

**Joint Government-Development Partners  
Cambodia Education Sector Review**

Aide Memoire

April 2015

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2014, Cambodia received a GPE Catalytic Fund Grant of US \$38.5 million. The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS), the World Bank and Education Sector Development Partners discussed and re-launched the Joint Annual Sector Review mission<sup>1</sup> from 16 March–03 April 2015 to contribute with analytical work to a comprehensive review of sectoral and sub-sectoral performance. The Joint Review coincided with a review of the Second Education Sector Support Project (SESSP) and the 24-26 March 2015 Education Congress<sup>2</sup>.

The Joint Review Mission expresses its sincere appreciation for the guidance and the valuable assistance extended by H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education Youth and Sport, H.E. Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State and Project Director SESSP, H.E. Thong Borann, Director General, Administration and Finance and Project Manager SESSP, as well as the members of PMC Secretariat and MoEYS leaders, managers and officials for their assistance.

The findings and recommendations of the Joint Mission, as reflected in this Aide Memoire, were discussed with MoEYS in on 03 April 2015, chaired by H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport. In acknowledging the value of all contributions, the Mission expresses its appreciation of the discussions with MoEYS specialists, Provinces, Districts and school communities during field visits. The Mission is pleased to acknowledge receipt of an advance copy of the Activities Report covering the period July 2014 to December 2014, the power point presentations, and the draft 2015 Education Congress Report.

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<sup>1</sup> The **Development Partners participating in the Joint Review Mission** were:

Anne Lemaistre (ESWG Chair, UNESCO), Simeth Beng (World Bank, Mission Leader), Aya Kibesaki (GPE, Cambodia Country Lead), Livia Barton (GPE, Communication Officer), Erica Boak (UNICEF, Chief of Education), Masahiro Kato (UNICEF, Education Specialist), Huot Chea (UNICEF, Education Officer), Channra Chum (UNICEF, Education Specialist), Solin Chan (UNICEF, Education Officer), Santosh Khatri (UNESCO, Programme Officer), Soth Nimol (UNESCO, Programme Officer), Corinne Boulet, (EU, Attache Social Sectors), Noeun Bou (EU, Program Officer), Sophea Mar (ADB, Education Specialist), Magnus Saemundsson (SIDA, Senior Education Advisor), In Samrithy (Embassy of Sweden, Programme Officer), Pich Thyda (JICA), Heng Sieng (USAID), Seo Dong Shin (KOICA), Prateek Tandon (WB, Senior Economist), Tsuyoshi Fukao (WB, Education Specialist), Sreng Sok (WB, Procurement Specialist), Sokbunthoeun So (WB, Public Sector Specialist), Sophear Khiev (WB, Financial Management Analyst), Latharo Lor (WB, Procurement Specialist), Ravan Chieap (WB, Program Assistant), Rajiv Agarwal (WB, Facility Consultant), Sandra Beemer (WB, Consultant), Makerthy Tep (WB, Safeguard Consultant), Chin Chanveasna (Director, NGO Education Partnership).

<sup>2</sup> The Education, Youth and Sport Performance in the Academic Year 2013-2014 and Goals for the Academic Year 2014-2015. [Education Congress](#) 24-25-26 March 2015.

	<i>Page</i>	
<b>1</b>	<b>SECTOR REVIEWS</b>	
1.1	Education Strategic Plan Management	5
1.2	Public Financial Management Review	11
<b>2</b>	<b>SUB-SECTOR REVIEWS</b>	
2.1	Early Childhood Care and Education	13
2.2	Primary Education	16
2.3	Secondary Education	18
2.4	Technical and Employability Education	23
2.5	Non-Formal Education	25
2.6	Higher Education	27

Annex 1: SESSP Project Review

Annex 2: ECE enrolment and trends analysis

Annex 3: Higher Education Reform Action Plan 2015-2018

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AM</b>	Aide Memoire
<b>AOP</b>	Annual Operation Plan
<b>CBI</b>	Core Benchmark Indicators
<b>CDMP</b>	Capacity Development Master Plan
<b>CFS</b>	Child Friendly School
<b>CLC</b>	Community Learning Centre
<b>CPS</b>	Community Pre-School
<b>CSES</b>	Cambodia Social and Economic Survey
<b>DGHE</b>	Directorate General Higher Education
<b>D&amp;D</b>	Decentralization and Deconcentration
<b>DGY</b>	Director-General Youth
<b>DHE</b>	Department of Higher Education
<b>DOE</b>	District Office of Education
<b>DPs</b>	Development Partners
<b>DTMT</b>	District Training and Monitoring Team
<b>ECCD</b>	Early Childhood Care and Development
<b>ECCE</b>	Early Childhood Care and Education
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>EGMA</b>	Early Grade Math Assessment
<b>EGRA</b>	Early Grade Reading Assessment
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ESP</b>	Education Strategic Plan (2014-2018)
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FMIS</b>	Financial Management Information System
<b>GER</b>	Gross Enrolment Rate
<b>GSED</b>	General Secondary Education Department
<b>GTHS</b>	General and Technical High School
<b>HBP</b>	Home-Based Parenting
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HRMIS</b>	Human Resources Management Information
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>JMI</b>	Joint Monitoring Indicators
<b>JTWG</b>	Joint Technical Working Group
<b>LS</b>	Lower Secondary (Grades 7-9)
<b>LSSC</b>	Local School Support Committee
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation

<b>MAP</b>	Ministry Action Plan
<b>MoEYS</b>	Ministry of Education Youth and Sport
<b>MoI</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MoLVT</b>	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training
<b>NCDD</b>	National Committee for Democratic Development
<b>NFE</b>	Non Formal Education
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organization
<b>NIE</b>	National Institute of Education
<b>NP-SNDD</b>	National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development
<b>PB</b>	Program Budget
<b>PCR</b>	Primary Completion Rate
<b>PEC</b>	Provincial Education Congress
<b>PESP</b>	Provincial Education Strategic Plan
<b>PFMR</b>	Public Finance Management Reform
<b>PISA</b>	Program for International Student Assessment
<b>POE</b>	Provincial Office of Education
<b>PTTC</b>	Provincial Teacher Training College
<b>RBB</b>	Results Based Budget
<b>RBM</b>	Results Based Management
<b>RTTC</b>	Regional Teacher Training College
<b>RUPP</b>	Royal University of Phnom Penh
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Agency
<b>SNA</b>	Sub-National Administration
<b>SOB</b>	School Operation Budget
<b>STEAM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
<b>SY</b>	School Year
<b>TIMSS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>TPAP</b>	Teacher Policy Action Plan
<b>TTC</b>	Teacher Training College
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Education Science Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Education Fund
<b>US</b>	Upper Secondary (Grades 10-12)
<b>VoD</b>	Vocational Orientation Department
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Program

## **1. SECTOR REVIEW**

### **1.1 Education Strategic Plan Management**

#### **A. Key Achievements**

1. The ESP has a strong focus on establishing and strengthening Results Based Management (RBM) and Results Based Budgeting systems (RBB). Many of these reforms are covered under the finance management review but the key principles of managing sector resources more effectively also relate to two important areas of strategic sector management.

#### **A1. Personnel Management:**

2. Effective management of personnel is critical for the education sector, and ESP initiatives to date have been very positive, (a) salary reform (increase in salaries and payments through bank accounts), (b) teacher demand and supply (adoption of the Teacher Policy Action Plan), (c) staff performance appraisal and enhancing education management staff (the introduction of staffing norms, career path development and capacity development). Career paths and salary scales could include duty-based allowances, for duties such as library management and sports activities.

#### **A2. Program Management**

3. Program Management structures from Ministry to Provincial Offices of Education, to Districts and to school level function effectively, with increased accountability in planning and implementation. MoEYS adoption of a sub-sectoral approach to program planning and reporting has been a positive step. Sub-sector committees are being set up and will be chaired by high level leadership in order to strengthen accountability across each sub-sector. Upgrading the Department of Planning to Directorate-level should strengthen its position in the co-ordination role.

#### **A3. Monitoring and Evaluation, and consultation:**

4. The overall ESP monitoring framework appears robust. EMIS statistical returns are increasingly comprehensive and timely, providing a sound basis for analysis and informed decisions. DTMT monitoring at school level informs and directs both planning and support activities. . The sector has recognised the importance of establishing a hierarchy for indicators to clarify its purpose (CBIs and JMIs). Some indicators are both output based, highlighting the level of population receiving education services in full, and focused at

sub-national levels in accordance with accountability structures. Overall, a very strong approach.

- **The Annual National Education Congress:** The annual congress helps to reaffirm sector commitments and recognise the contributions of stakeholders at all levels throughout the system. It also provides participants with the opportunity to reflect upon, and contribute to, the process of assessing sector and programme performance, identifying challenges and informing policy and strategy dialogue.. The comparatively recent establishment of the annual education retreat has assisted MoEYS in focussing more directly on policy dialogue and engagement.
- **The Annual Education Retreat** – Provides an opportunity for MoEYS leadership and key partners to reflect on progress made in the education sector, key challenges and emerging opportunities, and reach agreement on key priorities for the next year. It provides a critical forum for policy dialogue and engagement.
- **The Joint Technical Working Group in Education (JTWG-Ed)** is a long-established body for aid effectiveness and partnership through greater alignment and the harmonisation of development partner support to the ESP and AOPs. Support has been provided to strengthen **Provincial Joint Technical Working Groups (P-JTWGs)** and prepare Provinces and Districts for their increased roles and responsibilities under Cambodia’s Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D) policy.

#### A4. Key indicators

##### 5. Core Breakthrough Indicators

- **The Percentage of five year old children in all aspects of ECE has** shown positive progress, increasing from 56.5% to 61.4%. Initial progress has been slow but is anticipated to increase next year. Increasing the number of new teachers and securing sufficient investment budget remain a critical issue. Greater attention may be required to distinguish between formal pre-schooling and community-based or home-based forms of early childhood education and address the gaps in quality and learning outcomes among them.
- **Number of provinces achieving a Lower Secondary Completion Rate of at least 40%** has shown positive progress, increasing from 7 to 9. However, projections indicate limited improvements in the next three years followed by a potential decline resulting from the falling primary completion rates.
- **Youth Literacy rates (15-24)** have shown positive progress increasing from 91.5% to 93.0% (2013). However, continued improvements are at risk due to the fall in primary completion rates which are a major contributor to youth literacy rates.

- **Adult Literacy rates (15-45)** have increased from 77.6% (2008) to 80.0% (2013). However, the target of 90.5% appears ambitious as improvements occur slowly in this older age band.
- **The Number of Higher Education lecturers holding a Master Degree** has shown very positive progress increasing from 6,311 to 7,117. It can be anticipated that the 2017-18 target will be surpassed.
- **The Number of Higher Education lecturers holding a PhD** has increase from 808 to 830. Greater increases can be anticipated in future years as there are currently 1,181 students studying for PhD, though only 17 are in areas of science, natural science and medicine.
- **Share of Program Budget to total MoEYS budget** increased from 13.7% (2013) to 21.0%. A major increase is anticipated when salaries and emoluments graduate over to the PB budget.

## 6. Joint Monitoring Indicators

- **The JTWG** has met every quarter and two education retreats have been held.
- In respect to teacher deployment and terms and conditions: the **Teacher Policy Action Plan** has been adopted. Primary staff performance appraisals have been piloted in 2014. New primary staffing norms are to be piloted in 5 Provinces in 2014-15.
- **12 new Lower Secondary Schools** have been established in previously under-served communes.
- **A total of 59,971 government scholarships** to Lower Secondary students were provided, exceeding the target of 55,000.
- **The targets for textbook** ratios in grades 1-3 and 4-6 have effectively been met; the textbook ratio in grades 7-9 has fallen in line with a revised target.

## B. Remaining challenges

### B1. Personnel Management

7. **Staff recruitment:** The staff replenishment rate of 4.3% is still comparatively low and equivalent on average to 23 years of service. Priority areas for expansion such as ECE may require significant increases on their present recruitment rates if ESP enrolment targets in this subsector are to be achieved.

8. **Teacher deployment:** Considerable disparities in teacher distribution at school level, especially between urban, rural and disadvantaged areas persist. This represents the most critical impediment to the efficient, effective and equitable provision of education services.
9. **Regulations governing requests for new teachers:** The target for students-teacher ratio (i.e. 35 at primary level) is often considered to be the maximum class size. To approach a national primary target of student-teacher ratio of 35, the protocol for splitting the class in two should be based upon a maximum class size of 46 and a minimum class size of 23.

## **B2. Programme Management**

10. **Prioritising planned activities:** Sub-sector action plan activities are not presented in a prioritised framework. If at some point during the year either budget allocations or staff time and capacity are found to fall short of requirements, priority actions may not be completed.
11. **Reforming incremental budget planning at subnational levels:** Provincial and district planning and budgeting appears to be predominately incremental upon previous years. Budget revisions are often applied through reductions across all activities. This is less responsive to need or priority at lower sub-national levels. There also appears to be limited scope for districts and provinces to share experiences on budget planning.

## **B3. Monitoring and evaluation, and consultation**

12. **Overlap between indicators and reform priorities:** The ESP has a strong focus on establishing and strengthening Results Based Management (RBM) and Results Based Budgeting systems (RBB). Many of these reforms are covered under the finance management review but the key principles of managing sector resources more effectively also relate to two important areas of strategic sector management.
13. **Annual Education Congress:** Synthesising and assessing the feedback and contributions made at the congress is a challenging process.
14. **The Joint Technical Working Group in Education:** Continued efforts to ensure full participation by all external partners is required to ensure this can be achieved effectively.
15. **Budget and Financing:** This will be covered under the PFM section. It is however noted that the Budget Strategic Plan does not presently follow the same format as the ESP.

## **B4. High level Indicators**

### **16. Core Breakthrough Indicator challenges**

- Primary Completion Rate: The fall in **the number of districts attaining a primary completion rate of 80% or more** is a cause for serious concern. The number of districts achieving this has declined sharply from 130 to 104. Projections indicate that this

downward trend will continue unless significant improvements in student promotion rates are achieved. Moreover, **falling performance in this area is likely to have significant negative impacts on both the lower secondary completion rate and the youth literacy rate**<sup>3</sup>.

- **Percentage of Program Budget liquidation** fell from 93.2% to 86.2%. The reasons for this are discussed in the PFMR section. It is anticipated that results for this indicator will change significantly once salaries and emoluments graduate over to PB budgets.

### 17. Joint Monitoring Indicator challenges

- The **Sub-decree on increasing incentives** for teachers in disadvantaged and remote areas has not yet been completed. This is being carried out by the Personnel Department with the Civil Service Ministry
- The **Repetition rate at Primary** level has increased from 4.8% to 5.1% indicating that the enforcement of grade promotion regulations may not be occurring.
- The **Lower Secondary GER** had fallen marginally from 53.6% to 53.3%.
- The **Basic Education Survival rate from grade 1 to 9** has improved from 30.7% to 35.7% but this is due largely to changes in female survival – male survival has fallen.
- Similarly, the **Lower Secondary drop-out** rate has decreased slightly from 21.2% to 21.0% but falls short of the target of 19.0%<sup>4</sup>.
- The "**National Campaign on Grade 9**" is yet to be completed.
- The **curriculum for the Lower Secondary Equivalency programme** has been developed but not piloted.

## C. Conclusion/Recommendations

### C1. Personnel Management

#### 18. For immediate effect in 2015

- **Staff Recruitment:** HRM planning should prioritise expanding and contracting staff requirements and priorities flexibly in each sub-sector

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<sup>3</sup> A technical analysis of Primary Completion Rates has been provided as part of the Sector Performance Monitoring Annex to this paper

<sup>4</sup> See the analysis in the Sector Performance Monitoring Annex

- **Career paths and salary scales:** MoEYS should investigate the possibility of expanding duty allowances
- **Implementation of the TPAP:** Relevant aspects of the plan should be operationalised as soon as possible.
- **Operationalise the ESP indicator monitoring teacher deployment:** ‘Percentage of schools with pupil-teacher ratio 5 points less or more than the defined norm’.
- **Analysis of surplus and shortage of teachers:** Further analysis of teacher supply and demand should be undertaken. Baseline data should be analysed to assess the most appropriate range of PTRs for each sub-sector.
- **Regulations governing requests for new teachers:** Regulations need to be clarified by defining maximum and minimum limits for class sizes at all levels of schooling, and then enforced consistently.

#### **19. For action at the mid-term review**

- **Teacher deployment:** “Percentage of schools with pupil-teacher ratio within 5 points of the defined norm” should be considered as a high level indicator at the next mid-term review.

### **C2. Programme Management**

#### **20. For immediate effect in 2015**

- **Increasing accountability in planning and implementation:** Further strengthen accountability for implementation by including the title of the manager who is accountable for activities in sub-sector action plans.
- **Prioritising planned activities:** Sub sector action plans should be set out in three levels of priority.

#### **21. For action at the mid-term review**

- **The overall monitoring framework for the ESP:** A single and consistent set of high level indicators for the ESP integrated with the eight Ministerial priorities should be established at the next mid-term review.

### **C3. Monitoring and evaluation, and consultation**

#### **22. For immediate effect in 2015**

- **Joint Technical Working Group in Education:** Continued efforts should be made to ensure full participation by all partners.

### **23. For action at the mid-term review**

- **Further high level indicators:** The establishment of further CBIs related to provincial and district levels may provide a useful addition to enhancing provincial (and district) performance assessments within the P-JTWGs.

## **1.2 Public Financial Management Reform**

### **Progress:**

24. There has been good progress made in PFM reform since the Education Congress in 2014. The positive developments include: (i) Budget share of MoEYS has been increased as a portion of the national budget, (ii) Budgeted resources for the education sector have been determined through a more transparent process, (iii) Teacher salaries has been significantly increased and seems to continue this increase in the following year, (iv) Salary transfers are now being made through the banking system, increasing transparency and efficiency, (v) School operation budgets (SOBs) have been increased, and (vi) Preparation for full-PB system started and capital budget is included. We note several other positive developments in human resource management as well.

### **Issues:**

25. PFM Reform should continue to be a key focal point, in order to improve the following issues.

- In terms of macro policy indicators, Cambodia's recent share of public education to GDP is still significantly lower than neighbouring countries<sup>5</sup>, regardless of the recent commitment to positive increases. This is caused, in part, by the weak linkages between budget and policy and undeveloped system of budget execution and monitoring.
- In terms of financial management, technical departments should be more fully involved in the budgeting process in the full-PB system. Efficiency of budget formulation, execution, and monitoring can be improved in this way. Less coordinated budget formulation among technical departments and delay of budget execution have led to underspending of budget.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, it is 3.8 percent in Thailand, 3.2 percent in Lao PDR and 6.5 percent in Vietnam, while only 1.9 percent in Cambodia. This clearly shows that Cambodia should allocate more budgets to education in order to build a stronger foundation for human resources in order to compete effectively in the new ASEAN common market from 2015.

- In terms of PRM capacity, capacity in the following specific areas is still limited and need to be strengthened: (i) inspection and internal audit, (ii) budget planning and monitoring, and (iii) FMIS implementation at the national and sub-national levels.

### **Recommendations:**

26. Mission had a meeting with PFM team at Sub-TWG to discuss the issues and agreed next steps as following. The MoEYS PFM team will:

- Finalize result framework of each sub-sector and utilize the frameworks as a main reference for adjusting annual targets in Budget Strategic Plan as well as annual budgeting exercise.
- Develop new or revise current operational procedure for each program in each sub-sector so as to make sure each line of activities in Annual Operation Plan for the program (e.g. community learning center program) meet expected outputs and outcome.
- Conduct regular quarterly sub-sector review in order to monitor program and financial performance. It also monitors progress on implementation of recommendations given in education congress and joint annual sub-sector review.
- Develop a comprehensive FMIS capacity development plan and identify financial resources required.
- Develop a comprehensive internal audit capacity development plan in collaboration with the General Department of Internal Audit in MEF in order to improve risk management in internal audit work. Specifically, this should be conducted in the following order with technical inputs from MEF: (i) conducting formal assessment on capacity gap, (ii) identifying high priority training, (iii) conducting pilot training packages in small scale and review the impact, and (iv) expand the training nationwide.

## 2. SUB-SECTOR REVIEWS

### 2.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

27. **Relevant ESP policies and Early Childhood Care and Education plans:** Policy Objectives were (i) **increased enrolment**, especially poor, ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities; (ii) **improved quality of ECE**, care, nutrition, and health services; and (iii) establishing a **result-based management system**. The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) National Action Plan 2014-2018 provides broader strategies for sub-sector coordination among relevant Ministries.

**Table 3: Progress against Early Childhood Care and Education indicators**

	ESP Indicators for ECE Subsector	Actual 2013-14	Target 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
#1	% 5-year-old children attending pre-school	59.9%	66%	61.4%
2	% 4-year-old children attending ECE/pre-school	24.5%	33%	29.1%
3	% 3-year-old children attending ECE/pre-school	16.7%	27%	16.6%
4	% ECE services meet quality standards	-	40%	-
5	% ECE service of 5 year learning capacity tested	-	40%	-
6	% children with an acceptable nutritional status	-	40%	-
7	% children in public pre-school receive de-worming	-	90%	87.8%

28. ECE enrolment rate for children aged 5, a **Core Breakthrough Indicator**, has increased but some of the targets were not achieved, especially for 3 year-old children where progress has stagnated. Private preschool data were collected through EMIS from 2014, but overall progress was limited by the supply of classrooms and teachers for State Preschools and the sustainability of Community Preschools (CPS).
29. Indicators #4-7 were added in ESP 2014-18 to monitor ECE quality and care for children. Baseline data for indicators #4-6 were delayed pending definition of standards and data collection. The system established in 2015 should ensure data will be available for the next round of reporting.<sup>6</sup> The de-worming indicator may appear on track, but it covered only children in State Preschools.

<sup>6</sup> CDHS 2014 data show 33% of children under 5 years are stunted (height for age), 10% are wasted (weight for height) – it signifies Cambodian children’s nutritional status remains at emergency levels, and 23% are underweight (weight for age).

30. **Policy actions taken by Early Childhood Care and Education in 2014:** In response to the demand-supply gap for qualified preschool teachers, an increased enrolment was sought for the Pre-service Teacher Training Centre from 150 to 250 students per year.
31. The D&D initiative in Battambang required Communes to establish a CPS if none exists. Led by MoEYS, the ECCD National Committee was established for coordination across 13 ministries.
32. The ECCD National Action Plan (NAP) 2014-18 was officially endorsed, promoting the inter-sectoral coordination among the concerned Ministries for the common result framework.
33. **Key findings from analytical studies:** The ECD Scale Research (2013-14) sample of 1,500 children aged 3-5 years (*see Annex*) revealed that: (i) ECE has a significant impact on development outcomes of children; (ii) the urban–rural gap in development outcomes is significant; and (iii) the gap between ethnic majority and minority groups is greater and widens as children grow older, suggesting that interventions such as multilingual education programs, are needed.
34. **Key findings from the Mission field visits:**
- **ECE Demand-Supply gap:** Classrooms were often overcrowded in both State and Community Preschools. The current capacity, including classrooms and teachers, cannot match demand based on 25 students per class.
  - **Sustainability of CPS:** This approach is effective and sustainable approach in rural areas when backed by commune support, community participation, management and funding. Many CPS depend on external support for teacher training, incentives and program monitoring. Incentives for CPS teachers are not sufficient to attract capable and committed members of the local community into the teaching profession.
  - **Potential of Home-based Parenting (HBP) Education:** Parents are advised of the positive impact on their parenting practices, including health care and early stimulation for children. As pregnant women and parents of 0-2 year-old children are also included, HBP should supplement but not replace preschool education.
  - **ECE Resource Centre** visited had two functions: (i) serving as a model preschool and (ii) providing support to other ECE programs. A standard operational guideline and training for Resource Centre focal points will be rolled out in 2015.
35. **Remaining Early Childhood Care and Education challenges:**
- **Expansion of ECE:** Comprehensive ECE service mapping and school inventory have to be developed jointly by MoEYS, concerned DPs and NGOs. The high unit cost of State Preschool construction limits expansion. Hard-to-reach areas and vulnerable groups, particularly children with disabilities and indigenous minorities, require additional attention and support. Remote communities without State Preschool may need to rely

heavily on CPS and/or Home based Parenting Programme but discrepancy in quality and learning outcome need to be addressed.

- **Teacher development and deployment:** Currently only one central Teacher Training College provides pre-service training for preschool teachers. Deployment of teachers is often ad hoc, may not abide by regulations and some Primary school teachers are transferred to preschool classes without any pre-school training.
- **CPS sustainability:** Incentives for CPS teachers are low, disbursed irregularly, and without any uniform standard. CPS is not included in all annual commune investment plan. There is no clear MoI guideline regarding the support to be provided by Commune Councils. The current MoEYS Program Budget fund cannot be allocated for CPS. These structural challenges contribute to high teacher turnover, low quality in teaching, and dependency on external support.
- **School Operational Budget:** PB for preschool attached to primary school is often managed by the primary school (SOB).

### **2.1.2 RECOMMENDED EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE ACTION FOR 2015:**

36. **Expansion of ECE:** Mapping of ECE services and analysis required to identify strategies to expand ECE coverage with focus on remote and disadvantage areas. MoEYS Construction Group should issue a revised cost-effective design for State Preschools. Comprehensive school planning and ECE expansion plans should be discussed with concerned parties at ECE subsector meetings.
- **CPS sustainability:** Arrange policy dialogue between MoEYS, MEF and MoI leading to an inter-ministerial agreement and framework for budget allocation, ensuring sustainable CPS operation as well as improved minimum incentive and support package for CPS teachers. Ensure CPS operational budget in place for 2016 and the source of that financing identified.
  - **Teacher Development and Deployment:** Assess capacity of 6 Regional Teacher Training Colleges to offer preschool Pre-service Teacher Training and capacity of the central TTC to absorb more students. Assess the additional qualified teachers needed and the implications for recurrent financing.
  - **School Operation Budget:** Review regulation for preschool SOB management in public preschool classes operating in primary schools.
  - **Home-based Parenting Education:** Complete the holistic program modules and materials with technical inputs from relevant Ministries and DPs.
  - **Data collection:** Review ECE data collection processes to improve relevance and effectiveness for evidence-based program improvement and policy advocacy.

**The ECE Annexes 1.1 and 1.2 are attached.**

## 2.2 PRIMARY EDUCATION

37. The Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018 (page 22) identified three Primary Subsector Policy Objectives:

- (i) Ensure all school-age children and at age of enrolment are retained to the end of the school year and cycle;
- (ii) Ensure all children gain knowledge, skills, good health and ethics to agreed standards; and
- (iii) Primary Education Result Based Management Systems are fully functioning.

As noted at **Table 2**, the Core Breakthrough Indicator for Primary in 2017-18 set a target of 144 Districts with a primary education completion rate of at least 80%. Reported status was 119 Districts in 2013-14 but had declined to 104 in 2014-15. There is a cluster of Districts with 75-79% completion - understanding why Districts “under-perform” and options to improve completion should enable Districts to take the necessary steps.

38. The **Education Congress Report** in March 2015 presented a comprehensive summary of Primary Education Outcome Indicators 2013-14, 2014-15, Targets for 2014-15.<sup>7</sup> **Table 4** identifies high dropout rates (Total 10.5%; Female 8.3%), minor “improvement” by 2014-15 (Total 8.3%; Female 7.2%) when compared with the 4% target for 2014-15.

**Table 4: Progress Analysis of Outcome Indicators**

ESP Indicators for Primary Sub-Sector	Actual 2013-14	Target 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
1. Percentage of child-friendly schools at intermediate and developed levels	77.5%	85%	73.6%
2. Net Admission Rate - Total (Female)	95.3% (95.3%)	100%	99.4% (100%)
3. Net Enrolment Rate – Total (Female)	98.2% (98.5%)	98%	97.9% (98.4%)
4. Dropout Rate – Total (Female)	10.5% (8.3%)	4%	8.3% (7.2%)
5. Repetition Rate – Total (Female)	4.8% (4.1%)	3%	5.1% (4.3%)
6. Completion Rate – Total (Female)	88.9% (90.2%)	100%	84.1% (86.6%)
7. New Grade 1 with Pre-School Experience	80%	85%	62%
8. Transition Primary to LSec – Total (Female)	76.8% (81.4%)	90%	78.7% (81.2%)
9. Percent schools: Latrines; Safe Water	82.8%	87%	80.9%
9. Percent schools: Handwashing facilities	49.6%	60%	47.2%
9. Percent schools: First Aid Boxes	70%	70%	29.3%

Source: Education Congress Report 2015 – page 22

39. **Progress Analysis of Outcome Indicators:** **Table 5** summarizes studies and field visits presented at the Joint Development Partners meeting with the Minister on 4 April 2015:

<sup>7</sup> The heading “Core Breakthrough Indicators” may have been an error in translation but was reproduced from the Education Congress Report for the Joint Government-Development Partners Education Sector Review for Primary Education Sub-Sector.

**Table 5: JOINT MISSION REVIEW Primary Education Sub-Sector Review**

Sub-program	Achievements	Challenges	Actions agreed
<b>Quality and Service Delivery expansion</b>	More schools; fewer incomplete schools; School Improvement Grants (SIG)	Late School Operating Budget disbursement; Integration SOB, SIG; SOB flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish review of SIG use, including WASH facilities.</li> <li>• Inter-ministerial Prakas on SOB flexibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Early Grade Reading and Mathematics (EGRA, EGMA)</b>	EGRA and EGMA training and material delivered to schools.	Schools need support to integrate EGRA into pupil assessment. Examine Khmer literacy problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO to share best EGRA practices with MoEYS</li> </ul>
<b>Student support; scholarships, low vision and hearing impairment</b>	Expansion of MoEYS Scholarship scheme to Primary	Drop-out rates, whilst improving, remain a challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterplan for Inclusive Education to be shared with DPs / NGOs for consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher training and teacher deployment</b>	Prioritised local recruitment for areas of teacher shortage. Constructed teacher dormitories in remote areas. Multi-Grade Teaching	Operationalising TPAP actions as a priority. Too much variation in Pupil/ Teacher ratios between areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Supply/ Demand projections</li> <li>• MoEYS/DP workshop on Teacher Deployment</li> <li>• Multigrade Teaching Study (UNESCO)</li> <li>• Pilot School based personnel management</li> </ul>
<b>Textbook development, printing and distribution</b>	Targets for textbook production nearly reached	Distribution of textbooks remains an issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-convene Sub-Technical Working Group to assess textbook distribution</li> </ul>
<b>Application of school hours</b>	MoEYS issued clear guidance on teaching staff working hours	Research/NEP findings of unofficial school closures/ absenteeism	PED will oversee working group to review pilot options for full-day schooling

40. Identifying Provinces/Districts with high dropout shows that **repetition** was higher in 2014-15 (Total from 4.8% to 5.1%; Female 4.1% to 4.3%). Primary repetition rate halved between 2008 and 2012 and remained about 5%. Primary drop out fluctuated between 5% and 10% since 2008, with a drop below 5% in 2013 but exceeding 10% in 2014.<sup>8</sup>

41. **Progression from Primary Schools to Lower Secondary Schools:** Late enrollment and Primary grade repetition leads to high risk of dropping out school; especially in Lower

<sup>8</sup> Analysis by District should identify those Districts reporting largest changes in drop-out in 2013-2014-2015.

Secondary. Improving the quality of teaching and learning is affected by skills, experience and training of teachers but it is also affected by age of students at each transition to the next level of schooling. EMIS data for 2014-15 shows a distinct profile of the modal (largest) age-group in each grade. The same data set could be examined for schools in Rural and Urban areas. Students who “drop out” are probably “older” – either they entered late or have repeated at least once.

Recommended Primary Education related actions for the remainder of 2015

42. **To improve budget management**, a review of the use of the School Improvement Grant should be conducted, including where it has been used on WASH facilities, and MoEYS should issue an Inter-Ministerial Prakas on PB budget flexibility. MoEYS should also act quickly to ensure timely School Operating Budget disbursement to schools.
43. **To improve EGRA and EGMA implementation**, MoEYS should engage NGO expertise developed in these areas.
44. **To improve inclusive education** MoEYS should share the re-developed Masterplan for Inclusive Education with technical experts in DPs and NGOs for consultation.
45. **To improve teacher training and deployment**, MoEYS should host a workshop with DPs to share updated school population and teacher demand and supply projections, pilot school based management, and take in to account the results of the UNESCO study in to Multi-Grade Teaching.
46. **To improve textbook distribution** the working group on this issue should be reconvened.
47. **To improve the application of school teaching hours** MoEYS should share new guidance on flexible school calendars, establish a working group on full-day school, and continue with personnel management reforms.

## 2.3 SECONDARY EDUCATION

### Relevant Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018 policies and Secondary Education plan

48. Three ESP policy objectives identified for Secondary Education, informed this review:
  - 1) ensure **equitable and expanded access** to general secondary education schools which meet all **quality standards**;
  - 2) ensure graduate students from secondary schools are equipped with **right and employable skills** and;
  - 3) ensure **results-based management** of secondary education is fully functioning.

49. With these objectives, nine key policy actions and 10 outcome indicators were reviewed. Technical education in high school is reviewed separately from this report which focused predominantly on Lower Secondary School (LSS).

### Progress against Secondary Education indicators and policy actions taken in 2014

50. Eight of the ten outcome indicators in **Table 6** (*next page*) do not meet the set targets, one on scholarships has exceeded target and the life skills indicator is not yet measurable. Progress in increasing enrolment and decreasing school dropout rates (indicators 1-5 and 7) has stagnated (see Annex 1). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for LSS was 55.3% in 2013/2014 and 55.1% in 2014/2015 - well **below** the 67% target for 2014/2015.
51. LSS dropout rates target for 2014/2015 was set at 11%, but remained high at 21.2% in 2013/2014 and 21% in 2014/2015. Improving the provision of clean water and latrines in schools (indicators 8-9) were also off track. While it is positive that CFS policies have been expanded to LSS, progress is behind schedule to implement these policies.
52. **A greater effort will be required** to achieve all ten targets. Increased funding may provide quick results against some indicators (e.g. WASH in schools), but an evidence-based approach may be needed to address broader issues (e.g. enrolment and dropouts). Of nine policy actions, six are being implemented, though it is not clear how advanced most policy actions are nor the efficacy of action taken. Coordination of the subsector review process appears to have been a positive learning experience for GSED.

**Table 6: Secondary Outcome Indicators status (March 2015)**

No.	Indicators	Target	Actual 2013/2014	Target 2014/2015	Actual 2014/2015	Status
1	Dropout rate in lower secondary*	<b>3% (2016/17)</b>	21.2%	<b>11%</b>	21%	↓
2	GER at in lower secondary	<b>87% (2017/18)</b>	55.3%	<b>67%</b>	55.1%	↓
3	GER at upper secondary	<b>45% (2017/18)</b>	26%	<b>31%</b>	25.3%	↓
4	Transition rate (LSE --> USE)*	<b>83% (2017/18)</b>	70.2%	<b>83%</b>	71.1%	↓
5	Completion rate at lower secondary*	<b>76.4% (2017/18)</b>	39.1%	<b>52%</b>	40.3%	↓
6	Lower secondary students receiving scholarships each year	<b>9%</b>	10.5%	<b>9%</b>	10.97%	↑
7	Schools implementing CFS program	<b>75% (2017/18)</b>	55.6%	<b>60%</b>	53.1%	↓

8	Schools with latrines	<b>90% (2018)</b>	63.6%	<b>90%</b>	63.1.5%	↓
	Lower secondary	<b>100% (2018)</b>	98%	<b>100%</b>	95.8%	
	Upper secondary					
9	Schools with clean water	<b>90% (2018)</b>	36.4%	<b>90%</b>	34.5%	↓
	Lower secondary	<b>100% (2018)</b>	62.6%	<b>100%</b>	59.9%	
	Upper secondary					
10	SE schools with life skills program**	<b>30% (2018)</b>				

\*These flow rates presented here as actual rates of 2013/2014 is actual rates of 2012/13 and the flow rates presented here as actual rates of 2014/15 is actual rates of 2013/14.

\*\*Limited information was available for this review on implementation of life skills programs in secondary schools.

### Equitable/expanded access to general secondary schools which meet all quality standards

53. The LSS GER has fallen by 10 percentage points since 2007 and stands at 53% (55% including private schools). Coverage remains a challenge in northeast and border areas (e.g. 144/1633 communes without LSS). There are large numbers of overage secondary students, many of whom have been overage since entering primary. Data from CSES (2012) shows that 55% of 12 to 14 year-olds are in primary school. This, together with a lack of clean water and latrines in schools (36.9% of LSS are without toilets, 65.5% of LSS are without clean water), contributes greatly to high dropout rates of 21% in LSS.
54. Considerable effort has focused on improving equitable and expanded access to secondary education by building new LSS (5) as well as resource schools (36, or 1-2 in each province). Through review of Sub-Decree 66 and increased budget, the LSS student scholarships exceeded 55,000 target (by 4,971) although this remains very small in relation to need. The SDPP (student dropout prevention program) has been implemented in 322 LSS. Pre-service teacher training also produced 1,311 new graduates this year, many of whom were deployed to areas in need, based on performance.
55. Effort to ensure access to schools “which meet all quality standards” is apparent, with a commitment to scale up Child Friendly Schools, with 723 government CFS (established by their own initiative) plus 200 NGO-supported CFS.
56. Effort has been made to reform grade 12 exam and tighten management of the grade 9 exam, to initiate curriculum review and strengthen textbooks in maths and science. Basic teaching and learning resources have been expanded (e.g. 107 of 1249 LSS have computer labs and LSS students each receive a set of 4 textbooks).
57. Teachers have also been trained in a variety of areas (e.g. 3,765 LSS teachers trained in maths and science, 4,244 grade 7 teachers in lesson study; 1,500 primary/preschool teachers upgraded to basic education teachers).
58. **Field visits** identified specific bottlenecks which may impede these efforts:

- secondary students report that classmates are lured into the labour market under financial pressure.
- WASH facilities in schools visited appeared insufficient; libraries, science and computer labs visited provided only limited equipment and materials.
- There is a mismatch in teacher deployment with surplus teaching staff in some schools (e.g. Pupil Teacher Ratio of 10:1 at one LSS visited compared to national 20:1 average; high dropout rates among scholarship students (10/90 in LSS visited);
- limited teachers for specialised subjects (e.g. maths and science) in schools .
- Most schools reported delays in receiving the programme-based budget (PB) for the financial year due to guidelines changes and a lack of clarity re implementation.

### **Ensuring graduates are equipped with right and employable skills**

59. One measure for acquisition of “right and employable skills” may be year 12 exam results which indicate limited progress (e.g. 91%, 86%, 76% and 70% of students failing maths, chemistry, physics and foreign languages respectively in 2013/2014, with a cumulative exam pass rate of 41%).
60. The Review acknowledges the effort to strengthen quality learning including focus on re-training teachers in science and maths. While curriculum review is currently being undertaken, 144 teachers (grade 9 and 12) have been trained in curriculum standards, exam reform has been conducted with ACU and the year 12 exam has been implemented twice in 2014. National assessments (maths, Khmer and physics) have also been conducted in grade 8 to help measure learning.
61. The 2006 Life Skills Policy identified basic and career skills as the two skills that prepare students for a healthy and productive life. Life skills education is generally integrated into core curriculum subjects by improving student-centred learning and 2-5 hours/week local life skills programme. Based on the 2006 policy, a local life skills programme has been implemented in selected provinces by MoEYS and NGOs. The NGO model of life skills appears effective but requires ongoing support and engagement from local business communities.
62. Field visits and review meetings revealed limited life skills teaching aids and appropriate methodologies as well as a lack awareness of “life skills” as a subject area among students and teachers. Unofficial holidays make implementation of a full 38 week/year curriculum difficult; this especially affects local life skills programs which require additional coordination and resources. Collaboration between GSED and the Vocational Orientation Department remains a challenge.
63. Various systems are used to monitor secondary education (e.g. EMIS, QEMIS, HRMIS, FMIS) will be merged. Efforts to strengthen results-based management have included the introduction of the Quality Assurance Inspection Concept (external: EQAD and POE; and internal: DTMT and schools) with 21 inspection trainers trained.

## **Ensuring results-based management systems in fully functioning manner**

64. Review meetings and school visits suggest the school inspection process is not clear to all stakeholders across central, district and local levels. DTMT for LSS has not been established and/or trained in all provinces, leading to insufficient support to the school self-assessment processes, especially in rural and remote areas. It is difficult to determine the efficacy of the school self-assessment processes (against the school operation plan and ESP implementation). During visits, school directors and teachers described heavy workloads as a hindrance to the reporting requirements of different information systems.

## **Remaining Secondary Education challenges**

65. **Low GER and high dropout rates** remain a concern and a result of numerous compounding factors – poverty, the high opportunity cost for education especially for male students, late enrolment and repetition in primary, distance to schools, lack of classrooms, limited clean water and latrines in schools, teacher absenteeism and shortage of teachers in specialised subjects, and limited community engagement in monitoring school performance.
66. **Students ill-prepared for the labour market** - the result of compounding factors including: lack of qualified and sufficiently trained teachers including in life skills, limited opportunity for full curricula implementation and limited practical application of curriculum content, limited expansion of life skills training and limited quality learning materials and facilities including libraries, science and computer labs.
67. **Complex monitoring and reporting systems** – the existing information systems (e.g. EMIS, QEMIS, HRMIS, FMIS) are managed separately from the proposed sub-sector M&E; there is limited local capacity to gather and monitor data, limited local school level autonomy including in the appointment of teachers and an unclear school inspection process.

## **Recommended Secondary Education related actions for the remainder of 2015**

### **68. To address low GER and high dropout rates:**

- Reassess effectiveness of scholarship coverage and amount at lower secondary level (increase to 360,000 Riels per student per school year) to offset the high opportunity costs for education and increase participation;
- Mobilise the private sector to support full participation in LSS and eradicate child labour through improved regulation, and a requirement of grade 9 completion for all employees;
- Address drop out issues by expanding the school dropout prevention program (which includes the early warning system and improvement of computer labs);
- Conduct a thorough analysis of the causes of high drop outs in different contexts, the effectiveness of current interventions and how these interventions could be improved;
- Reduce overage students in the system via the accelerated learning program with proper assessment against curriculum standards;
- Provide Capital/PB/maintenance for WASH facilities (latrines, clean water).

**69. To strengthen students' capacity for entering the labour market:**

- Monitor effective implementation of curriculum through DTMT and school inspection process to promote quality teaching and learning at the secondary level;
- Redefine life skills concept and re-examine implementation of the life skills program as part of the curriculum review.
- Continue with expansion of life skills program to all schools, including provision of a curriculum coordinator and career counselling for all SE students;
- Conduct assessment into teacher deployment with clear recommendations for improving the current supply and demand mismatch;
- Consider solutions to address teacher shortages including: a) introduction of a mobile teaching team with specialised skills including in maths and science at the district level to respond to lack of teachers in rural and remote areas, and; b) introduction of a system of school autonomy in terms of teacher recruitment (3/4 permanent and 1/4 contract teachers) at the secondary level to assist with fluctuations in demand.

**70. To strengthen internal efficiency:**

- Activate/reactivate Secondary Sub-Sector Working Group to review policy progress against actions and targets on a quarterly basis;
- Ensure the existing information management systems are adapted to feed into and support the new M&E systems by subsector;
- Define a) the roles of the DTMT as an internal monitoring team and provincial inspectors as external school inspection teams, b) the mechanisms and tools used to support monitoring and inspections for both and c) how reporting and inspection findings complement each other via a well-developed information sharing and feedback system.
- Define the distinct roles of GSED, VOD & Youth Department with regard to the life skill education program;
- Distribute revised textbooks for all subjects to schools and teachers, and;
- Make clear and informed decision on student streaming (Science, Humanities and TVET) at the upper secondary level and develop support mechanisms for this streaming.

## **2.4 TECHNICAL AND EMPLOYABILITY EDUCATION**

71. Strengthening technical education and employability is one of the Government's top priorities, as evidenced by NSDP 2014-2018 and the recent IDP 2015-2025. With shortages of skilled workforce to meet labor market demands, several NGOs and the private sectors have been operating different initiatives. The formal education system is faced with a challenge to integrate better "soft skills" with the curriculum to improve delivery and quality of technical education.

### **Relevant ESP policies and Technical and Employability Education plans**

72. Policy objectives under "General and Technical Education" include a) equitable and expanded access to secondary schools which meet all quality standards in general and

technical education sub-sector; b) students who graduate from secondary schools equipped with employable skills or are able to enter into technical training and higher education; c) a result-based system of general and technical secondary education.

73. Under the Youth Development sub-sector, policy objectives include a) provision of opportunities for youth to access vocational training and b) encourage youth to take initiatives with a spirit of entrepreneurship and leadership.

**Progress against Technical and Employability Education indicators:**

74. ESP indicators on General and Technical High Schools (GTHS) show that neither the number of schools nor student enrolment meet the set targets. There are only 3 GTHS as of March 2015 and the target for 2018 is 7 GTHS. MoEYS has MEF approval of funding for another GTHS in Siemreap in 2017. Development Partner support requires examination. The 2018 GTHS enrolment target is 2000 (600 female) but the 2014-2015 enrolment is only 868 (326 female). Further GTHS are required to meet the 2018 target.
75. The broader target for local life skills program implementation (see Table 6 Indicator 10 above) is 30% coverage of secondary schools by 2018 and the Vocational Orientation Department (VoD) plans to commence monitoring by July 2015.
76. Key findings from analytical studies and field visits indicate that low wages for unskilled workers has been the main Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) attraction for Cambodia. The sector needs to develop technicians and skilled staff to avoid being trapped in low skill industries. Informal education programs by MoLVT need to be supported by vocational literacy and capacity building at Upper Secondary level. Improving basic/foundation skills at Lower Secondary is a pre-requisite for viable vocational training programs beyond Grade 9. Career counselling programs are required.
77. Field visits to the two functioning GTHS, Kampong Chheuteal and Rota, with different Development Partner inputs (from Thailand, Qatar, Korea and Czech Republic) show different student drop-out rates. As well as greater coordination between MoEYS, MoLVT and private sector employers, Cambodia needs joint planning, curriculum review, teacher training/placement, career guidance and awareness campaigns. The General Secondary Education Department (GSED), Vocational Orientation Department (VoD) and Director-General Youth (DGY) are each engaged in this sector, require a coherent Youth Education strategy and careers counselling. Integrated Technical Teacher planning and training is required, and timing will be critical if Cambodia is to benefit from its economic opportunities.
78. Technical and Employability Education action requires MoEYS clarification of LSE/USE streaming, MoEYS/MoLVT working group to collaborate (including NIE/NTTI technical teacher training framework), study/evaluation of existing life skills programs, and national co-ordination on vocational/career counselling.

79. At the 04 April 2015 meeting with the Minister, Development Partners identified the “need to understand” which students are dropping out and their reasons, at both a national and local scale. Scholarships will not address the issues if the Sector does not understand the broader economic and sector issues. Career counselling is not sufficient.

## 2.5 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

80. Core Breakthrough Indicators 4 (**Youth Literacy**) and 5 (**Adult Literacy**) provide an assessment of economic, political and social change over the past half-century. School enrolment, participation and completion contribute to better outcomes for the current youth generation – about 93% youth literacy (but below the 97.5% target). In poor urban communities and in many rural areas, adult literacy limits employment opportunities for adults and children in poorer households face greater learning challenges if their parent/s have limited literacy.

81. Unless the cycle is broken, poverty is generational. Schools in most societies have been leaders in improving outcomes for children with access to schools, staffed with qualified teachers and textbooks and materials for learning. Community Learning Centers (CLCs) carry the major task of improving youth and adult literacy, strengthening the outcomes for early “drop-outs” and reducing longer-term (structural) poverty. Some of the NFE indicators point to this ongoing challenge.

**Table 7: Progress NFE Outcomes and Achievements against ESP**

No.	Key NFE Indicators	Actual 2013	Target 2014	Actual 2014	Target 2015	Target 2018
1	Adult literacy rate (15-45 years)* increase from 87% to 91% by 2018	<b>77.6% (2008)</b>	87%	<b>80% (2013)</b>	89.2%	90.5%
	EFA literacy target for 2015				84.4%	
2	Percentage of illiterate population completing program (80%) by 2018	<b>79%</b>	69%	<b>82.8%</b>	72%	80%
3	The number of participants completing skills training increase from 9,000 to 12,000	<b>7,649</b>	13,481	<b>8,524</b>	15,917	24,208
4	95% drop-out children completed re-entry program and continue formal learning by 2018	<b>87.1%</b>	95%	<b>86.2%</b>	95%	95%
5	The number of students undertake equivalency program increase from 5,000 to 7,300 by 2018	<b>759</b>	5,709	<b>4,146</b>	6,243	7,317

6	All 24 Provinces establish NFE-MIS in 2014 and produce analytical reports by 2017.	2	5	22	10	24
7	Number of CLCs increase from 371 to 471 and Libraries increase from 57 to 73 by 2018.	348	371	347	391	471
8	30% of CLCs have (achieved?) standards in 2018	0	5%	0	10%	30%

\*Target indicator for population aged 15-45 (not total Population aged 15+).

82. Special attention may be required to strengthen learning outcomes for urban children who do not enroll at school or drop out before they “learn” how to learn! Improving the enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes for “out-of-school” children remain challenges for both schools and CLCs. Poverty and children in families where their parents had limited schooling opportunities limit the prospects for later generations. Maternal literacy may be the best predictor of success for future generations.

83. Community Learning Centers are the bridge between those “out of school” and better employment/life outcomes. The difficulty confronting the Ministry, Provinces, Districts and existing CLCs are reported lack of guidelines, lack of funds, “management” of CLCs, poor quality/old buildings, non-attendance, and whether primary grade teachers have the required skills to “teach” adults. References are made to MoEYS Sub-Decree 20 on NFE and “guidelines” required. A positive strategy could be to reward communities which (a) “mobilize” out-of-school adults, (b) provide essential language/learning skills, and (c) find/develop pathways into paid employment.

84. The **National Literacy Campaign 2015** presents an opportunity for Provincial and District Education officials to encourage community learning, out-of-hours use of school facilities. This may be an example of the need for “regulations” which encourage rather than limit initiative, rewarding success and learning from (rare cases of) “failure”! Mobilizing community is the best form of public “audit” and accountability.

85. Equivalency programs at the lower secondary level, together with MoEYS Vocational Orientation Department and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT), should provide pathways into paid employment. Review of the purpose and relevance of different literacy and non-formal education programs requires more effective collaboration between all MoEYS Departments and with other Ministries.

## 2.6 HIGHER EDUCATION

86. Substantial progress has been achieved in HE enrolments, increasing from 76,000 in 2005-06 to 214,000 in 2013-14. Higher education accreditation standards and systems have

been developed and formalized over the past decade. A new accreditation system will be piloted in 2015. There are 110 HEIs (43 public; 67 private) with Public HEIs granted partial autonomy through government regulations on Public Administration Institutions. Sector strategy is responding to four challenges to the HE sector:

<b>SKILLS</b>	Low level skills of many HEI graduates
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	Mismatch between Supply and Labor Market Demand
<b>FUNDING</b>	Low levels of public funding allocated
<b>RESEARCH</b>	Low quality of research environment

87. These challenges are circular (inter-dependent) – appropriate skills avoid mismatch with the labor-market, sector efficiency provides justification for public funding, and public/private investment in quality research builds both economic opportunity (and revenue for government) and training/skills development for graduates.

88. **Progress and key achievements against ESP Indicators:** Of the eight outcome indicators in **Table 8** (next page), four have been updated, Indicator 1 (Scholarship student rate) exceeded the 8% target and Indicator 3 (Teachers with Masters or Doctorates) was partially achieved. Two indicators (#2 HE Gross Enrolment Rate 12.4%; #7 HE internal quality standards 18.9%) did not achieve their 2014-15 targets (15%; 20% respectively).

**Table 8: Progress Analysis of Higher Education Outcome Indicators**

ESP Indicators: Higher Education Sub-Sector	Actual 2013-14	Target 2014-15	Actual 2014-15
1. Percentage state scholarships enrolled Yr 1	5%	8%	9.9%
2. Gross Enrolment Rate (HE)	13%	15%	12.4%
3. Teachers with Master +1,000, PhD +250			
Local Master Degree	50	70	600
Local Doctorate	20	30	17
Overseas Master Degree	30	40	200
Overseas Doctorate	20	20	14
4. Graduates in ASEAN priority programs	87%	88%	n.a.
5. Graduates with employment	70%	72%	n.a.
6. HEIs with annual budget plans	10%	20%	n.a.
7. HEIs achieving internal quality standards	10%	20%	18.9%
8. Budget for Higher Education sub-sector	4%	8%	n.a.

89. **Table 9** (next page) was presented to the Minister and Development Partners at the review meeting on 3 April 2015. The Table<sup>9</sup> presents a matrix of challenges and reforms to achieve a more effective HE sector which meets Cambodia's existing needs and builds the skills base to enhance Cambodia's economic position in South-East Asia and international markets.
90. Cambodia higher education still faces considerable challenges, including i) low level of skills among university graduates; ii) low-quality research environment and lack of quality research outputs (patents, publications), iii) mismatch between graduates' major field/s of study and labor market demands; and iv) low overall allocation of public funds to the higher education sub-sector.
91. These skills and research challenges arise due to information, capacity and/or incentive constraints which require attention. Improvement in governance is the key to breaking through constraints in information, capacity and incentive at HEIs. Governance reform begins with building HEI capacity to manage both finance and human resources. There are three parallel priority thematic areas for reform – evaluation (quality assurance), research and inclusive access.

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<sup>9</sup> A more detailed version of this table exists.

**TABLE 9 MATRIX OF HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED STRATEGY/REFORMS**

Timing	Challenges	Constraints	Strategies	Reform Action
<b>Short Term 2015-2016</b>	Quality of HE Graduates	Spending Inefficiency	Best practice HEI as model	S1. Practice HEI autonomy on Financial Management
		Insufficient and poor quality Faculty	Build foundations for expanding HEI	S2. Practice HEI autonomy on Personnel Management
				S3. Build capacity for Quality Assurance
<b>Medium Term 2016-2018</b>	Skills mismatch of HE graduates with Labor Market needs (overall; specific)	Poor information dissemination to Employers	Expansion of Best Practice to 5 Public HEI and 5 Private HEI to meet national standards	M1. Review HE legislative and governance framework (autonomy)
		Under-spending on Priority Programs		M2 provide additional funds to HEI with improved transparency and meet national HEI standards
	Lack of Inclusiveness	Low transparency in internal HEI management		M3. Implement HEI Accreditation System
		Under-spending on Equity	Retain talented students in Priority Programs/ Civil Service Systems	M4. Use Demand side financing to attract most talented students to Priority Programs
		Very limited High Quality research output	Under-spending in STEM and R&D (Research and Development)	Building Best Practice Public HEI toward regional and international standards

92. DHE, development partners and public HEIs agree with the overall reform action plan and have expressed their support for its implementation. The private sector, including private HEIs, also agreed with the plan and share interests in its implementation.

93. The main elements of the revised Higher Education Reform Action Plans 2015-2018 are:

- 93.1 **Governance** (Financial and HR autonomy): Short term reforms in 2015-2016 focus on low skill levels of university graduates, especially (1) HEI financial management and (2) quality of HEI faculty. Technical FM and HRM inputs should be piloted at one HEI (eg RUPP) so that one best practice HEI provides a model for FM and HRM. Mid-term (2016-2018) reforms focus on the mismatch between graduate fields of study and labor market demands. Governance constraints include (i) poor information sharing with external parties, (ii) under-spending in priority programs, and (iii) lack of transparency in internal management. Best practice suggests that the existing legislative framework should be revised to provide clear academic and non-academic autonomy to HEIs.<sup>10</sup>
- 93.2 Once the legislative framework is revised, priority funding should be allocated to those HEIs that have improved transparency and met National HEI accreditation standards.
- 93.3 **Evaluation/Quality Assurance of HEIs:** Short term quality assurance and capacity development should be built through revision of guidelines, training of new assessors and pilot implementation of accreditation standards. Harmonization of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) standards and External Quality Assurance (EQA) among the key stakeholders. A pilot evaluation of public and private HEIs should lead to an “agreed” official accreditation system for all HEIs.
- 93.4 **Research:** Improvement of research quality in priority fields (such as science, technology, math, engineering) is a mid-term agenda. Short-term research capacity could be strengthened through the competitive grants mechanism. Outputs from pilot intervention should be measured, assessed and shared. Mid-term research capacity at HEI level could be further strengthened through a pilot research grant activity and/or other potential public funds/donor funding and private sector support.
- 93.5 **Inclusiveness:** Improving “access” to higher education is also a mid-term agenda. Demand-side financing should be provided to attract the most talented students into priority programs. Impact evaluation of the pilot activities should guide subsequent programs.

94. The Joint Government-Development Partners mission in March-April 2015 recommended the following higher education initiatives:

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<sup>10</sup> Institutional autonomy creates an obligation for public and private HEI to account to the Government for their performance against National HEI accreditation standards.

- Consultation with HE Minister on the final revision to the Higher Education Reform Action Plan 2015-2018 (Annex 2) for the Minister's approval;
- HE sub-working group prepares its short-term 2015-2016 Action Plan for submission to HE Minister for approval;
- HE sub-working group meets regularly to guide implementation of the reform action plan. The HE Sub-working group has an "enabling" function in assisting Government, HEI and stakeholders implement effective reform.

**Annex 1:**

**Project Review on Second Education Sector Support Project**

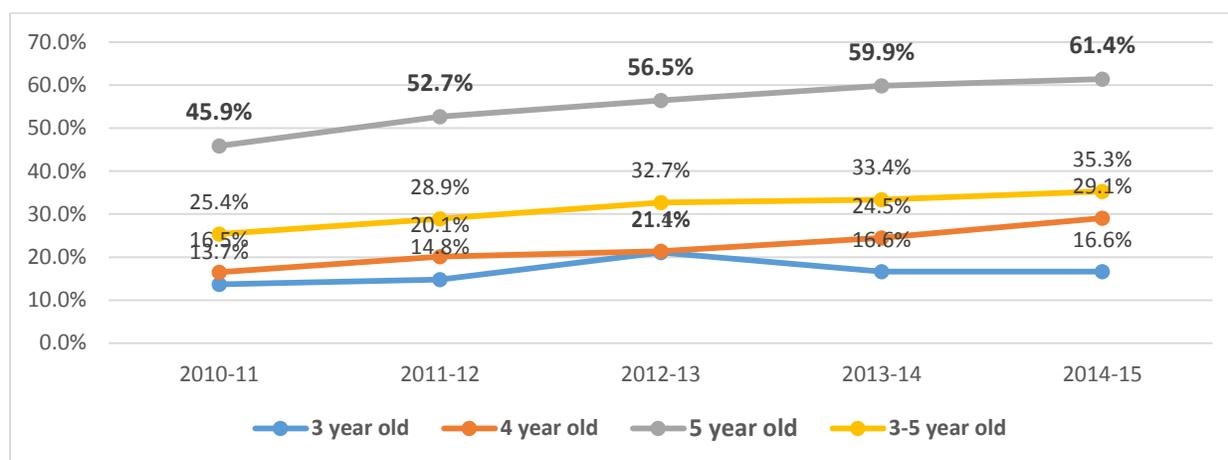
**Project Implementation Support Mission 2**

**March 16 – April 3, 2014**

**Attached separately**

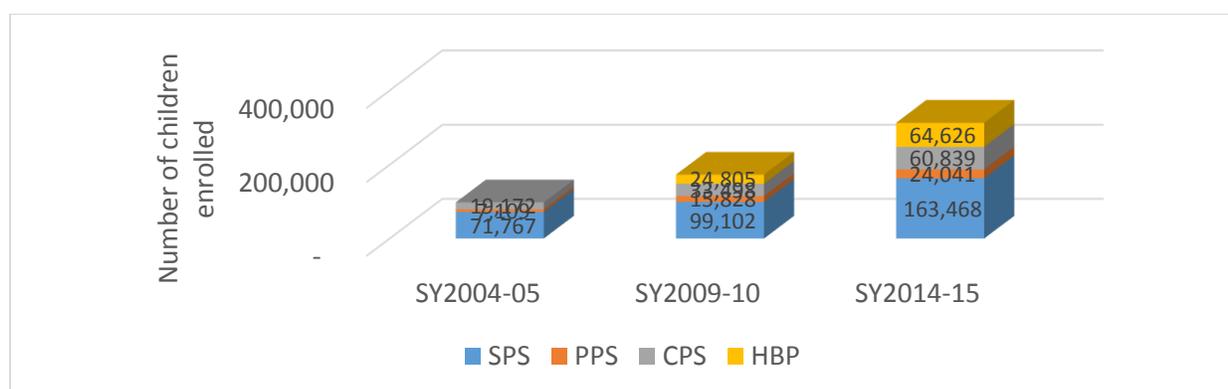
## ECE enrolment trends and analysis

**Figure 1.1: Trends of ECE Enrolment by Age Groups**



**Figure 1.1** shows the enrolment of 5-year-olds (a Core Breakthrough Indicator in the ESP) is progressing well and has yet to meet the 2014/2015 target of 66%. The result is mainly due to increasing numbers of primary schools use ECE reception classes to targeting 5-year-olds prior to entry into primary. Access for 3-year-olds is more challenging with a drop to 16.6 percent. It can be attributed to priority placed on enrolment of 4 and 5 year old children, the shortage of teachers and classrooms, and reluctance of parents to enroll younger children in preschools. CSES 2012 data report that only 30% of 5-year-olds were attending pre-school which shows the importance of triangulating with other data sources.

**Figure 1.2: Enrolment by types of ECE Program**



**Figure 1.2** shows that the total number of children enrolled in all forms of ECE (3-5 years old) has tripled over the past decade, amounting to 313,000 in 2014/2015. While State Preschools have a greater proportion (52%), the increase of Community Preschool (CPS) and Home-based Program (HBP) is notable, accounting for 19% and 21% respectively. During the joint field visit, ECE expansion was recognized, and the quality and sustainability of CPS and HBP were raised as priority issues to be addressed at the policy

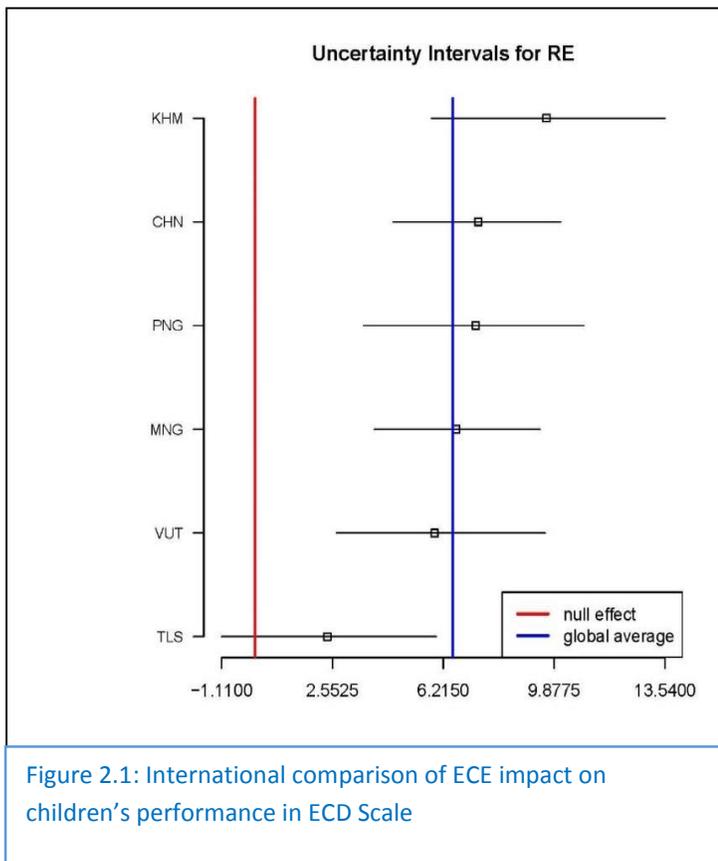
level. In some provinces, ECE provision relies heavily on CPS and HBP. State Preschools should be expanded as the most sustainable option for good quality ECE. HBP should be considered as a supplement to ECE, since it is an initiative to promote improved parenting and encourage enrolment in preschool rather than a preschool program in its own right.

## Annex 1.2: ECD Scale Study

In 2011, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), ARNEC, Hong Kong University launched a ‘East Asia and Pacific Region ECD Scale’ initiative to develop a common framework and tools to measure the development of 3, 4, 5 year olds in different domains – including cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and motor skill development. Cambodia was one of six participating countries of the ECD Scale study. As per the standardized assessment tools and protocol, data collected in 2013 from 1,500 samples including 300 ethnic minority group (Phnong). Key findings are summarized below.

### ECE Experience has Significant Impact on the Development Outcomes of Children

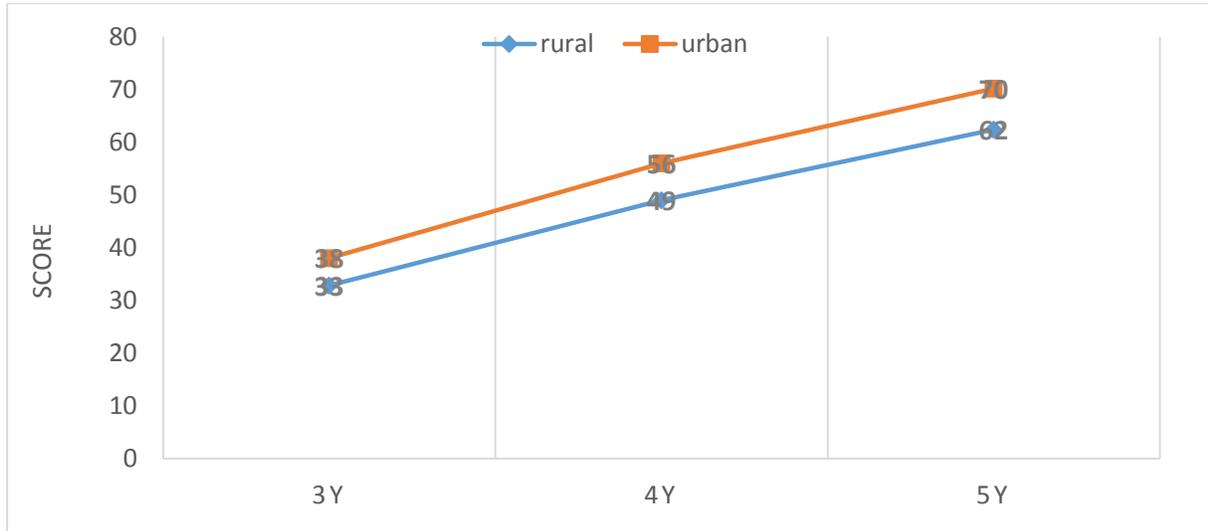
The ECD Scale indicated participation in ECE programs has a significant positive impact on children’s development outcomes. Children who attended ECE program scored about 9 percentage points higher than other children – which is actually the highest impact observed among all the participating countries in ECD Scale as Figure 2.1 shows. Improved developmental readiness of children facilitates on-time enrolment and better performance in primary education, reducing repetition and dropout. This finding should give a strong foundation for accelerating expansion of ECE services in Cambodia.



**Urban – Rural Gap in Development Outcomes:** The ECD Scale revealed a significant development gap between urban and rural groups –children in urban areas gained higher scores in all domains. As an example, **Figure 2.2** shows comparison of cognitive development outcomes between urban and rural groups. This result may be attributed to the difference in access to and

quality of structured early learning programs as well as parenting practices (i.e. involvement in early learning of their children at home). This result suggests urgent need to expand and strengthen the quality of ECE programme in remote and disadvantaged areas.

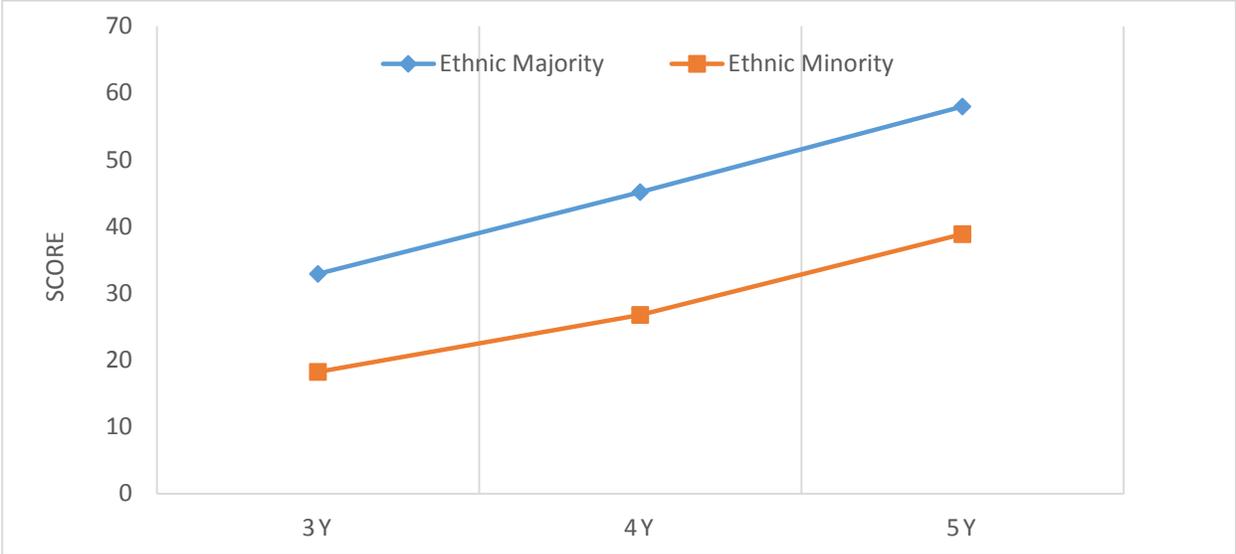
**Figure 2.2: Comparison of urban and rural samples in cognitive development result**



### **Ethnic Majority – Minority Gap in Development Outcomes:**

Significant differences were found between ethnic minority (Phnong group) and ethnic majority children in all domains except motor development. Achievement and knowledge gaps between the two groups either increase or remain the same as they become older. **Figure 2.3** shows the cognitive development gap widens between the two groups as they grow, with a similar trend in language development. This is particularly concerning as these domains are typically associated with school readiness. This result underscores the need for interventions to address the particular learning needs of minority groups such as an effective multilingual education program.

Figure 2.3: Comparison of ethnic majority and minority groups in cognitive development



**Ministry of Education Youth and Sport**

**Higher Education Reform Action Plan 2015-2018**

**(draft)**

**Attached separately**