhara	F	Ken soldier
24	Chey Sophea	F	Ken soldier
25	Sok Sreynhal	F	Ken soldier
26	Him Sophea	F	Ken soldier
27	Kong Chinda	F	Ken soldier
28	Kong Uma	F	Ken soldier
29	Keo Phirum	F	Giant soldier

30	Phan Phatchinda	F	Giant soldier
31	Yim Phokkanny	F	Giant soldier
32	Chhor Nybopha	F	Giant soldier
33	Lek Vanny	F	Giant soldier
34	Hem Linda	F	Pyearthhor Servant

**Musician Group**

35	Proeurng Pryuon	M	Roneat Ek
36	Nol Kol	M	Flute
37	Chhem Sok	M	Sompho
38	San Kimsour	M	Drum
39	Sieng Nguonly	M	Roneat Thong
40	Se Phala	M	Gong Thom
41	Chum Kong	M	Gong Toch

**Signers**

42	Yan Borin	M
43	Duong Mary	F
44	Hun Sarath	F
45	Thong Dara	M

- **Research results:** After the appointment, the four members, in close collaboration with other senior masters and officials of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, have compiled the two stories: Preah Samut and Pong Sovan Chan Sovat. The new choreography and the music have been elaborated. H.E. Ms. Minh Kossany was in charge of style correction and she followed up the whole research progress.

- **Rehearsal:** The rehearsal of the Preah Samut and Pong Sovan Chan Sovat started on Tuesday 10 June 2008 on the ground floor of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in front of the Ministry's new theatre.

**Participants:**

*Masters*

- H.E. Ms. Minh Kossany
- Prof. Ms. Em Theay
- Masters from MCFA
- Other masters from B1 component

*Artists*

- Professional artists from MCFA
- Students from the faculty of choreographic arts
- Students from the faculty of performing arts

- Firstly, masters asked artists to perform, they observed in order to identify irrelevant gestures, and they had a discussion among masters to find out the best ways to correct them. Then students observed professional artists and tried to perform under the supervision of the masters.

- They spent the first whole week to the general correction of irrelevant gestures.
- Artists and students were divided into small groups for an effective rehearsal.
- They started Preah Samut story during the second week of rehearsal and finished their rehearsal with Pong Sovan Chan Sovat.



*The preparation before the rehearsal*



*Masters are preparing documents for the rehearsal*



*Students from the faculty of choreography and performing arts*



*Students are trying to perform*



*Master is correcting some irrelevant gestures*



*Students and professional artists perform together in front of the Ministry's new theatre*

**- Production of costumes and accessories:** Under the direction supervision of H.E. Ms. Minh Kossony and the attention of senior masters specialized in Khmer Classical Dance, costumes and accessories have been produced and delivered to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.



*Ornaments of component B3*

### 3.3 Component C: “Production of one set of musical instruments”

#### 3.3.1 Tasks

- Purchase one set of Pin Peat musical instruments for the Royal Ballet, produced by a well known workshop and artisans.

#### 3.3.2 Achievements

- Ten musical instruments were ordered to a very well known workshop and artisans “Chum Pra Saeu”:

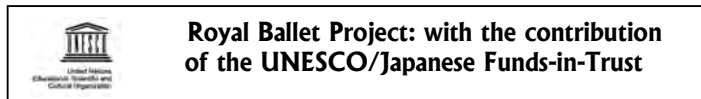
1. Roneath Ek (high-pitched xylophone)
2. Roneath Thung (low-pitched xylophone)
3. Roneath Dek (metallophone)
4. Koang Touch (small gong)
5. Koang Thom ( Large gong)
6. Sra Lay (Large and small oboe)
7. Skor Samphor (double-head drum)
8. Skor Thom (large two-piece drum)
9. Chhing (small cymbals)
10. Krab (small bamboo clappers)



*Classical musical instruments were produced by a skillful artist*



- After several months of production, all musical instruments were delivered to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. The sticker mentioned: “Royal Ballet Project: with the contribution of the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust” was put on each instrument.



- Musical instruments were officially delivered by UNESCO Representative in Cambodia to the Ministry of Culture and fine Arts on Tuesday 12 February 2008 at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.



*Deliverance of musical instruments of Royal Ballet Project, Component C1.*

### **3.4 Component D: “Organizing the annual Royal Ballet performance”**

#### **3.4.1 Tasks**

- Produce documentation, posters and booklets to promote the performance of Preah Samuth and Vong Sovann Chann Savat stories;
- Organize an annual performance with new choreography resulting from the research in activity B3 of the Preah Samuth and Pong Sangvar Chan Sangvat stories. The performances have been be joined by artists from the Department of Performing Arts and students from Faculty of Choreography;
- Cooperate with the Ministry of Informaton to broadcast the performances of the Preah Samuth and Vong Sovann Chann Savat stories on television.

#### **3.4.2 Achievements**

- Brochures, posters and leaflets for these two annual performances of Preah Samut and Pong Sovan Chan Sovat with new choreography have been produced. The performances have been conducted by senior masters specialized in Khmer Classical Dance or Royal Ballet and under the direct supervision of H.E. Ms. Minh

Kossony, Deputy Director General of Cultural Technique. After several weeks of hard training and intensive rehearsal, performers and musicians were ready for the plays.

- The team needed to produce pictures of some important scenes of both stories to be used in an advertisement.

The following activities show different steps in taking photos:

### *1. Sampeah Krou (Praying Ceremony)*

In all Khmer traditional art forms, artists always celebrate Sampeah Krou or the praying ceremony. It is a memorial ceremony for previous dance trainers who had passed away. In doing so, dancers try to remember the souls of their ancestors who previously had taught them dance and morality. For this photo session, H.E. Minh Kossony and other masters mad a praying ceremony.



*H.E. Minh Kossony and others masters celebrated Sampeah Krou Ceremony*

### *2. Costumes preparing*

Masters helped artists of main characters of both stories to wear costumes prepared by specialists in Khmer traditional costumes and funded by this UNESCO/Japanese Funds-In-Trust Project.



### *3. Photo session*

Three photographers were invited to take photos from different angles of each scene in order to prepare good brochures of the stories.



*This photo shows one of the scenes of Pong Sovan Chan Sovat. Two animals, a bird and a tiger will figure in this story.*

### *4. Musicians*

Musicians were also invited to perform for praying ceremony. They were very pleased to have the opportunity to perform with the new musical instruments recently produced with the contribution of UNESCO Funds-In-Trust from the component C of the Project.



*The two annual performances: Preah Samuth and Vong Sovann Chann Savat*



*Chaktomuk Conventional Hall*

- After several months of intense efforts of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in close collaboration with UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh, the final component of the project entitled “Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”, supported by UNESCO/Japanese Funds-In-Trust, has been achieved.
- Around one thousand leaflets for Preah Samuth and Vong Sovann Chann Sovat plays have been printed and distributed to invitees and to related institutions.
  - Preah Samuth on Saturday 06 December from 6:30 pm
  - Vong Sovann Chann Sovat on Saturday 13 December from 6:30 pm



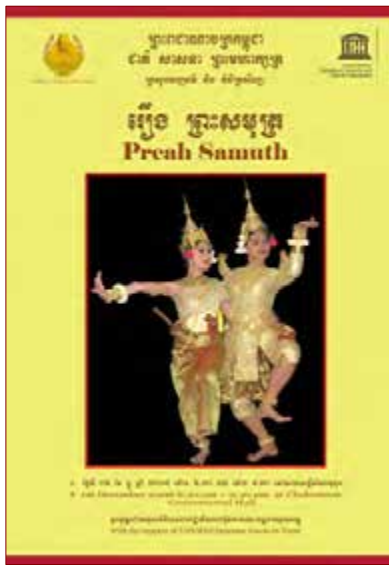
*Preah Samuth leaflet*



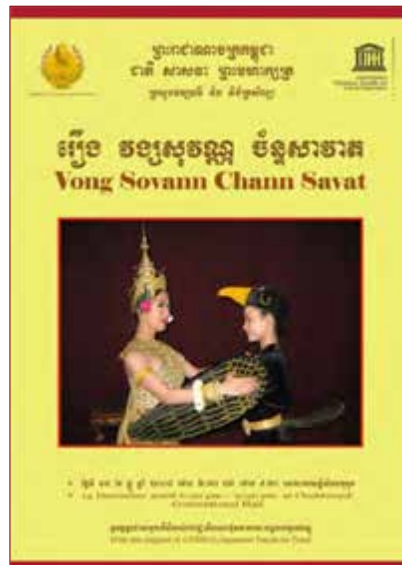


*Vong Sovann Chann Savat leaflet*

- Around six hundred posters of these two stories have also been printed and distributed.



*Preah Samuth poster*



*Vong Sovann Chann Savat poster*

- One thousand invitations have been printed and sent to national and international invitees.



*Invitation in Khmer*



*Invitation in English*

- **Performances:** Around thousand national and international invitees attended these two performances.



- Several National Televisions have reported on those two events. The Working Group of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts has also recorded the two performances and would make a DVD. In conclusion, this project has been implemented successfully.

#### 4. Difficulties

After his arrival at the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh in March 2007, the new Programme Specialist has identified some factors that caused the delays of the project implementation:

- **Overload in coordination:** The coordinator of the Ministry was overloaded with too many activities. He was not able to follow up all projects properly. UNESCO Phnom Penh strongly needed to provide a very close assistance because the same focal point had been assigned to coordinate five other projects among many others of the Ministry.
- **Sequence of implementation:** The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts was convinced that each component was to be implemented one after another. However, the work plan clearly mentions that two or three components could be carried out during the same period and this was discussed on several occasions with the Ministry staff.
- **A specific time was needed:** Some work needed a suitable period of time to ensure the quality. For example, the research in Phase A2 of the Project (Research and inventory of Royal Ballet), the report in Khmer language was done several months before the translation into English could be finished. The translation consumed a tremendous time because it was translated by a general English translator and in the second step it had to be revised and edited by a specialist of the matter.
- **Other unexplained delays in implementation:** Important gaps have been noticed between the time foreseen in the contracts and the real execution of the work. Some steps were delayed for several weeks.

#### 5. UNESCO solutions

UNESCO tried its best to give assistance and assure the smooth execution of the project. Human resources have been reinforced:

- **The Programme Specialist (PS):** Before 15 March 2007, UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh was running without a Programme Specialist for Culture. Within UNESCO, the only National Professional Officer (NPO) was overloaded with several projects at the same time. Just the ICC (International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor) consumes a lot of time, so that follow up faced some difficulties. The Current Programme Specialist took all projects in hands after his arrival in March. He immediately took up the matter of the implementation delays and had several meetings with the working groups of the project at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. Contrary to expectations, the situation for project implementation of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts did not change until September 2007.
- **A National Professional Officer (NPO)** was appointed on September 3, 2007 to follow up all the Projects related to the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), including the Ballet Royal Project. The new situation within the Culture Unit of the UNESCO office in Phnom Penh almost immediately improved the execution of the Project.

## 6. Global results

- ❖ **Component A1: “Training: research methodology and project management”**
  - The three-week training seminar of staff on research methodology and project management skills was organized.
  - The seven-day study visits during the training sessions in adequate places in ensuring necessary logistical arrangements were organized.
  
- ❖ **Component A2: “Research and inventory of Royal Ballet**
  - In close collaboration with artists and representatives of the Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts, the researchers conducted research as foreseen, collected surviving documents including photographs, interviews and documented the knowledge of principle masters of the Royal Ballet tradition throughout Cambodia in particular in the followings:
    - Performing Arts (Traditional dance/story/choreography...)
    - Traditional oral literature (Traditional oral folktale)
    - Traditional costumes
    - Traditional practices
  - The book of the inventory of masters and practitioners was published in Khmer and in English. They also put their research results in a DVD. The book and the DVD contain the following points:
    - Brief history and presentation
    - Name of each form
    - Revival history
    - Major stories in the repertory
    - Major masters and practitioners
  
- ❖ **Component B1: “Training for current dancers to become teachers”**
  - The training session of Royal Ballet for dancers from the Department and the Faculty of Choreographic Arts was organized. Twenty-four dancers became masters and each of them received a training certificate.
  
- ❖ **Component B2: “Training for provincial and private troupes”**
  - Eight masters of the component B1 trained few hundred artists from 19 private troupes in Siem Reap province.

## **7. Lessons Learned**

- Publication is a very complicated task. This activity requests a hard participation of all officials and needs time for its achievement. Sometimes, it can last longer than one year of work.

- The translation of the research results from Khmer into English may take long time. We need to provide enough time for this kind of activity. Cambodian Specialists of the field are strongly needed for the translation from Khmer into English and Natives are also needed to proofread the work.

- Technical assistances are highly demanded for the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in order to speed up the project implementation.

- More times and masters are strongly needed to provide regular meaningful training sessions to 504 artists from 19 private troupes in Siem Reap.

- A daily follow up is also necessary to ensure a regular project implementation progress.

## **8. Recommendations**

- The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in close collaboration with UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh should continue to provide private provincial troupes with regular training sessions in order to preserve the specificity and the authenticity of the Ballet Royal and other Khmer dances.

- The two stories, Preah Samut and Vong Sovann Chan Savat, should be performed once again in the following years in order to spread more widely.

- An annual schedule of regular performances of different forms of Khmer performing arts should be established in order to promote and revitalize provincial troupes and to provide national and international visitors with access to Khmer performing arts

## **9. Visibility**

The UNESCO logo and the Donor “Japanese Funds-in-Trust” have been mentioned on all publication namely books, posters, leaflets, backdrops, and musical instruments. All important events such as opening ceremonies of the workshop were shown on National Television and attended by national and international personalities.

## Result Matrix

SUMMARY of OBJECTIVES (intended)	ACHIEVEMENTS (results)	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
<p><b>Sector Goal:</b> Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity</p>	<p><b>Component A1: “Training: research methodology and project management”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The three-week training seminar of staff on research methodology and project management skills was organized.</li> <li>The seven-day study visits during the training sessions in adequate places in ensuring necessary logistical arrangements were organized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Component A2: “Research and inventory of Royal Ballet”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In close collaboration with artists and representatives of the Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts, the researchers conducted research as foreseen, collected surviving documents including photographs, interviewed and documented the knowledge of principle masters of the Royal Ballet tradition throughout Cambodia in particular in the followings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performing Arts (Traditional dance/story/choreography...)</li> <li>Traditional oral literature (Traditional oral folktale)</li> <li>Traditional costumes</li> <li>Traditional practices</li> </ul> </li> <li>The book of the inventory of masters and practitioners was published in Khmer and in English. They also put their research results in DVD format. The book and the DVD contain the following points:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief history and presentation</li> <li>Name of each form</li> <li>Revival history</li> <li>Major story in the repertory</li> <li>Major masters and practitioners</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Component B1: “Training for current dancers to become teachers”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training session of Royal Ballet for dancers from the Department and the Faculty of Choreographic Arts was organized. Twenty-four dancers became masters and received a training certificate each.</li> </ul> <p><b>Component B2: “Training for provincial and private troupes”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eight masters of the component B1 trained few hundred artists from 19 private troupes in Siem Reap.</li> </ul> <p><b>Component B2: “Training for provincial and private troupes”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eight masters of the component B1 trained few hundred artists from 19 private troupes in Siem Reap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books on the Royal Ballet in Khmer and in English</li> <li>24 Certificates were delivered to trainees.</li> <li>A set of musical instruments were delivered to the Ministry of Culture.</li> <li>19 private troupes in Siem Reap have been trained.</li> <li>Two annual performances took place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Related national and international instructions such as libraries, researchers are satisfied with the new book on the Royal Ballet of Cambodia for their references.</li> <li>24 trainees and officials and students of school arts are satisfied with the training session completion.</li> <li>Musicians are satisfied with the new set of musical instruments.</li> <li>Artists from 19 provincial private troupes in Siem Reap are satisfied with the training session provided by the project.</li> <li>Masters, performers, students, national and international personalities are satisfied with the performance of Preah Samut and Vong Sovann Chan Savat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project Purpose/Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and collection of existing documents and Knowledge about the Royal ballet is conducted;</li> <li>‘Lost’ choreographies and surviving knowledge is revitalized;</li> <li>Older masters and practitioners of the Royal Ballet are assisted in their efforts to transmit their knowledge to the younger generations;</li> <li>Capacities and facilities are developed at the Faculty of Choreographic Arts and the Department of Performing Arts as the centers for research and training;</li> <li>Public awareness is raised in particular among younger generations on the significant values and traditions of the Royal Ballet in order to enhance recognition and involvement.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cambodian researchers are well trained to carry out research on oral and intangible heritage and to develop and manage projects in this fields;</li> <li>Publication of research on the Royal ballet to enhance understanding and raise public awareness on the values of this art form;</li> <li>An inventory of Royal Ballet and performing arts of Cambodia made available, including the masters and practitioners;</li> <li>The training skills of professionals enhanced and the transmission to younger generations ensured;</li> <li>The production of a new set of traditional musical instruments is implemented to improve the artistic performance of the Royal Ballet troupe;</li> <li>Revived choreographies;</li> <li>Sensitization of the public on the value and the important of safeguarding the intangible heritage, through the organization of Royal Ballet performances</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To train staff in research methodology and project management skills;</li> <li>To research and inventory the Royal Ballet;</li> <li>To train current dancers to become teachers;</li> <li>To train provincial and private troupes;</li> <li>To revitalize ‘lost’ choreographies and surviving knowledge;</li> <li>To produce musical instruments;</li> <li>To organize the annual Royal Ballet performance</li> </ul>			

