



The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011

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Outline

- What is ISCED?
- How ISCED works?
- Classification system
- ISCED levels
 - Principal characteristics
 - Classification criteria
- ISCED Mappings

WHAT IS ISCED?



WHAT IS ISCED?

- ❑ International **S**tandard **C**lassification of **E**ducation (ISCED)
- ❑ **F**RAMWORK to facilitate comparisons of education statistics across countries
- ❑ **M**ETHODOLOGY for translating national educational programmes and related qualifications into an international comparable set of categories
- ❑ A product of international agreement and adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO Member States
- ❑ Maintained by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

WHAT ISCED IS NOT:

- ❑ A model for the ideal education system
- ❑ A method for measuring the quality of the education programmes
- ❑ Ideal model for the provision of education statistics at the national level

HOW ISCED WORKS?

- ISCED 2011 rests on three components:
 - I. Internationally agreed concepts and definitions;
 - II. The classification systems; and
 - III. ISCED mappings of education programmes and related qualifications in countries worldwide.

DEFINITIONS

- ▣ ISCED classifies education programmes
- ▣ An **education programme** is a coherent set or sequence of educational activities designed and organized to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period of time.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF ISCED 2011

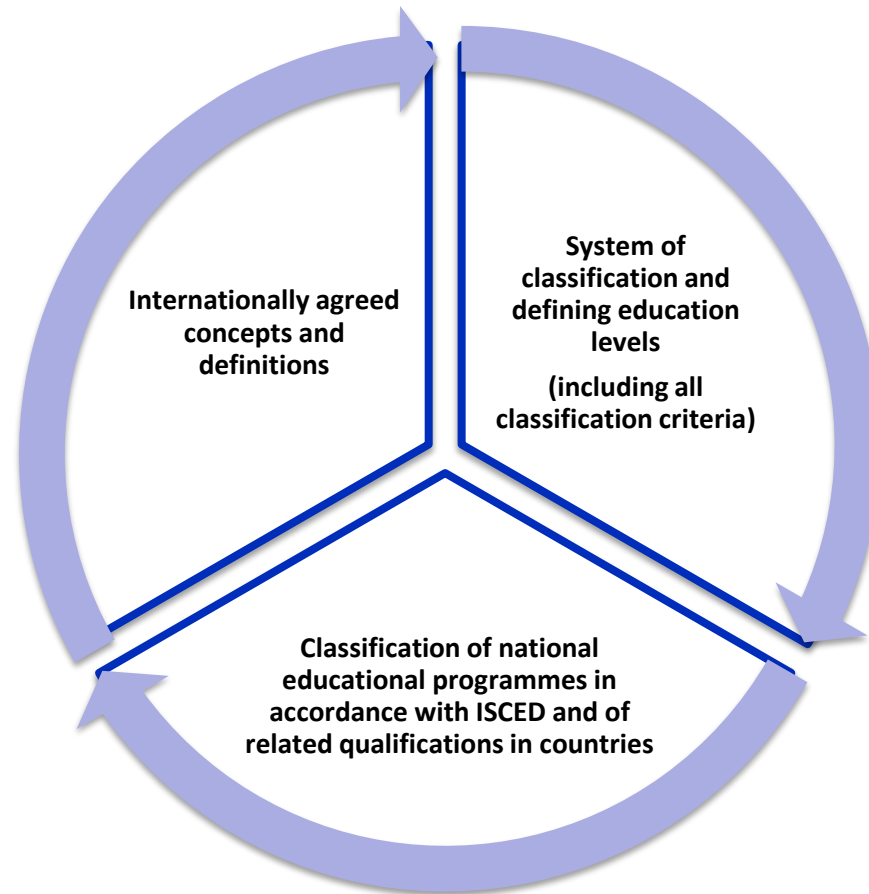
Levels

“ The notion of ‘levels’ of education is represented by an ordered set, grouping of education programmes in relation to gradations of learning experiences, as well as the knowledge, skills and competencies which each programme is designed to impart. The ISCED level reflects the degree of complexity and specialisation of the content of an education programme, from foundational to complex ”

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF ISCED 2011

ISCED 1997	ISCED 2011
0 Pre-primary (designed for children aged 3 years and above)	0 Early childhood education 01 Early childhood educational development (designed for children aged under 3 years) 02 Pre-primary (designed for children aged 3 years and above)
1 Primary (or 1st stage of basic education)	1 Primary
2 Lower secondary (or 2nd stage of basic education)	2 Lower secondary
3 Upper secondary	3 Upper secondary
4 Post-secondary non-tertiary	4 Post-secondary non-tertiary
5 First stage of tertiary	5 Short cycle tertiary 6 Bachelor's or equivalent level 7 Master's or equivalent level
6 Second stage of tertiary	8 Doctoral or equivalent level

Components of ISCED



Coverage and restrictions of ISCED

Coverage: formal and non-formal education

- ▣ **Formal education** is defined as institutionalized, deliberate, planned education through public organizations and recognised private bodies, and constitute the formal education system of a country.
- ▣ **Non-formal education** is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning of individuals.

Restrictions: informal education

Non-formal education

... it does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway structure; it may be short in duration and/or low-intensity; and it is typically provided in the form of short courses, workshops...

... non-formal education can cover programmes contributing to eradication of adult and youth illiteracy and education for out-of-school children, as well as programmes on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development. It can include training in a workplace to improve or adapt existing qualifications and skills, training for unemployed or inactive persons...

Informal education

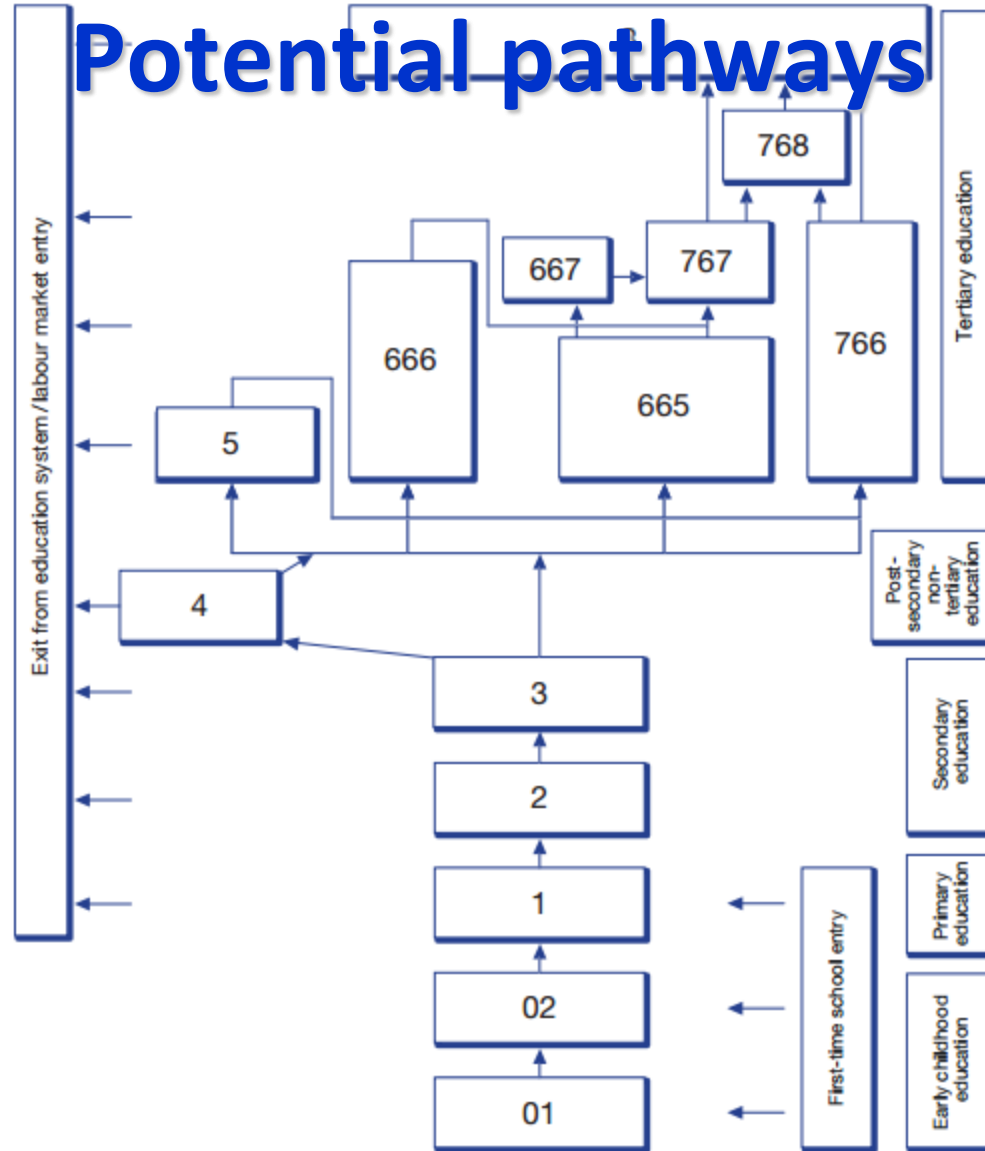
Informal learning is defined as a forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate but are not institutionalised. It is consequently less organized and structured than either formal or non-formal education.

Informal learning may include learning activities that occur in the family, workplace, local community and daily life, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially-directed basis.

Classification criteria

- ❑ Age of enrolment
- ❑ Typical duration. The minimum duration
- ❑ Qualifications awarded upon completion of the programme
- ❑ Qualifications of teachers/ instructors
- ❑ Entry requirements
- ❑ Completion of the ISCED level
- ❑ Access to the higher level of education
- ❑ Programme orientation

Figure 2. ISCED 2011 potential educational pathways



Classification by orientation

General programmes

Technical and
vocational
programmes

ISCED level 0

Two categories exist:

Programmes of Early Childhood Development

- an educational component is targeted at children aged 0 to 2 years
- learning environment is visually stimulating and language-rich focuses on mastering the rhetoric and its use for meaningful communication
- there are opportunities for active play to develop coordination and motor skills among children
- **Programmes offering child care only are not included**

ISCED level 0

Pre-school education

an educational component is designed for children from age 3 years

- ▣ improving oral communication and social skills
- ▣ developing logical thinking and the ability to argue
- ▣ introduced to alphabetical and mathematical concepts
- ▣ physical exercise through games are used as learning opportunities to promote social interactions with peers

ISCED level 1

Generally focused on teaching fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics and establishing a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge

- ❑ The enrollment age is usually not below 5 years old nor above 7 years old.
- ❑ This level typically lasts six years, although, if the primary education is part of the “basic education”, ISCED level 1 includes only its first stage.
- ❑ The beginning of the systematic learning of reading, writing and arithmetic
- ❑ The beginning of learning often coincides with the beginning of compulsory education

ISCED level 2

Aimed at the completion of education, and to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development

- ❑ The beginning of teaching the subjects with the participation of teachers with specialised knowledge
- ❑ Begins after 4-7 years of ISCED level 1 education
- ❑ Usually ends after 9 years from the start of the ISCED level 1
- ❑ Often coincides with the end of compulsory education

ISCED level 3

More specialized than ISCED level 2 (both students and teachers)

- Enrolment requires successful completion of the ISCED level 2
- Usually starts after 9 years from the completion of the ISCED level 1
- The enrolment age is 15 or 16 years

ISCED level 4

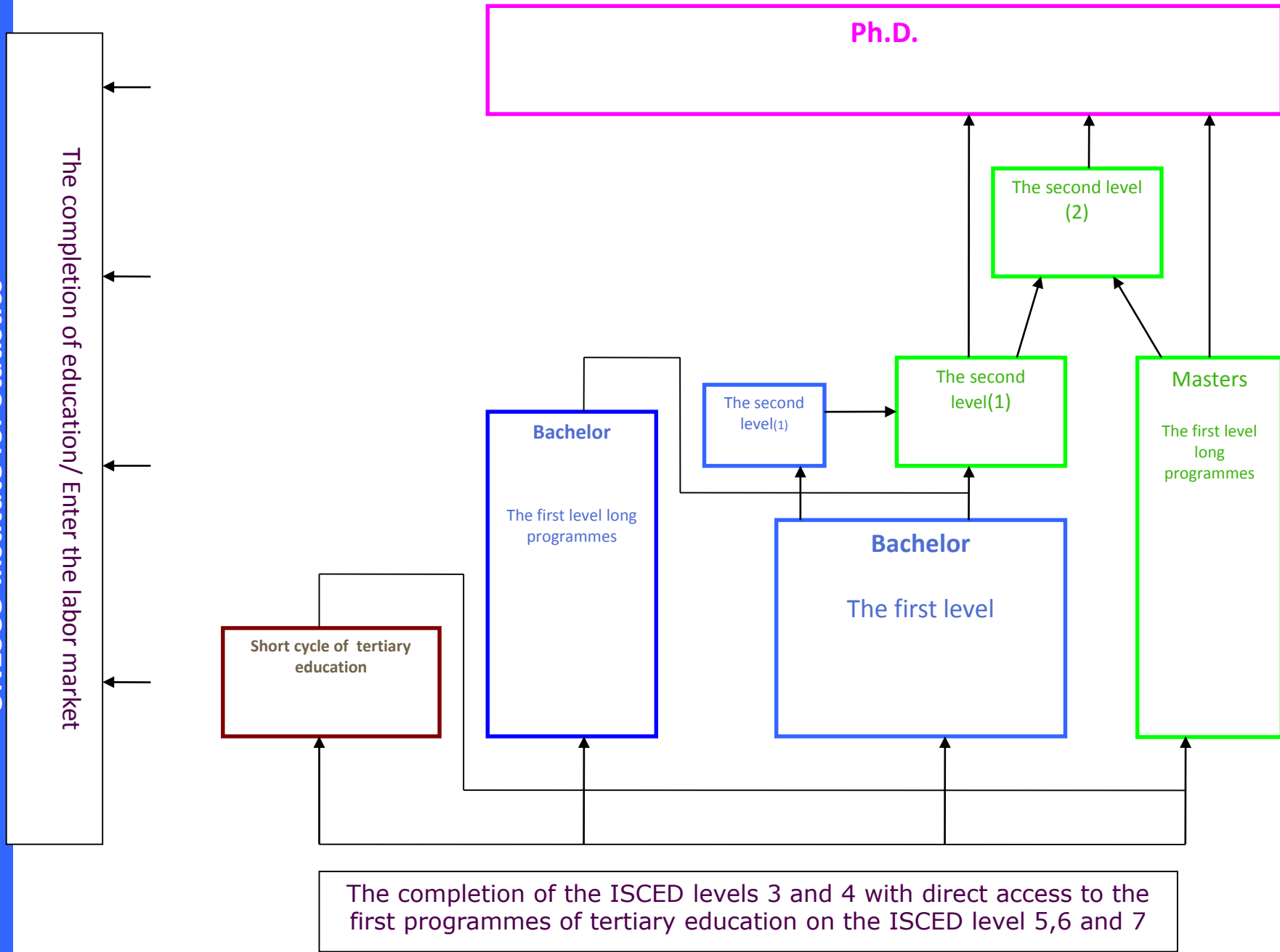
Covers programmes that are internationally considered to be between the second phase of the secondary education and post-secondary education:

- ❑ Often slightly more difficult than ISCED level 3
- ❑ Students are usually older than at the ISCED level 3
- ❑ This level typically lasts from 6 months to 2 years
- ❑ Enrolment requires successful completion of the ISCED level 3
- ❑ Most popular programmes: preparing students for tertiary education entrance examinations; “second chance education”; preparing for labour market

ISCED level 5-8

Tertiary education:

- Based on secondary education, organizing educational activity in specialized areas of education
- Aimed at education at higher levels of complexity and specialization
- Includes academic education and deeper vocational education
- Programme content is deeper and more complicated than at the lower ISCED levels



ISCED levels 5

Short cycles of tertiary education:

- This level lasts at least 2 years
- They are often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge and development of skills and competences
- They are usually associated with the practice, vocational training and the training of students to enter the labour market
- May open the ways to other tertiary education programmes
- Include academic tertiary education programmes, which are lower than bachelor and equal to bachelor programmes

ISCED level 6

Bachelor's or equivalent level:

- ❑ This level typically lasts 3-4 years
- ❑ Also intended to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies,
- ❑ Usually they are typically theoretically-based but may include practical components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice.
- ❑ Traditionally offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions.

ISCED level 6

- Instruction at this level often takes the form of lectures by staff who are typically required to have attained ISCED levels 7 or 8 or have achieved experience as a senior professional in the field of work.
- Programmes at this level do not necessarily involve the completion of a research project or thesis, but if they do, it is less advanced, less independent or is undertaken with more guidance than those at ISCED level 7 or 8.

ISCED level 7

Masters programmes or equivalent level

- ❑ Bachelor typically required for entry
- ❑ often designed to deliver to participants advanced academic and / or professional knowledge, develop skills and competencies
- ❑ may have a substantial research component but do not yet lead to the award of a doctoral qualification.
- ❑ usually, programmes at this level are theoretically-based but may include practical components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice.
- ❑ Traditionally offered by universities and other tertiary educational institutions

ISCED level 7

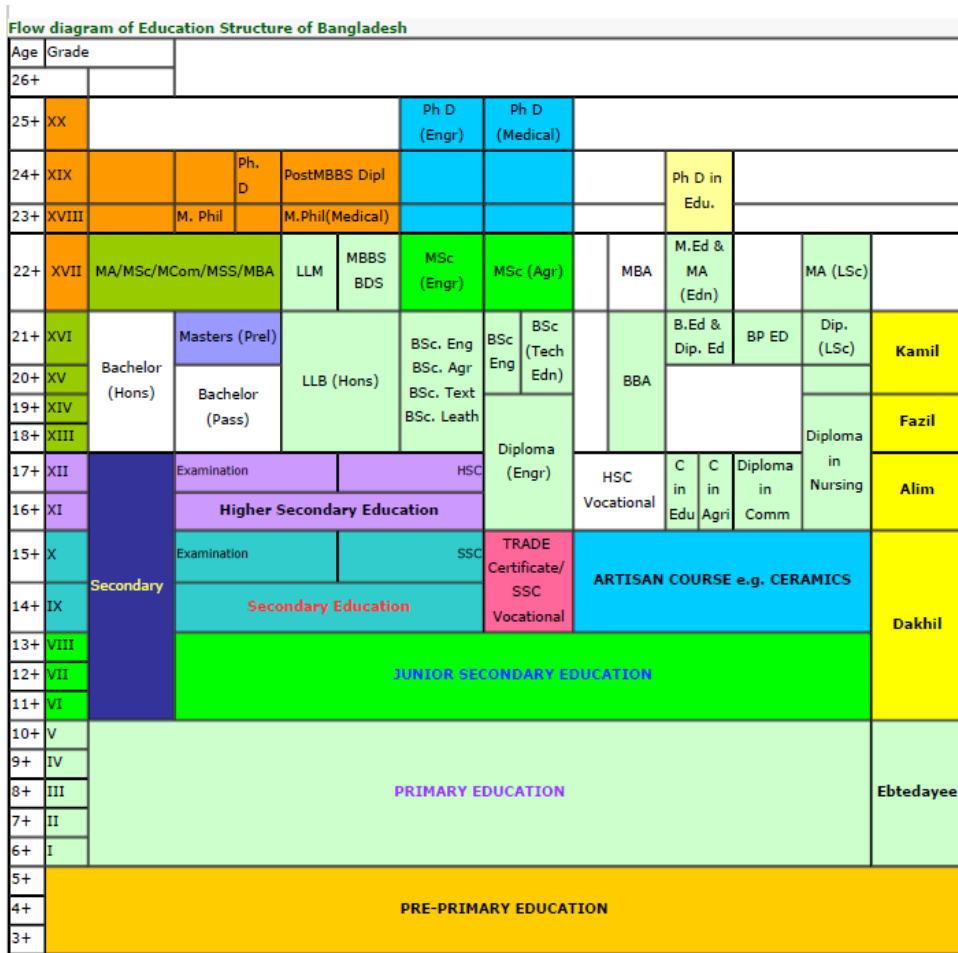
- Instruction at this level often takes the form of lectures by staff who are typically required to have attained ISCED levels 7 or 8
- Programmes at this level may involve the completion of a research project or thesis that is more advanced than those expected at ISCED level 6 and less advanced than those expected at ISCED level 8
- ISCED level 7 programmes have a significantly more complex content than programmes at ISCED level 6 and are usually more specialised.

ISCED level 8

doctoral or equivalent level:

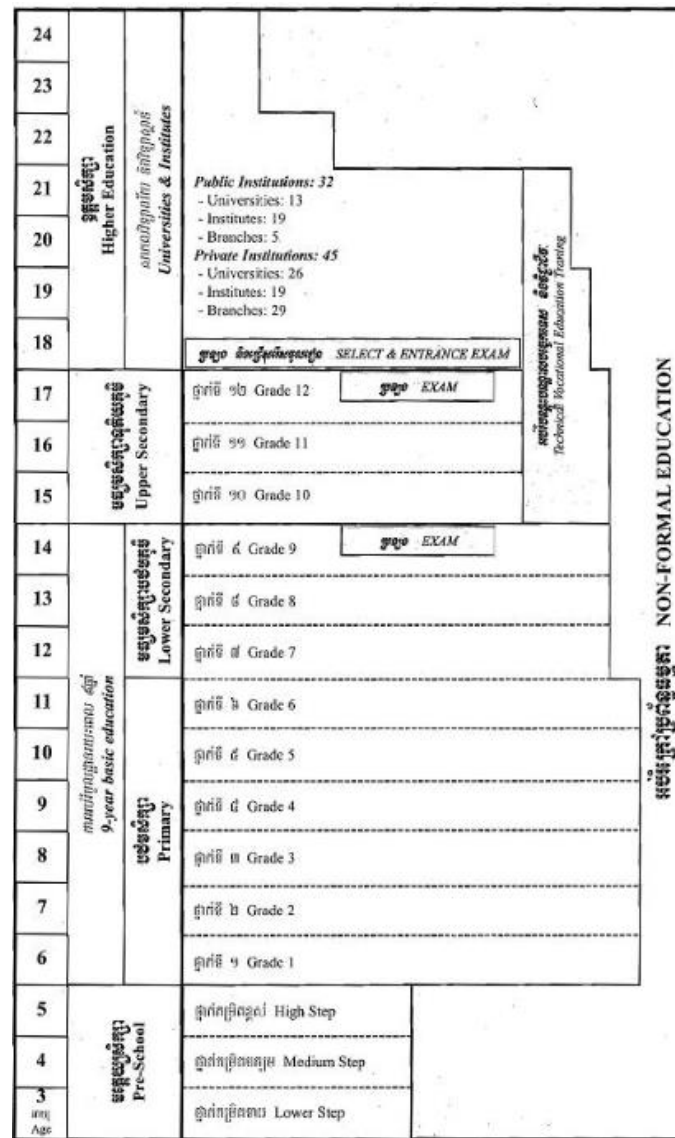
- Programmes usually last at least 3 years
- designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification
- devoted to advanced study and independent research
- concludes with the submission and defence of a thesis, dissertation or equivalent written work of publishable quality, representing a significant contribution to knowledge in the respective field of study.
- only offered offered by universities and other tertiary educational institutions focused on research

The transformation of data collected at the national level...



Country education system A

Country education system B



NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Questions and Comments

