

Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation, Religion, King



Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

Policy Guidelines

For

New Generation Schools

For Basic Education in Cambodia



September 2016

Preface

Building an education system of high quality is a key factor to ensure high living standards for any country. All countries require human resources of high competency, knowledge, and expertise in order to develop both the economy as well as the overall strength of society.

In order to address the needs highlighted above, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport has produced the present policy regarding the development of New Generation Schools with the goal of improving educational quality throughout the entire education system. At the present time, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport is currently rolling out the implementation of New Generation Schools as a continuation of Child Friendly School programming but at a much higher standard.

The New Generation School Policy will provide guidance to educators and students to better understand new methods of learning such as problem and constructivist-based learning. Through such methodologies, New Generation Schools will greatly enhance the presence of educational innovation throughout the school system. Other activities involving project work, subject clubs, and ICT in education will also greatly promote educational innovation. Finally, these guidelines will enable the Ministry and its development partners to make investments in selected schools in a way that achieves 'maximal' standards of learning for Cambodia's children and youth. The New Generation School idea will, therefore, empower the Kingdom's education system to effectively compete with other education systems in the ASEAN region where there is an urgent need for a work force with 21st Century skills. This refers above all to increased skill levels in the STEM subjects (i.e., Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport would like to express its deep thanks to all stakeholders for their contributions to making the New Generation School Policy possible. This policy will provide a clear pathway for the more effective development of human resources to address the needs of the 21st Century.

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport hopes that all relevant institutions, development partners, and the national and international community will strongly support the successful implementation of New Generation Schools.

Phnom Penh, On __ day of _____ 2016

Minister

Ministry of Education, Youth, & Sport

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present policy has been developed to provide guidance to educators and administrators at all levels regarding the implementation of *New Generation Schools* (NGS) throughout the Kingdom. The establishment of New Generation Schools is now an official policy goal of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) as per the new Education Reform framework promulgated by Ministry. Within the Education Reform framework, New Generation School activities are enumerated as Point 14. This policy is consistent with and further supports the National Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the National Education Law, Millennial Goals, the National Development Strategic Plan, and the Rectangular Strategy of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

As the Kingdom enters the 21st Century, its education system faces many challenges. These challenges come from many sources including the integration of all ASEAN member states, increased economic competition, rapid penetration of Cambodian society by technology, increasing urbanization, the expansion of private schools, and a large youth population who require intensive guidance in today's world of competing choices and ideas. New Generation Schools can help the Kingdom address these challenges by raising the quality of human resources in a sustainable way.

MoEYS places a very high priority on improving the *quality of education* at both primary and secondary school level to meet the challenges elaborated above. Over the years, there have been some successes in this area but much more needs to be done. Given that the Kingdom has limited resources, spreading these resources across the entire country too thinly defeats the goal of increasing educational quality. What is needed is a *second development track* that will allow the government to continue to address the most basic needs of all schools while allowing for intensive and simultaneous investment in other schools to achieve *maximal* educational learning standards. New Generation Schools have been created to meet this need.

The establishment of New Generation Schools is a continuation of Child Friendly School development efforts and shows their continuing evolution. Such schools follow precedents in other countries where some public schools receive greater autonomy from the state to stimulate educational innovation. This speaks especially to the *Charter School Movement*. Such schools have helped restore a high measure of good governance and greatly enhanced the reputation of public schools in the areas where they have been tried. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport has studied these precedents very carefully and with special adaptations to the Cambodian context, the Ministry believes that they can work effectively in the Kingdom as well.

2. VISION

New Generation Schools will lead to the emergence of a new administrative framework that ensures the necessary conditions needed for successful educational investment.

3. GOAL OF NEW GENERATION SCHOOLS

Create a new development track within the public education system that will lead to the creation of *autonomous public schools*, which receive high investment linked to new standards of accountability and governance as well as professional standards for 21st Century learning.

4. OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives for New Generation School Policy Guidelines include the following:

- 4.1** Create autonomous public schools governed by strict rules of performance accountability linked to high investment.
- 4.2** Create new governance boards that will hold schools accountable for their performance.
- 4.3** Create an *accreditation system* that will facilitate Oversight Board decision-making about a school's adherence to New Generation School core principles.
- 4.4** Provide new institutional freedoms (i.e., operational autonomy) to drive innovation in the way educational services are formulated and delivered.
- 4.5** Enable the education system to be more efficient and socially equitable with respect to the teaching and learning process by instituting a *rationalized resource allocation system* that enhances educational services.
- 4.6** Improve teaching standards through new approaches that include competitive teacher recruitment; performance-based incentives; intensive capacity-building in educational technology; STEM and problem-based learning methodologies; and explicit teacher career paths linked to professional development opportunities (e.g., teacher scholarships for future study).
- 4.7** Expand educational services for Cambodian youth that include career counseling services, differentiated learning channels (e.g., project work, subject clubs), mobile learning, and life skills education.

5. KEY STRATEGIES

In order to achieve the above goals and objectives, the following important strategies will be utilized:

5.1 Rigorous School Selection

- Engage in rigorous selection of schools
- Select schools with the highest potential to utilize high investment effectively.

5.2 Partnerships

MoEYS will build strong partnerships with Non-state Actors (NSAs) and the Private Sector to assist Ministry in implementation and resourcing of New Generation Schools.

5.3 School Accountability

Strengthen accountability of school managers by using multiple strategies including:

- Recruitment of school managers competitively using incentives linked to high performance
- Creation of a new *National Oversight Board* that strictly enforces criteria for the New Generation School designation
- Withdrawal of NGS accreditation and investment in cases where schools no longer meet agreed criteria.

5.4 Direct Control of New Generation Schools from National Level

- Oversee independent public schools designated as New Generation Schools directly from national level using a National Oversight Board created by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (as noted in Section 4.3 above).
- Devolve central control to Local Oversight Boards in later years when the number of New Generation Schools increases.

5.5 Teacher Incentives:

Provide special incentives for teachers to improve performance strategically as well as abolish current practices of private tutoring to one's own students that undermine standards of professionalism and dignity among teachers.

5.6 Operational Autonomy linked with Innovation

- Allow schools to work outside of the policy framework applied to normal schools so long as they can justify how proposed actions will promote new innovation to increase educational quality, including the right to undertake outside recruitment of teachers from other schools.
- Modify the curriculum, use technology to increase educational efficiencies such as electronic lesson plans, m-Learning, etc., and other forms of educational innovation, as well as putting in place provisions for operational autonomy that will be contingent on evidence of innovation.

5.7 Intensive Use of Technology to Drive Innovation:

Use technology as a key element in New Generation Schools that includes not only access to hardware but also student usage of new educational software that will enhance teaching, learning, and assessment (e.g., Literatu, 3D Classroom, etc).

5.8 Youth Empowerment

Enable a greater role for students in managing new facilities and services including new service provisions for *Youth Centers* within the school that provide space for students to plan special activities, utilize special investment funds provided by the school, and receive counseling services.

5.9 Increased Hours of Teaching and Learning

- Increase the number of hours of instruction for students to 34 hours per week for primary schools and 40 hours per week for secondary schools.
- Ensure that teachers adhere to official guidelines requiring them to teach full-time (18 hours per week for lower secondary school teachers and 16 hours per week for upper secondary school teachers).

5.10 Introduction of Subject Themes

Require using increased hours of instruction time to provide access to special subject themes that may focus on the STEM subjects, foreign languages, or other areas of interest to the local community.

5.11 Social Equity Fund

- Require meeting the needs of the poorest members of the community by incentivizing outreach to the poor
- Create a *Social Equity Fund* that will enable schools to access extra funds to help the poor.
- Abolish all unofficial fees that most affect the poor.

5.12 School in a School Model

- Use the strategy of a ‘School in a School’ wherein one creates a new structure within an existing school to address systemic challenges
- Require the competitive selection of managers and teachers, selective student identification (e.g., examinations), setting new curricula, and other measures that are inherent in the New Generation School model.

5.13 Reduced Pupil Teacher Ratios:

Allow schools to reduce the number of students in classrooms to increase individualized learning activities.

5.14 Changing Individual Mind Sets:

Change the behaviors of all school-level stakeholders including students, parents, administrators, and teachers to meet the needs of 21st Century learning.

5.15 Modernizing Learning Environments:

Use new innovative designs in educational architecture to transform classrooms and other school facilities to align with 21st Century standards.

6. ACTION PLAN

To achieve the above strategies, the following activities should be adhered to:

6.1 Establishment of Mechanism

- Create *National and Subnational Oversight Boards* for coordination of New Generation Schools
- Create an *Evaluation and Accrediting Sub-committee* that makes recommendations to the Board to accredit New Generation Schools

6.2 Formulation of Regulation

- National Oversight Board for New Generation Schools is chaired by the Minister of Education, Youth, & Sport.
- The National Oversight Board must include a combination of relevant department representatives, development partners, and private sector representatives.
- Subnational Boards are led by the Director of the Provincial Office of Education, Youth, and Sport and must include a combination of relevant department representatives, development partners, and private sector representatives.
- After a time of proliferation and increasing experience in the administration of New Generation Schools, Subnational Boards will become more active in their responsibilities at which time the National Oversight Board will start to devolve its authority to sub-national structures.
- New Generation Schools will report directly to the Oversight Board, which will afford them a high degree of autonomy and freedom in the way that they are administered.
- New Generation School operating structures will follow detailed operational guidelines as laid out in the *Operational Policy Guidelines for New Generation Schools*.

6.3 Financial Support

- New Generation Schools may be resourced through multiple channels including direct government financing, development partners, international organizations, non-government organizations, as well as private organizations and foundations.
- New Generation schools may negotiate direct parental contributions of a voluntary nature after three years of operation on the condition that they maintain their accreditation.
- MoEYS will set up a *Social Equity Fund* to ensure that negotiations with parents for contributions do not impact negatively on poor families.
- New Generation Schools may also generate their own income through canteen rental, endowment funds, and other forms of local income generation to ensure sustainability.
- New Generation Schools will prepare an *Investment Plan* each year to maintain and improve standards using a standardized form as provided in the *Operational Policy Guidelines for New Generation Schools*.

6.4 Human Resource Training

- To ensure effective implementation of New Generation Schools, MoEYS will train NGS personnel using training materials provided for in the *Operational Policy Guidelines for New Generation Schools*.
- These training materials will be implemented through a combination of national staff, and trainers from outside institutions, development partners, and civil society.

6.5 Project Implementation Process

- Each year, New Generation Schools will prepare *Investment Plans* using a standardized template that enables them to meet accreditation criteria and process indicators indicated in the *Operational Policy Guidelines for New Generation Schools*.
- Oversight Boards will ensure that New Generation Schools are staffed with highly competent managers and teachers who are competitively recruited and vetted each year by the Oversight Board for contract renewal at a New Generation School.
- Approved Investment Plans will be resourced using the funding channels outlined in Section 6.3 above.

7. MONITORING & EVALUATION

The New Generation School implementation framework will carry out monitoring and evaluation using two strategies. The first strategy will focus on ‘process’ indicators that will assist New Generation Schools to make continuous improvements in educational services across multiple areas including teaching and learning environments, library services, counseling services, science and ICT labs, and other areas. The purpose of the assessment of process indicators is ‘formative’ in nature and will be implemented using standardized tools indicated in the *Operational Policy Guidelines for New Generation Schools*. The second strategy for monitoring and evaluation will entail an assessment of compliance with ‘Accreditation Criteria’ that are laid out in the *Operational Policy Guidelines for New Generation Schools*. Accreditation must occur once each year and will result in New Generation Schools receiving a *Certificate of Accreditation*. This certification will enable New Generation Schools to access special sources of funding so that they can achieve the highest educational standards possible. If schools lose their accreditation, they will return to being a normal school and will lose access to special funds and other privileges accorded to New Generation Schools (e.g., autonomous status).

8. CONCLUSION

The New Generation School model will create the conditions for success needed to ensure effective educational investment in many schools. The Accreditation System associated with New Generation Schools guarantees high standards of governance (transparency, accountability, and participation) and will create a magnet for new investment in education that might not ordinarily have been available due to variable conditions of educational governance in the public sector. It is expected that much of this investment will come from the private sector because the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport to create New Generation Schools will attract investors to a degree much higher than in the past.