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Principles and general objectives of education

Providing education opportunities to all Cambodian children is central to the Royal Government's poverty reduction and socio-economic development plans. The main goal is to develop an inclusive, easily accessible and high quality service, which is available to all, independent of wealth, gender, ethnicity and mental and physical aptitude. The vision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports includes an understanding of the critical need for education and training systems to enable economic growth, improved employment prospects and income-generating opportunities. The vision also incorporates a fundamental understanding that quality education can contribute to better family health and nutrition, improved family planning and a well-entrenched democratic system.

The overall objective of the education system is to help children develop mental and physical qualities. In order to attain this main objective, schools need to develop in the students the spirit of self-confidence, self-reliance, responsibility, solidarity, national unity and patriotism. Schools must also instil in students an attitude of respect towards the law and human rights.

Other responsibilities of schools are to nurture children to become good citizens, live together peacefully, be able to strengthen their responsibilities towards their families' happiness and make a contribution to promoting social welfare. General education strives to meet the above-mentioned overall objective by delivering knowledge and skills, promoting the personal qualities of the students, and accumulating work experiences and various activities that are beneficial to students, their schoolmates and to society as a whole.

The implementation of the Education Strategic Plan 2009-2013 is linked to imparting a culture of peace, respect for human rights and dignity, respect for the principles of freedom, democracy and justice, and instilling a culture against violence, drug use, child and women trafficking and social discrimination. (MoEYS, 2010).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports was established on the basis of the Law (Royal *Kram*) dated 24 January 1996.

Article 65 of the **Constitution** of 1993, amended in 1999, stipulates that: "The State shall protect and upgrade citizens' rights to quality education at all levels and shall take necessary steps for quality education to reach all citizens. The State shall respect physical education and sports for the welfare of all Khmer citizens." In addition, "The State shall establish a comprehensive and standardized educational system throughout the country that shall guarantee the principles of educational freedom and quality to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunity to earn a



living.” (Article 66). “The State shall adopt an educational programme according to the principle of modern pedagogy including technology and foreign languages. The State shall control public and private schools and classrooms at all levels.” (Article 67).

According to Article 68, “The State shall provide free primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools. Citizens shall receive education for at least nine years.”

The **Education Law** was promulgated in December 2007. Article 31 stipulates that every citizen has the right to access quality education of at least nine years’ duration in public schools free of charge. The Ministry in charge of education shall gradually prepare the policy and strategic plans to ensure that all citizens obtain quality education as stipulated by the law.

Administration and management of the education system

Administratively, the country comprises 20 provinces and four municipalities (Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Kep, and Pailin). Provinces are subdivided into districts, and districts into communes. The municipalities are subdivided into precincts, and precincts into quarters. The central administration is the main body handling administrative affairs at provincial/municipal and district levels.

The **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)** has four levels or horizontal lines of authority, consisting of the central, the provincial/municipal, the district and the school levels. A school cluster is a group of schools located near each other that can provide mutual technical and material assistance to make the teaching-learning process more effective. The MoEYS is organized around the central headquarters, 24 **provincial/municipal education offices**, 193 **district education offices** and schools. Typically, provincial education offices are in charge of upper secondary schools (*lycées*), while district education offices supervise lower secondary schools (*collèges*).

The organizational structure of the Ministry was revised in early 1998. Currently there are four directorates general (Education, Higher Education, Youth & Sport, Administration & Finance), the Inspectorate, and the EFA Secretariat. The Department of Planning, under Administration and Finance, is responsible for the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Its mission is to collect data from all schools across the country for processing, analyzing and then compiling into statistics and indicators yearbooks for distribution to and use by all levels of educational administrators. The Directorate General of Education includes the following departments: primary education, school health, secondary education, early childhood education, non-formal education, pedagogical research, and teacher training. Within the framework of the Education Strategic Plan 2009-2013, the main objectives of the sub-programme ‘Development of instructional materials and textbooks’ are to: develop curricula of a universal nature consistent with regional educational progress and in the world; and ensure the adequate provision of textbooks nationwide. The **Curriculum Development Department** will be responsible for: the implementation of the new curriculum policy and its review in 2011; the development



of learning standards for grades 3, 6 and 9 nationwide; the implementation and monitoring of textbook policy; and the development of technical and vocational education curriculum. (MoEYS, 2010).

Over the past decade, in common with most ministries, the primary mission of the central administration has been to exercise a degree of control over operations, with a predominant focus on administration. Levels of delegation to line departments, provincial and district authorities have been limited and unclear. The predominant culture has been one of seeking upward approval for decisions. The opportunities and willingness to take decisions at lower levels of the system has been limited by unclear delegation of authority. The situation is reinforced by a tradition of highly centralized resource management for both personnel and operational budgets.

The introduction of the priority action programmes (PAP) in 2000 has provided an opportunity to rationalize organizational structures and responsibilities within the Ministry. Financial channelling and management of PAP funds is directed from the central government treasury to district accounts held in the provincial treasury. This has had a positive effect on various levels of MoEYS to review its role and function. In essence, central headquarters are gradually assuming their proper role of policy making, strategic planning and monitoring. Provincial offices are beginning to assume a progress monitoring and oversight role, with districts and schools being responsible for day-to-day management of PAP funds.

In 1996 during the curriculum reform process MoEYS set up many committees such as the Curriculum Reform Committee and the Curriculum Implementation Committee. In 2006 there were three committees in MoEYS dealing with curriculum matters: the **Education Material Approval Board (EMAB)** in charge of the approval of textbooks and other reading materials to be used in schools; the **Standards Reference Group** in charge of defining curriculum standard for grades 3, 6 and 9; and the **Life Skills Working Group** responsible for the life skills policy for use in schools. In 2006 it has been proposed to establish a Curriculum Coordination and Textbook Policy Committee. (MoEYS, 2006).

On the basis of Article 5 of the Education Law of 2007 a **Supreme National Council for Education**, lead by the Prime Minister, shall be established with the following functions: prepare policy proposals and long-term strategies which respond to the social and economic development to the Royal government of Cambodia; evaluate the tasks related to the education sector, technical and vocational training; and collect all the resources for education.

The main objective of the **Cambodian National Council for Children** is to promote improved cooperation among relevant institutions for children's interests. The **Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation** supervises welfare and rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. The **Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA)** and the **Cambodian National Council for Women** are in charge of the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The MOWA acts as a catalyst and advocate to encourage public institutions, civil society and the private sector to integrate gender equality into their policies and programs, and as a coordinator and facilitator. It is responsible for monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes to assess their contributions to achieving the government's



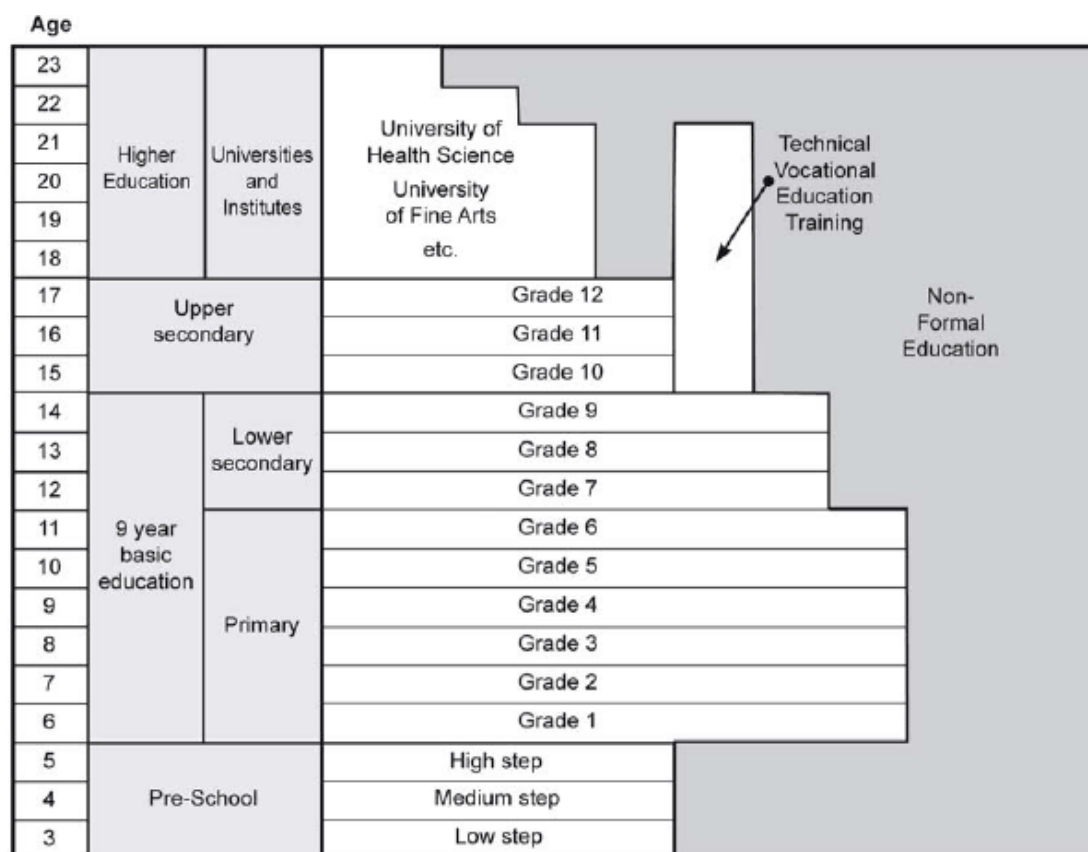
goals in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The MOWA is also one of the key partners of MoEYS in the provision of early childhood care and education (in particular as far as community preschools and home-based programmes are concerned).

The **National Training Board** was formally constituted in 1996 in recognition by the Royal Government of Cambodia that a coordinated, long-term development plan was needed for technical vocational education and training (TVET). Since 2004, TVET is under the responsibility of the **Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training**.

The **Accreditation Committee of Cambodia** (ACC) was established in March 2003. Its main purpose is to establish a legal mechanism for administering the accreditation of all higher education institutions in order to ensure and promote academic quality for greater effectiveness and quality consistent with international standards.

Structure and organization of the education system

Cambodia: structure of the education system (2009)



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, August 2009.

Pre-school education

Preschool education is not compulsory. It lasts three years and caters to children in the age group 3-5 years.

Primary education

Primary education lasts six years and is compulsory. Primary education is considered as the first stage of basic education. Before 1996 primary education lasted five years (four years before 1985).

Secondary education

General secondary education is divided into two cycles: lower secondary, or the second stage of basic education, lasting three years and in principle compulsory; and upper secondary education, which is not compulsory and also lasts three years. Upon completion of lower secondary education (grade 9) students sit a national examination

and if successful receive the basic education diploma; at the end of upper secondary education students having successfully passed the national examination are awarded the high school diploma (*baccalauréat*). Students having completed lower secondary education can continue to upper secondary education or enrol in technical and vocational training programmes (lasting one to three years) under the authority of the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. Students having completed three-year (level 3) technical and vocational programmes are awarded a certificate equivalent to the *baccalauréat*.

Higher education

Higher and tertiary-level education is provided in universities and technical and professional training institutions. Technical and professional training institutions offer programmes lasting two to three years and leading to a certificate/high diploma. Regional teacher training centres offer two-year programmes to upper secondary education graduates qualifying for lower secondary education teachers. At the university level, programmes leading to the award of an associate degree typically last two years. The award of a bachelor's degree normally requires four years of study (including the foundation year) on a full-time basis (five years in the case of engineering, six years in the case of architecture, seven years in the case of pharmacy, and eight years in the case of medicine and dentistry). A one-year, postgraduate programme at the National Institute of Education for bachelor's degree holders leads to the diploma of upper secondary school teacher or a diploma in education. Programmes leading to the award of a master's degree normally take two years to complete; programmes leading to a doctoral degree usually require at least three years of study.

The school year should consist of thirty-eight working weeks. At the university level the academic year is normally divided into two semesters (September-January and February-June).

The educational process

The aim of the school curriculum is to develop fully the talents and capacities of all students in order that they become able people, with parallel and balanced intellectual, spiritual, mental and physical growth and development. In particular, when students leave schools they should:

- develop a love of learning that will enable them to pursue employment and continue lifelong learning;
- have attained a foundation knowledge of Khmer language, Khmer literature and mathematics;
- have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to improve and maintain their own physical and mental health and to contribute to the improvement and maintenance of the health of their families and wider society;
- have the capacity to manage and take responsibility for their own actions and decisions and be self-reliant;
- appreciate the value and importance of science, technology, innovation and creativity;

- have employment-related skills, an understanding of and positive attitude towards work and a capacity to manage and work effectively and harmoniously with others;
- have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality and a commitment to identifying, analyzing and working towards solutions of problems experienced by their families and society;
- have an understanding and appreciation of other people and other cultures, civilizations and histories that leads to the building of a public spirit characterized by equality and respect for others' rights;
- be active citizens and be aware of social changes, understanding Cambodia's system of government and the rule of law, and demonstrating a spirit of national pride and love of their nation, religion and king;
- have an appreciation of and be able to protect and preserve their natural, social and cultural environment.

In order to achieve this, the school curriculum should:

- provide learning experiences that will enable students to learn to know, learn to do, learn to be and learn to live together;
- equip students with the everyday Life Skills they will require to reach their full potential and to be effective and productive members of society;
- enable students to attain a high level of knowledge and skills in the following subject areas: Khmer language and literature; mathematics; sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, and earth and environmental studies); social studies (history, geography, home economics, art education, and morals and civics); foreign languages; health and physical education and sports;
- emphasize active and applied learning in all subjects across the core curriculum, including the study of technology, which is the application of knowledge to improve the quality of life for all citizens. (MoEYS, 2004).

The Policy for Curriculum Development 2005-2009 has upgraded and changed the 1996 core curriculum. In particular, the policy:

- simplifies the early primary education curriculum to ensure that each student will achieve a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy by the end of grade 3;
- outlines a new life skills education curriculum, including the new Local Life Skills Programmes (LLSP);
- introduces an integrated studies approach to science and social studies in grades 1-3;
- considers foreign languages teaching as a priority;
- defines a clear structure for the development of standards in Khmer and mathematics at the end of grades 3 and 6, and national examinations in Khmer, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign languages at the end of grade 9;
- introduces elective subjects for students in grades 11 and 12, while increasing time for each subject and reducing the total number of required subjects. (MoEYS, 2006)



Following the new National Curriculum, set out in December 2004, pupils in primary education should receive five periods of teaching per day (each teaching period lasting 40 minutes), five days per week, plus 2-5 additional 40-minute periods per week devoted to the Local Life Skills Programme (LLSP). Students in grades 7-10 should receive 30 periods of teaching per week (each teaching period lasting 50 minutes), plus 2-5 additional 50-minute periods per week devoted to the LLSP. Students in grades 11-12 should receive 32 periods of teaching per week, each teaching period lasting 50 minutes. The new basic education curriculum covering grades 1-9 was issued in 2006, jointly with curriculum standards for grades 3, 6 and 9.

Pre-primary education

The goals of pre-primary education, as stated in the curriculum, are to develop life skills, emotional values, social, moral and aesthetic values linked to the age of the child. Pre-numeracy, pre-literacy and integrated science are taught through play-way method. Other activities promote large muscle development, small muscle development, social skills, problem-solving, art, and drama, pre-reading and pre-writing skills.

Preschool education provision is a growing public-private partnership. In 1999, pre-primary education was provided in 874 government preschools for about 50,000 children, alongside some 10,000 children in 364 community and private preschools. The community schools constituted around 70% of non-public provision. Attendance at community schools is generally tuition-free compared to the urban-based private preschool, which levy a small charge. Demand for preschool education appears to be growing slowly in the late 1990s, in part due to two-parent families working in urban areas, requiring daytime child minding.

The national authorities have developed a policy framework on early childhood education for children aged 3-5 years in 2000. The Department of Early Childhood Education was established in 2003. The Ministry of Women's Affairs supervises the functioning and management of community preschools (CPS) which are set up by Commune Councils and meant for all children aged 3-5 years, particularly those in rural areas where opportunities for early childhood stimulation are few. Home-based parenting programmes are also operated and cater to children aged 0-5 years.

Officially, formal preschool education, managed and monitored by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), is organized as a three-step system for 3-5-year-olds, e.g. L1 for 3-year-olds, L2 for 4-year-olds and L3 for 5-year-olds. In practice, most children receive only one or two years of provision. Typically, state preschools operate 3 hours per day, five days per week, and 38 weeks per year. Community preschools operate two hours per day, five days per week, and 24-36 weeks per year. In the case of home-based parenting programmes, mother groups and the children normally meet once per week during one hour, 24 weeks per year.

Teachers in preschools run by the government should have completed a two-year training programme after grade 12 (end of upper secondary education). Community teachers have in-service training for 16 days provided by the Department



of Early Childhood Education in the provinces, and literacy teachers for parenting programmes receive in-service training for three days twice a year.

The preschool system has relied significantly on NGO support since the early 1990s. Much of NGO support has focused on quality assurance such as the training of roughly 2,000 pre-school teachers and curriculum materials development. UNICEF has provided support for the 609 community-based pre-schools for children of 3 to 5 years of age in 2005. This includes support for infrastructure, training costs, and development of teaching learning materials and honorariums to the teachers. Almost all the NGO and community preschools are targeted towards the poor and vulnerable population.

The quality and effectiveness of preschool provision is difficult to assess, in part because of a mix of objectives. These include school readiness, elements of pre-primary teaching, structured play and social development, initial hygiene and nutrition awareness and broader child minding and child-care.

In 2004/05 the estimated gross enrolment ratio for children ages 3, 4 and 5 were estimated at 1.2%, 5.0% and 12.9% respectively, and at 10.6% overall for the relevant age group. The percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience was estimated at 13.2% in 2004/05. Girls represented roughly half of the enrolment. There are significant rural/urban disparities in availability of pre-school services. Urban areas with only 15% of the preschool age population constitute around 25% of preschool enrolment.

According to EMIS statistics, there were 119,893 children (60,541 girls or 50.4% of the total) enrolled in early childhood education (ECE) in 2005, which represented a gross enrolment ratio of 11.9%. In spite of efforts to increase alternative forms of ECE support through community and home-based preschools, enrolment continues to be clustered in state preschools. EMIS reported that 75,669 children were enrolled in state preschools in 2005, or 63% of the total enrolment; 22,265 children were in community preschools, 13,447 children were in home-based preschools, and 8,512 were in private preschools. (MoEYS, 2007).

According to the Education Congress Report delivered in May 2010, the total number of children aged 0–5 years enrolled in all types of preschools was 186,086, of whom 93,725 were girls. Total enrolment in early childhood education programmes has increased from 120,098 children (13.6% of the children aged 3 to 5 years) in 2005/06 to 171,768 children (20% of the relevant age group) in 2009/10. An estimated 58% of the children are enrolled in public preschools. (MoEYS, 2010).

Primary and lower secondary education (basic education)

The purpose of the basic education curriculum is to contribute to the achievement of the aims of schooling in order that students can further their studies at the upper levels, participate in other vocational trainings or participate in social life by ensuring that every student has acquired:

- knowledge of Khmer language and mathematics;
- knowledge of the national identity;

- an understanding of morality and civic responsibilities;
- the everyday life skills that enable participation in their local community life and Cambodian society;
- a basic understanding of the natural world and of scientific principles;
- communicative competence in a foreign language.

Within the new National Curriculum of 2004, schools, in partnership with parents, their local community, community organizations and NGOs, must develop and administer a Local Life Skills Programme (LLSP) consisting of 2 to 5 lessons per week at the basic education level. The purpose of the LLSP is provide training in specific life skills that have a particular relevance to local students, and provide schools with time for extra-curricular activities such as social services or youth movement activities that will further develop students' habits of self-confidence and responsibility. Life skills are defined as the intellectual, personal, interpersonal and vocational skills that enable informed decision-making, effective communication, and coping and self-management skills that contribute to a healthy and productive life. The most fundamental of all life skills are Khmer literacy and numeracy, and the teaching of these skills is the main purpose during the first three years of primary education. (MoEYS, 2004).

The MoEYS has determined that there are two kinds of life skills: (a) basic skills: necessary skills, which provide a strong base for living; basic skills include general and pre-vocational skills; (b) career skills: basic vocational identification to determine a clear career in the future; career skills are simple skills and vocational skills. The new Basic Education Curriculum covering grades 1-9 issued in 2006 specifies basic skills to be taught to every student. These include important topics like health education, safety, nutrition, relaxation, illness protection, other ways to good health (e.g., hygiene food), traffic safety, drowning awareness, landmine awareness, HIV and AIDS awareness, drug awareness, bird flu, games, and environmental protection. The policy also ensures provisions for personal development, self-value, group work skills, peaceful living, and peaceful challenges-solution. (MoEYS, 2007).

The objective of primary education is to focus on the development of children's personalities by helping to upgrade their mental and psychological abilities. Children will master reading, writing, speaking, listening and arithmetic, will be able to solve their immediate problems, and will cherish learning and labour. Through these efforts, they will become useful members of the community and be capable of acquiring simple skills or continuing their study to higher grades. The purpose of the curriculum in grades 1-3 is to ensure that every child has a strong foundation in literacy and mathematics and that they develop their health, physical appearance, moral understanding, learning skills and life skills. Art education (songs, drawing, dance, music) is included in science and social studies. The purpose of the curriculum in grades 4-6 is to expand and consolidate students' knowledge and understanding of Khmer language, mathematics, learning skills, life skills, moral, and personal development that will enable them to pursue life-long learning and to introduce them to content in the areas of science and social studies. Art education is included in social studies.

The main objective of lower secondary education is to enhance the knowledge that the students have already acquired at the primary level. The aim is to ensure the

development of their freedom of thought and expression, build their attitude of tolerance, and, at the same time, develop their talents, individual qualities, creativity, social ethics and skills in order to create a harmonious society. The basic education lower secondary school curriculum (grades 7-9) seeks to provide all students with a breadth of knowledge, skills, Khmer language, mathematics, sciences, social studies, life skills, learning skills, vocational education, moral education and personal development necessary to enable them to contribute as productive members to the growth of Cambodian society and be able to further their studies at the upper levels, participate in other vocational trainings or to participate in social life. Foreign languages are included as a compulsory subject for all students at the lower secondary level. Pre-vocational life skills are taught as part of social studies and through the LLSP. Art education is included in the LLSP. Upon completion of basic education students will have grown to full adulthood and be capable of living in society and continuing their study to higher grades as required. (MoEYS, 2004 and 2006).

The weekly lesson timetables for primary and lower secondary education before the adoption of the new National Curriculum of 2004 are shown in the tables below:

Primary education (first stage of basic education): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Khmer language	14	12	12	11	8	8
Foreign language (English or French)	–	–	–	–	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5	5
Science	2	3	3	3	3	3
History and geography	2	2	2	2	2	2
Moral-civics	1	2	2	2	2	2
Arts	2	2	2	2	2	2
Technology	1	1	1	2	2	2
Physical education and sports	2	2	2	2	2	2
Special activities (which help to improve students' real social life skills and personalities)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	30	30	30	30	30	30

Source: Ton Sa Im, 2002. (In principle, each teaching period lasts 45 minutes).

Lower secondary education (second stage of basic education): weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
Khmer language	6	5	5
Foreign language (English or French)	5	5	5
Mathematics	4	5	5
Science	5	5	6
History and geography	3	3	3
Moral-civics	2	2	2
Aesthetic education (drawing, music, songs, dances and plays)	2	2	1
Technology-home economics	3	3	3
Physical education and sports	2	2	2
Special activities (which help to improve students' real social life skills and personalities)	1	1	1
Total weekly periods	33	33	33

Source: *Ibid.* (In principle, each teaching period lasts 45 minutes).

The weekly lesson timetables for primary and lower secondary education following the new National Curriculum are shown in the tables below:

Cambodia. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Khmer language	13	13	13	8	10	10
Mathematics	7	7	7	6	6	6
Science & social studies	3	3	3	–	–	–
Science	–	–	–	4	3	3
Social studies	–	–	–	5	4	4
Physical and health education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sub-total	25	25	25	25	25	25
Local Life Skills Programme	2–5	2–5	2–5	2–5	2–5	2–5
Total weekly periods	27–30	27–30	27–30	27–30	27–30	27–30

Source: MoEYS, 2004. Art education (songs, drawing, dance, music) is integrated into science & social studies in grades 1-3, and into social studies in grades 4-6. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

Cambodia. Lower secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	7	8	9
Khmer language	6	6	6
Foreign language (English or French)	4	4	4
Mathematics	6	6	6
Sciences	6	6	6
Social studies	6	6	6
Physical and health education	2	2	2
Sub-total	30	30	30
Local Life Skills Programme (including art education)	2–5	2–5	2–5
Total weekly periods	32–35	32–35	32–35

Source: MoEYS, 2004. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes.

Decisions regarding admission to lower secondary education are made by the provincial and district offices of education, based on an assessment of a student's performance in the last grade of primary schooling (grade 6). Performances are assessed through monthly tests and two semester examinations, and students are required to score a minimum of 50% in order to be admitted into lower secondary schools. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

The government has achieved significant expansion of primary education opportunities in the 1990s, with enrolment growing from 1.3 million in 1992 to around 2.2 million pupils in 1999. This represents an enrolment growth of 70% over the period. From 2000 to 2004, primary school enrolment grew from 2.4 million to 2.7 million, with the majority of growth being in rural areas. The overall net enrolment ratio increased from 84% to 91% since 2000. The rise was even greater for girls, especially in rural and remote areas, and the number of students from the poorest communes increased by around 0.5 million. The number of primary schools grew from around 4,500 in 1992 to 5,274 in 1999.

In 2009/10, the total number of primary schools was 6,665 (of which 1,203 incomplete) with 2,239,757 pupils enrolled; the total number of lower secondary schools was 1,172 with 585,115 students enrolled. The net enrolment ratio at the primary level was estimated at 94.8%, and at the lower secondary level at 31.9%. The pupil/teacher ratio was 49.2:1 at the primary level, and 24.4:1 at the lower secondary level. In 2008/09, the overall repetition rate was 8.9% in primary education, and 2.3% in lower secondary education; the overall dropout rate was 8.3% in primary and 18.8% in lower secondary education. The survival rate from grade 1 to grade 6 was estimated at 61.7%, and at 37.2% from grade 1 to 9. The completion rate was estimated at 83.2% for primary and 48.7% for lower secondary education. (MoEYS, 2010).



In 2005/06, there were 50,378 teachers in primary schools and 18,579 teachers at the lower secondary level. The gross enrolment ratio for primary education was estimated at 124% (118.6% for girls and 129.4% for boys), and for lower secondary education at 55.3% (50% for girls and 60.5% for boys). As regards primary education, the repetition rate was estimated at 21.8% in grade 1 (27% in remote areas), 14.4% in grade 2, and 11.8% in grade 3. (MoEYS, 2007).

It is difficult to reliably assess the quality and effectiveness of primary education. However a proxy indicator is the progression rate from grade 4, based on marked tests administered by teachers. The overall trend is slightly upwards: in 1996/97, 70% of pupils passed these tests compared to 72% in 1998. There are some urban/rural variations. In 1998, urban school pass rates were 78% compared to 65% in rural areas. Other proxy indicators of quality and effectiveness are not encouraging. For example, in 1998 the survival rate of the age cohort reaching grade 5 (grade 6 was introduced in 1996) was only 45%. Dropout rates in 1997/98 ranged between 10% and 16%. There were also significant variations in overall dropout rates between urban and rural areas (urban: 9%; rural: 15%; and remote areas: 26.2%).

The allocation of instructional hours in the curriculum is somewhat inconsistent with the broad objectives of primary education, which are to improve literacy, numeracy and social and scientific competences. Officially, in the 1990s the number of instructional hours in grades 1–6 was 635 hours per year, but a study carried out in 1998 suggested that the real teaching time could be as low as 350 yearly hours. In addition, pupil attendance rates are variable. For example, using census data it was estimated that only 60% of 9-year-olds attend schools regularly. Anecdotal evidence also confirms that the attendance by teachers is very variable.

The MoEYS has made significant efforts to upgrade the quality of teaching staff. In 1996, the entry qualifications to the teaching service were increased to twelve years of schooling (e.g. complete upper secondary education) and two years of teacher training (in cities and towns; a 9 + 2 scheme was applied in remote areas). In 2005/06, the educational level of primary education teachers was as follows: 6.5% with complete primary (30.3% in remote areas); 67.8% with complete lower secondary; 25.53% with complete upper secondary (9.06% in remote areas); and 0.17% were university graduates. An estimated 98.6% of primary school teachers had received pedagogical training. As regards secondary education (lower and upper) teachers, the educational level was as follows: 1.41% with complete primary (7.14% in remote areas); 40.3% with complete lower secondary; 43.62% with complete upper secondary (69.73% in remote areas); and 14.66% (1.36% in remote areas) were university graduates. (MoEYS, 2007).

Secondary education

The purpose of the upper secondary school curriculum is not only to expand and consolidate students' knowledge acquired at the basic education level but also to provide them opportunity for future orientation, that is, to have capacity to continue their studies at the higher education level or to specialize their studies or participate in social life by ensuring that students have acquired:

- advanced knowledge of Khmer literature and mathematics;



- deep knowledge of the national identity;
- a more complex understand of morality and civic responsibilities;
- the everyday life skills that enable participation in their local community life and Cambodian society;
- a broad understanding of the natural world and of scientific principles;
- high communicative competence in a foreign language.

The purpose of the curriculum in grade 10 is to expand and consolidate students' knowledge acquired at the lower secondary education level. In addition, schools must ensure the provision of a significant subject choice advice for students to study in grades 11 and 12. Art education (songs, drawing, dance, music) is included in the Local Life Skills Programme. The purpose of the curriculum in grade 11-12 is to provide students with the opportunity for increased specialization through subject choice, develop a depth of knowledge in particular subjects or to take training-based vocational subjects in order to continue their study at the higher education level or study vocational subjects or participate in social life. An Elective Vocational Education Programme (EVEP) provides students with the opportunity to participate in locally-provided vocational training programmes. (MoEYS, 2004).

The weekly lesson timetables for secondary education following the new National Curriculum are shown in the tables below:

Cambodia. Upper secondary education, grade 10: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods
Khmer language	6
Mathematics	6
Sciences	6
Social studies	6
Foreign language (English or French)	4
Physical and health education and sport	2
Sub-total	30
Local Life Skills Programme (including art education)	2-5
Total weekly periods	32-35

Source: MoEYS, 2004. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes.

Cambodia. Upper secondary education, grades 11-12: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods
<i>Compulsory subjects:</i>	
Khmer literature	6
Physical and health education and sports	2
Mathematics (basic/advanced)	4/8
Foreign language (English or French)	4
Sub-total	16–20
<i>Electives:</i>	
Sciences (choice among: physics; chemistry; biology; earth and environmental studies)	
Social studies (choice among: morals/civics; history; geography; economics)	
Elective Vocational Education Programme (choice among: ICT/technology; accounting/business management; local vocational technical subjects; tourism; art education and other subjects)	
Sub-total	16–12
Total weekly periods	32

Source: MoEYS, 2004. Each teaching period lasts 50 minutes. Elective subjects are taught four periods per week. Students who choose basic mathematics must take four electives; those who choose advanced mathematics must take three electives.

As regards the admission to upper secondary education, students are required to take the national entrance examination. The contents of the examination papers and the schedule are decided at the ministry level, and the provincial office makes the necessary arrangements, including the preparation of examination rooms, administration, and marking of the examination. The offices also make pass/fail decisions based on MoEYS criteria. Student promotion from a lower to higher grade in secondary education, except for grades 9 and 12, is based on the results of a series of assessments conducted throughout a year. Teachers administer quizzes, oral tests, monthly tests, and semester exams, and students must gain at least 50% out of the maximum performance of 100%. Attendance is also used as promotion criteria. Students must not be absent for more than 20 days without reported leaves or 60 days with reported leaves. The provincial offices of education make final decisions regarding a student's promotion. When students pass the lower secondary school leaving examination, they are automatically granted a certificate that allows them to enter into upper secondary school (grade 10). Those who do not wish to continue to upper secondary education can also use the certificate to enter vocational training, which requires the successful completion of lower secondary schooling. In order to graduate from upper secondary schools, students are assessed based on the scores earned in grade 12, the final grade of upper secondary education, and the score of the national examination. Generally, the score for grade 12 is marked on a 0-100 point scale, whereas the national examination ranges from 0-575. Students need to score a minimum of 337 points (50% of the total) in order to be considered eligible for



graduation. The two school leaving examinations at the end of grades 9 and 12 are administered by the Examinations Office, MoEYS. However, all decisions regarding the preparation of the examination are made at the departmental level. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes, which used to be under the authority of MOEYS, were transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT) when the Ministry was established in 2004. Strategies for TVET were developed in 1999, which encouraged private sector participation in providing a large range of programmes and activities. Programmes are offered at three different levels (each lasting one year) in a wide variety of areas, including vehicle repairing, general mechanics, computer technology, agricultural mechanics, electricity, electronics, repairing of cooling mechanics, and civil engineering. For the 2005/06 academic year, a total of 42,212 students (of which 15,826 or 37.5% were girls) were enrolled in TVET under 40 public and 170 private technical and vocational training institutions. (*Ibid.*).

Upper secondary education opportunities are limited. In 2009/10, there were 383 upper secondary schools with 323,583 students enrolled, and the net enrolment ratio was estimated at 19.4%. The average students/teacher ratio was 32.2:1, and the completion rate was estimated at 26.1%. (MoEYS, 2010).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

As far as secondary education is concerned, grade 9 examinations pass rates increased from 47% to 71% between 1998 and 1999, in part due to the need for selecting grade 9 students for an increased number of grade 10 places. In 1998, provincial pass rates varied significantly ranging from 31–37% (in Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Cham) up to 63–75% (in Pursat and Stung Treng). These provincial variations are a consequence of the relative availability of grade 10 places. Drawing any further conclusions regarding overall quality improvement would be problematic.

As regards the grade 12 examinations, the overall pass rate increased from around 70% in 1994 to 79% in 1998/99. Once again, there were wide provincial variations and significant urban/rural inequities. For example, 88% of students passed in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville compared to only 42% in Kompong Speu, while none of the Kep candidates passed the examinations. The remote provinces have very few candidates, but performance varied dramatically ranging from a 12% pass rate in Ratanakiri to a rate of 70% in Preah Vihear. The levelling of pass rates may indicate that the improved central management and moderation of the grade 12 examination is beginning to provide a consensus on performance standards, which in the medium term will assist better quality assurance and performance and monitoring.

As a system for standardized learning assessment has yet to be established, measuring actual achievement in quality and outcomes of teaching and learning is a challenge. (MoEYS, 2005).

Teaching staff

A key component of improved resource management is effective deployment of the education service, especially primary and secondary school teachers. In 2004/05, there were some 45,000 primary school teachers and around 17,500 secondary school teachers. In addition, there were about 10,000 non-teaching staff workers in schools. These were supplemented by some 3,100 education staff in provincial and district education offices. The number of preschool teachers was 4,395; 3,027 in state preschools, 920 in community preschools and 448 in private preschools.

Teacher education provision consists of primary education provincial teacher-training centres (PTTCs) and six regional teacher-training centres (RTTCs) which train grades 7-9 teachers (both offering a two-year programme), and a one-year postgraduate programme at the National Institute of Education (formerly the Faculty of Pedagogy) training upper secondary school teachers. Admission is increasingly based on completion of grade 12 (in the past there was some discretion concerning grade 9 completion as an admission credential). The majority of primary school teachers have had access to a nationwide, distance learning, in-service programme, financed with donor support over the 1995–2000 period. As part of pre-service training of lower secondary education teachers, 14 weeks of practical training in total are included in the programme (six weeks in the first year and eight weeks in the second year). In the case of teachers in upper secondary education, pre-service training includes four weeks of practical training. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

One concern is the highly academic nature of the teacher-training curriculum. A large proportion of time is spent on academic upgrading as opposed to teaching methodology and in-school teaching practice. The recent location of a model primary school close to the colleges is reported to be an improvement. Nevertheless, the opportunity to increase the methodology component, as academic entry requirements have been raised, has not been fully grasped. The average number of instructional periods per week is set at 32 core periods plus six extension periods, which is considerably higher than many secondary schools.

The current curriculum of the PTTCs and RTTCs is not particularly responsive to emerging requirements. The RTTC and the National Institute of Education programmes perceive their mission as the training of single subject specialists, which undermines a more flexible deployment of staff, especially in secondary schools. The tradition of graduate teachers being trained for teaching only upper secondary classes also undermines the efficient deployment of newly trained teachers. The provision for the training of teachers of more practical subjects (i.e. foreign languages, industrial arts, art and craft, science) is still limited.

Efficient staff deployment, especially in secondary schools, is constrained by subject specialization and variable teaching loads. The broad MoEYS guideline is teacher workload of 18–20 hours per week. A 1999 survey indicated that the average workload for lower secondary teachers (grades 7-9 schools) was only 14 hours per week. In upper secondary schools (grades 10-12), the figure was 13.8 hours. In contrast, the workload in consolidated schools (grades 7-12) increased to 17.7 hours per week. Larger schools provide greater opportunities for economies of scale and the



more efficient use of teachers for their specialist subjects. A key policy issue is therefore to set agreed standards for teacher workloads and ensure their enforcement.

The 1999 survey also showed significant variation in the matching of staff deployment with their specialist subjects. For example, if a teacher of Khmer taught only Khmer classes, the matching rate would be 100%. In other words, the match is a measure of efficient internal specialist staff deployment. There was substantial variation by subject with the lowest matching rates of 5-20% in the vocational subjects. Foreign languages have comparatively low matching rates at around 30% in lower secondary, rising to around 45% in upper secondary education. The core subjects (e.g. mathematics, Khmer language, sciences) generally had matching rates of around 85–95%. A key measure will therefore be to ensure that secondary teacher training produces multi-subject specialists rather than single subject specialists in order to optimise use of such staff.

The proposals for rationalization of provincial or district education administrations and teaching/non-teaching staff need to take account of other considerations, especially the potential impact of greater decentralization of education service management. For example, the proposed enhanced monitoring role for provinces and districts will have to be taken into account (e.g. use of schools' inspectors).

There is a growing support for increased delegation of education personnel management to district education authorities in order to allow adaptation on a case-by-case basis. The role of the central administration should be to set effective staff deployment guidelines against agreed levels of service provision, leaving it to lower levels of the system to implement them accordingly. It needs to be recognized that if personnel management functions are delegated downwards, urgent capacity building in these functions will be needed, including appropriate staff deployment, personnel information systems and relevant training.

The salary scales and career progressions are comparatively compressed towards the lower end of the scale, with large numbers of non-graduate primary school teachers. There is only a very limited career path and promotion prospects. For example, school directors are not paid additional responsibility allowances for management responsibilities. In addition, there are only limited and insufficient incentives for posting qualified teachers to work in remote areas and schools in difficult circumstances.

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Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport: <http://www.moeys.gov.kh/> [In English. Last checked: April 2011.]

National Training Board: <http://www.ntb.gov.kh/> [In English. Last checked: April 2011.]

Royal University of Phnom Penh: <http://www.rupp.edu.kh/> [In English. Last checked: April 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>