

Integration of

TEACHERS' VOICES



into

EDUCATION FOR ALL IN CAMBODIA

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Integration of Teachers' Voices into Education for All in Cambodia:

Teacher status, social dialogue and the education sector

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Pact Cambodia
January 2004

FOREWORD

The ILO's concerns for universal access to high quality education have focussed over several decades on policies that ensure an elevated professional, social and material status for teachers, the key actors in determining high quality learning outcomes. Based on its previous experience, the ILO has more recently initiated a flagship programme on teachers and the quality of education in co-operation with UNESCO and international teachers' organizations. The flagship is an integral part of the international campaign on Education for All (EFA). It includes components of research, policy dialogue and formulation and technical advisory services focussing on key challenges to the realization of EFA goals. Among these are the parameters that determine how well countries recruit, professionally prepare, employ and otherwise provide conditions that motivate individuals to teach effectively.

Moreover, ILO activities are keenly sensitive to the process by which educational policies, plans and means of implementation are determined. Social dialogue, which the ILO understands to include all forms of information sharing, consultation and negotiations between employers and workers, public or private, is a critical part of educational decision-making. Educational plans and their implementation are infinitely stronger and more likely to succeed when those who are expected to implement them – principally teachers, but also other stakeholders – are associated at all stages with their design, execution and evaluation. Furthermore, organizations that collectively represent teachers should be recognised as a force for educational advancement, and associated with educational policy determination, as recommended by the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers.

The present publication is an outgrowth of these concerns. As part of the EFA Flagship, and in the framework of ongoing assistance to Cambodia to integrate social dialogue processes with efforts to reduce poverty, the ILO's Sectoral Activities Programme commissioned research on teachers' status and social dialogue in Cambodia. The research was subsequently shared with national and international participants at a national seminar on teachers' professional development convened with the assistance of UNESCO.

The publication has been prepared by researchers from Pact Cambodia, an international non-governmental organization with many years of active assistance towards sustainable development in Cambodia. The research examines the state of Cambodian education, educational planning, the professional and employment status of teachers, and especially to what extent social dialogue does or does not function between teachers, the organizations representing them and educational decision-makers. The survey concludes with a set of recommendations for policy and institutional improvements by which teachers' voices can be more effectively integrated into EFA and education sector decisions in Cambodia.

As part of ongoing work of the Sectoral Activities Programme on these issues, the study is circulated to stimulate discussion and further reflection with a view to improving policies and decision-making processes based on international standards. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ILO.

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ACRONYMS

ACILS	American Center for International Labor Solidarity
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour Congress of Industrial Organizations
AIDS	Acute Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CITA	Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association
CNC	Commission Nationale Du Cambodge
EFA	Education For All
EI	Education International
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IIC	Institution for International Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KTA	Khmer Teachers' Association
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MOWVA	Ministry on Women and Veterans Affairs
NEFAC	National EFA Commission
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPRP	National Poverty Reduction Plan
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEDPII	Second Socio-economic Development Plan
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Pact appreciates the support of the International Labour Organisation for providing an opportunity to explore education and labour in Cambodia. Individuals took time from busy schedules to share their perspectives on these sectors and to direct us to people, places and documents that would be of assistance in the assessment. Special thanks go to William Ratteree for his guidance and advice and to Nuon Rithy for his support. The importance of the education and labour sectors and the dedication of individuals working within them, offers hope that the Cambodian education system will thrive. In addition, Pact staff must be acknowledged for their roles in assisting to ensure a quality product.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of the Cambodian education system is essential to an economically viable country and to an educated, healthy and content citizenry. Education has, therefore, become a priority for the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). The proportion of the national budget for education has increased and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) has produced several comprehensive education plans. Cambodia has become an active participant in the global Education For All (EFA) initiative and has committed itself to ensure that all children and youth have equal opportunity to access basic education, independent of economic status, gender, geography, physical disability and ethnicity. To achieve the goals of EFA, the RGC has developed a series of short and long-term plans emphasizing the elimination of barriers to education for the poor, for girls and for those living in rural and remote areas in the country; increasing the number of teachers in primary and secondary school programs, including the number of women teaching in secondary schools; and increasing the number of children who complete a minimum of nine years of education.

This assessment considers the integration of teachers' voices into educational planning, especially as represented by the Khmer Teachers' Association (KTA) and the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA). Information used in this assessment included education sector planning documents, interviews with such education stakeholders as donors, NGOs, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), labour organisations, teachers' organisations, higher education professionals and focus groups with teachers. Findings focused first on the inextricable link between the education sector and labour issues with recommendations to include: 1) the expansion of mediation, negotiation, advocacy and social dialogue strategies for CITA, support for the continued growth and organisational development of CITA and a broadening of CITA's activities to address Cambodia's educational objectives and plans; 2) a more visible presence by the KTA on the professional development of teachers and advocacy for teachers; and 3) a more consultative process by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) to incorporate teacher organisations in the development and implementation of educational plans. Undergirding these recommendations is an ongoing need to gather data on teachers as well as students to ensure that decision making processes and planning are informed by fact.



INTRODUCTION

Teacher status and teacher organisations: *Integration of Teachers' voices into Education for All* was prompted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and its interest in the involvement of teachers' organisations in sector planning. Education sector reform is a crucial benchmark in Cambodia's economic development and poverty reduction. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has produced numerous plans to map this investment in education. For example, the RGC signed the Education for All National Plan 2003-2015 (EFA), produced an Education Sector Plan (ESP), an Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), and included education in the National Poverty Reduction Plan (NPRP). Respondents for this assessment consistently expressed their support for these plans, acknowledged the work that went into their development, and recognized the challenges in their implementation. Significant also is the Education Law drafted by MoEYS for approval by the Council of Ministers. This Education Law will reinforce all MoEYS initiatives.

The potential impact of MoEYS' education initiatives is vast—and positive. Conversely, there is the potential for negative consequences if these initiatives are not fully implemented. Given that many of these plans are nascent, MoEYS is open to changes and to

the possibility for greater participation by teachers in the future. Teacher training, deployment, salaries, and teacher/pupil ratios are all potential targets for additional planning and strategy revision in collaboration with teachers. Yet without the right to organise, the right to appeal decisions, and a recognized presence in the decision making process, teachers' concerns continue to be focused on individual problems and have not played a big role in the public arena. Only two teachers' organisations identified were concerned with

the welfare of teachers; the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA), an independent organisation created in 2000, and the Khmer Teachers' Association (KTA), a voluntary benevolence organisation.

BACKGROUND

The profile of Cambodia is that its citizens are poor, young, and rural. In 2002, 36 percent of the 13 million Cambodian citizens lived below the poverty line of US\$0.46-0.63/day (Council for Social Development, 2002). More than 52 per cent of these Cambodians are under 18 years of age and a 20 per cent population increase is expected over the next ten years (Secretariat General of NEFAC, 2003). Rural Cambodia will account for the largest proportion of this increase. Over 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas (Council, 2002). Out of the total population, 37 percent above the age of 15 are illiterate; and 29 percent are semi-literate, meaning they can read and write words and numbers, but can not read and write sentences. Literacy rates are significantly lower for females than for males; males have a literacy rate of 79 percent while women have an average literacy rate of 57 percent. Only 12 percent of women over the age of 25 have more than a primary school education (Council). Predictably, poverty rates are higher for households in which the head of the household has had either no formal education or limited primary schooling (Secretariat General of NEFAC, 2003). The RGC has made a strong commitment to reduce poverty and to universal education as a core strategy to achieve this goal.

MoEYS recognizes that the strengthening of any one sector, in this case the educational sector, is dependent upon the robustness of numerous other sectors. Health, economic macro and micro development, rural livelihoods, education, and gender equity strategies are inextricably interrelated. Consequently, a high level of interministerial collaboration and a process that inspires ownership at all levels—governmental to individual citizen—will contribute to achieving success.

The gradual rebuilding of the Cambodian educational system is a remarkable story.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

From the early twentieth century until 1975, the system of mass education in Cambodia operated on the French model, requiring 13 years of education and 4 to 5 major examinations each year. Independence in 1953 prompted a renewed interest in education and in the year following independence the number of students rapidly increased. At that time teachers were able to support themselves while practicing a respected profession. During the Khmer Rouge regime of 1975-79, education was severely set back and the great strides made in literacy and education during the two decades following independence were systematically obliterated. At the beginning of the 1970s, there were more than 20,000 teachers in Cambodia. Only about 5,000 of the teachers remained 10 years later; 50 of the 725 university instructors, 207 of the 2,300 secondary school teachers, and 2,717 of the 21,311 primary school teachers survived (Country Studies, 2003). By the end of the Khmer Rouge regime, most young people under the age of 14 lacked any basic education.

The gradual rebuilding of the Cambodian educational system is a remarkable story, beginning with the assistance of volunteer teach-

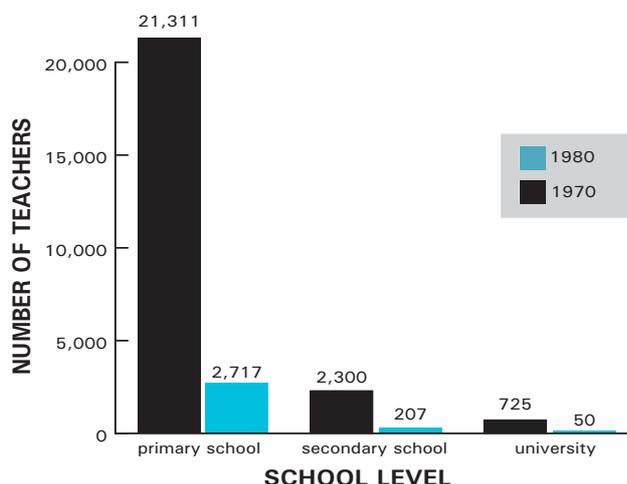
ers and citizens with a few more years of schooling than their students, and continuing with significant financial and technical assistance from donors, an increasingly educated cadre of teachers, dedicated MoEYS staff, and a larger portion of the RGC budget—18.2 percent in 2002 with an anticipated increase to 20 percent in 2005 (Secretariat General of NEFAC, 2003).

Progress in education since the signing of the Paris Peace Accord in 1991 has had a considerable impact on children. Between 1998/1999 and 2001/2002 there was an absolute increase of 32 percent in primary school enrolments. An estimated 89 percent of primary age school students and 19 percent of secondary school age students now enrol in school and a significant proportion of this growth is in disadvantaged areas. (Disadvantaged schools are those without a good roof, a good floor or a good wall in at least half of its rooms, without a drinking water supply, and without latrine facilities.) It is discouraging to note, however, that by the lower secondary level of school, only 17 percent of potential students enrol.

The drop out rate is dramatic for girls. During the 2001-2002 academic year over 1,000,000 girls enrolled in primary school; only 172,348 enrolled in secondary school (EMIS Centre, 2002). Girls represent only about one third of the total enrolment in secondary schools and 20 percent of post-secondary students. MoEYS reports a need to accelerate the rate children progress into lower secondary school in the coming years, otherwise “it would not be possible to reach the basic education access goal of 9 years of quality basic education for all by 2015. Most children would be enrolled in primary school by 2007, but lower secondary school ‘enrolment for all’ is unlikely.”

By 2010 the RGC expects that all children will participate in 9 years of free, basic education of good quality. Achieving this ambitious mandate defines the work of MoEYS’ staff as they begin to implement the directives established within the EFA, ESP, and ESSP. NGOs, donors and teacher organisations interviewed for this assessment expressed their strong support for the objectives of the EFA,

During the 2001-2002 academic year over **1,000,000** girls enrolled in primary school; only **172,348** enrolled in secondary school. (EMIS Centre, 2002)



Statistics from Country Studies, 2003

ESP and the ESSP. Strategies within these documents were also supported by most participants in the education sector.

Implementation marks the area for concern; funds are inadequate, human resources are limited in number and skills, and geographic barriers can be daunting. MoEYS has stated these strategies are flexible and will be changed based on assessments conducted during implementation and the identification of more effective solutions. The processes guiding the evolution of strategies would benefit from more clarity—especially for parents and teachers who are directly affected by them. A focused campaign to bring the EFA to the attention of all Cambodian citizens has just begun.

Many NGOs working in the education sector have first-hand experience with the strategies as they are implemented, and in partnership with MoEYS have conducted extensive reviews and offered specific recommendations. The *Education Sector Review Report-2002*, the first Annual ESP/ESSP Review provides a comprehensive analysis of what works and what does not. The challenge is in knowing how stakeholders can best assist Cambodia to achieve goals in the education sector as they also hold the RGC and MoEYS accountable.

METHODOLOGY ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The goal of this assessment was to develop a basic understanding of the Cambodian education sector—past, present, and future—the sector's strengths, weaknesses, and challenges and its relationship to teachers' organisations. Within this context the objectives were:

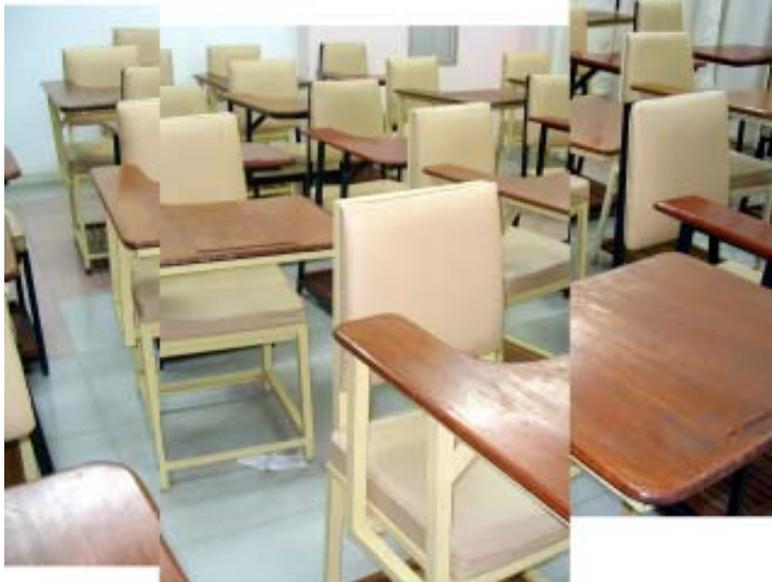
- To develop a basic understanding of priorities for the Cambodian educational sector;
- To determine the extent to which the Cambodian Independent Teachers' Association (CITA) and the Khmer Teachers' Association (KTA) were involved in developing and implementing educational policy;
- To assess the impact of key educational policy directions and practice objectives on teachers;
- To assess a potential role for teachers' organisations as advocates for teachers; and,
- To identify potential mechanisms for teacher input in educational directives.

The focus in this assessment, to consider the involvement of teacher organisations in educational planning, was based on the ILO's interest in the interface between teacher organisations and MoEYS, and their roles in the educational sector. Consequently, the purpose, plans, strategies, organisational structures, and effectiveness of KTA and CITA in representing the needs of teachers, as identified by supporters and critics, were the focus of the interviews.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Information gathering focused on: 1) a literature review of documents on Cambodia's educational vision and plans, and 2) interviews with key advisors, stakeholders and visionaries in education, including those charged with the responsibility of implementation.

The literature review responded first to the reports identified in the collaboration contract with the ILO, such as the EFA, ESP, ESSP and NPRS. Additional documents were identified during interviews of teachers, government administrators, NGOs, advisors and educational organisations. Documents were read with several



objectives in mind.

- To understand education objectives and their desired effect on education in Cambodia;
- To assess the acknowledged or unacknowledged effect of objectives in these key documents on teachers; and
- To determine mechanisms for participation by teachers organisations in the development of educational policies and practices.

Interviews were used to acquire a more in depth understanding of educational priorities and strategies, to obtain opinions on CITA and KTA and the role of teachers in the implementation of educational plans, and to discuss the coherence between plans and practices. Interviews were also conducted with Ministers and Directors within MoEYS, donors and donor advisors, social dialogue experts, NGOs and educational organisations. Additionally, two focus groups were held with members of CITA. In the focus groups, seven teachers from Phnom Penh, and twenty teachers in Kampong Cham Province responded to questions about their objectives for joining CITA and their opinions on CITA strategies.

THE KHMER TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (KTA)

The Khmer Teachers Association (KTA) was first established in 1947 as a benevolence organisation for teachers. It disbanded during the Khmer Rouge regime, but was re-established in 1994. It is estimated that over 90,000 teachers work in government schools and 87,000 teachers are members of the KTA. Membership is automatic for public school teachers. The KTA's mission is to strengthen solidarity among teachers and improve their living conditions regardless of politics, race or religion. Five goals articulated by the KTA are:

1. To strengthen and improve friendship and help one another within the members of KTA;
2. To improve teachers' professional knowledge;
3. To help education in Cambodia;
4. To encourage communication between teachers in the country and with international agencies; and
5. To materially and emotionally support teachers' living conditions.

The KTA states that it is independent from the government. It has a board and holds elections every two years. Chapters are present in each province and directors are also elected every two years. The director of the KTA is a volunteer and actually works for the Commission Nationale Du Cambodge (CNC) which is under the RGC's Council of Ministers. He reports a positive association between the

KTA and the government, citing invitations to participate in MoEYS planning sessions as evidence.

The organisation produces a monthly magazine focused on the professional development of teachers, collects and manages dues from its members, and collects and distributes additional contributions to families of teachers upon their deaths—up to 2,000,000 Riel (4,000 Riel is equivalent to U.S. \$1.00). One hundred Riel is deducted monthly from each member to support the KTA; 70 Riel remains in the province for running the organisation and 30 Riel are sent to the central office where funds are expended on management and publication costs of the magazine.

In 2001 the European Union provided \$40,000 to the KTA to improve the living conditions of teachers. Subsequently, a loan fund was established for teachers in Phnom Penh. A major initiative of the KTA is in developing a system of guesthouses throughout Cambodia for the use of teachers on travel. This initiative continues what was a function of the KTA prior to the Khmer Rouge regime. Currently, guesthouses have been established in Phnom Penh, Siem Riep and in Kampot. Land has also been purchased in Kampong Cham for the next facility.

The KTA occasionally advocates on behalf of individual teachers. It encourages MoEYS to increase teacher salaries and emphasizes the need for continued professional development of teachers.

THE CAMBODIAN INDEPENDENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

The Cambodian Independent Teachers Association (CITA) was officially launched in March of 2000. Reports vary about the number of teachers in attendance at the inaugural meeting, but the number most often cited is 200. Education International (EI), the largest international organisation of teachers' unions reports that CITA faced tremendous odds in becoming registered as a teachers' organisation. Eventually, and following international pressure on the government, CITA was recognized by the Ministry of Interior as an organisation in July, 2001. CITA could not register as a union. Union membership for civil service employees is not yet a right under the Civil Service Law.

CITA is managed by an elected President and several volunteers. The organisation has received technical assistance from the ILO, the US AID-funded American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS) in Phnom Penh, and from EI with whom it is formally affiliated. Outside funding supports the CITA newsletter and financial support from the Swedish Teachers Union flows through EI to CITA. EI established and equipped the CITA office in Phnom Penh. Most CITA staff report that they are employed in other jobs and contribute their free time to CITA; EI provides the salary for one part-time secretary.

CITA activities are directed by eight CITA guidelines outlined in the organisation's Constitution:



1. To promote the solidarity of Cambodian teachers irrespective of race, colour, sex, religion or political opinion;
2. To help improve the quality of education in Cambodia;
3. To help protect the financial, emotional and psychological interests of teachers and to act as a support mechanism for teachers experiencing difficulties;
4. To improve the standard of living of teachers by demanding and negotiating

with the government for increased salaries;

5. To promote good working conditions for teachers which guarantee decency, safety, security and justice for all teachers;
6. To support the professional development of teachers through education and training programs;
7. To promote solidarity between Cambodian teachers and international organisations and teachers organisations worldwide; and,
8. To support human rights, democracy and social development in Cambodia through education and by organising the teachers into one voice.

All government employees teaching from kindergarten to university are eligible to apply for membership in CITA. The organisation now has a membership of 2,500 and a presence in 10 provinces. CITA members pay an initial membership fee of 500 Riel and monthly dues of 200 Riel. Every two years the CITA president is elected at the CITA Congress, as are the 12 members of the National Executive Committee. Branch Executive Committees have been established in the 10 provinces where CITA has a viable presence.

A CITA advocacy strategy is the strike. The CITA Draft Constitution, Chapter 9, Article 33 addresses strikes, stating "CITA considers peaceful and non-violent strikes as an option to improve and protect the interests of teachers in Cambodia. All strikes led by the organisation will be in accordance with Articles 37 and 38 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia which allows strikes as a means to:

- Protect the status and freedom of teachers
- Demand an improvement in the status and working conditions of teachers and,
- Improve the exercise of democracy in the Kingdom of Cambodia."

CITA is a nascent organisation with a commitment to teachers, the teaching profession and the quality of education in Cambodia. Core activities focus on growing CITA membership and developing leadership among its members. CITA lacks the resources to grow more rapidly or to use the full range of advocacy strategies to achieve its goals.

CIVIL LAW, RIGHT TO ORGANISE, TRADE UNIONS, PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The Cambodian Constitution passed in 1993 sanctions the right to freedom of association and to organise trade unions. In Chapter III, The Rights and Obligations of Khmer Citizens, Article 36, Cambodian citizens have the right to form and become members of a trade union; Article 42 provides the right to establish organisations and political parties. The right to organise in Cambodia has been strengthened by a number of additional legislation and policies. The first among these was the Labour Law, enacted in 1997, which outlines rules regarding labour contracts. Drafting of the Labour Law included input from the ILO and the AFL-CIO, the largest labour union in the United States. In 1999, Cambodia became the second country in Asia to ratify all seven core ILO Conventions. The first Cambodian labour union, the Free Trade Union of Workers of The Kingdom of Cambodia, was formed in 1996 and soon after 3,000 garment workers marched to the National Assembly seeking better working conditions (MacLeod and Mansfield, 2002). Whereas the right to organise has taken a strong foothold in the garment factory sector, it has yet to take hold in the education sector.

One factor contributing to an absence of union activity in the education sector is the Civil Service Law of the Kingdom of Cambodia which was passed in 1994. The Civil Service Law has yet to incorporate the principles of the ILO conventions and does not give public school teachers the right to organise. This 1994 Civil Service Law fails to ensure the rights of public employees to organise unions, does not protect union activity, and fails to allow for collective bargaining rights. It conflicts with the ILO Conventions, most notably the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), both of which have been cited by teachers' organisations as providing protective assurances for teachers and both of which have been ratified by Cambodia. Amendments to the Civil Service Law are currently being drafted by the American Center for International Labor Solidarity to provide protection against anti-union discrimination and to support collective bargaining rights. The drafted amendments, however, are not assured of governmental support.

associated targets identified during the UNESCO-sponsored World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

Draft Law on Education

MoEYS staff and advisors to MoEYS are in the midst of drafting a Law on Education to present to the Council of Ministers. This reformist Law on Education will govern all academic, technical, and vocational education programs of all kinds and levels—formal, non-formal or informal, public and private school, and local, national, or international. It will cover children at enrolment age and school age, learners, parents, commune-sangkat councils, organisations of learners, and educational personnel. It will not cover religious or military technical education. The draft law cites the following goals:

- To establish effective rules and education administration and management systems based on the principles of good governance;
- To set national requirements for equal access and equal opportunity to obtain education for all;
- To ensure gender equity in education and educational services;
- To achieve quality education for all;
- To eliminate discrimination against race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion or national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status in education and educational services;
- To elaborate legal conditions for promotion of gifted and talented learners irrespective of their background;
- To ensure the rights of learners, educational personnel, parents and persons with disabilities in education and educational services;
- To establish the limits of the governmental responsibility for education; and,
- To set conditions for involvement of private persons in education whether on a profit-making or non-profit-making basis, as well as the conditions for participation of the education related stakeholders in the education administration and management.

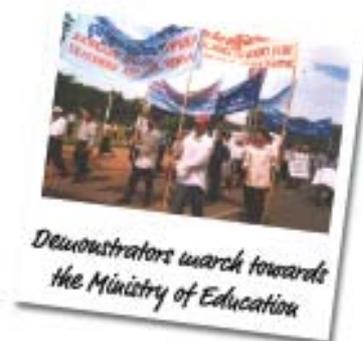
A review of model education laws, legal assistance, and much thought and debate has gone into the development of the Cambodian Education Law. Yet despite the serious and extensive attention given to this law, the process of consultation and the participants in drafting the Education Law are not evident. It is expected to go in front of the National Assembly in early 2004.

FINDINGS

NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND PLANS

The documents reviewed for this assessment included: the macro level—NPRS 2003-2005, Draft Law on Education, and EFA 2003-2015; the operational level—ESP 2001-2005, ESSP 2002-2006; and such macro and micro level sector analyses as the Educator Sector Review Report-2002 and the NGO Statements to Consultative Group Meeting in Cambodia, 2002 and 2003. Many of the education plans generated by MoEYS are available on their web site, www.moeys.gov.kh.

Macro level documents serve as catalysts for donor support as much as they provide direction to the RGC. The RGC's Education for All National Plan 2003-2015 parallels the six EFA goals and



National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005

The National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005 (NPRS), one of the RGC's macro level plans, was published in December, 2002 and describes one of several core initiatives in Cambodia's development. The guiding vision of the NPRS is ambitious, but commendable: "To have a socially cohesive, educationally advanced, and culturally vibrant Cambodia without poverty, illiteracy and ill health..."(NPRS, p. 5). The NPRS is also one of several plans that continue to inform and be informed by the Second Socio-economic Development Plan, 2001-2005 (SEDPII). The NPRS is the result of sustained financial and human resources by international donors, most notably, the World Bank.

Developing the NPRS is described within the document as a rich consultative and inclusive process involving multiple ministries, data from extensive surveys of poverty in Cambodia, provincial consultations, parliamentarians, donors, a broad range of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and unions. Unions established the Union Committee for PRSP to address labour conditions, employment issues and corruption. This committee submitted a report entitled "Generating Decent Work for Poverty Reduction in Cambodia-the Voice of Workers, Employers and the Government." The impact of this specific report is unclear, but the role of trade unions is explicit in the NPRS. "Through such organisations as the Chamber of Commerce and Worker Federations/Trade Unions, the private sector is expected to participate actively in meetings, workshops and national poverty forums" (NPRS, p. 154). The NPRS document includes a range of statements that acknowledge workers' rights and worker conditions (gender equity, health, safety, and appropriate wage levels). For example, the monitoring of working conditions in private enterprises will be done in cooperation with the ILO, labour will be trained on workplace relations, and labour law will be disseminated to employers and employees.

The following are priority poverty reduction actions. Each of those listed encompasses its own set of poverty-reducing objectives and strategies:

1. *Promoting Opportunities* incorporates actions that lead to sustaining a high economic growth; sound financial system oversight; increasing revenues for the social and economic sectors; civil service, legal and judicial reforms; and improving rural livelihoods.
2. *Expanding Job Opportunities* addresses development in the private sector, in trade, in tourism, in post and telecommunications, in micro-finance, in labour and vocational training, and in industrial development and urban development through public/private partnerships.
3. *Improving Capabilities* incorporates health, nutrition, education, safe water, and sanitation, through the promotion of physical accessibility, affordability, and education.
4. *Strengthening Institutions and Improving Governance* emphasizes reforming justice, administration, and civil service including pay



reform, decentralization of local governance and anti-corruption activities.

5. *Reducing Vulnerability and Strengthening Social Inclusion* highlights food security, social protection, and human trafficking.

6. *Promoting Gender Equity* emphasizes increased inclusion of women in a broad range of sectors ranging from community to governmental levels through collaborative strategies among ministries to be managed by the Ministry on Women and Veterans Affairs (MOWVA).

These six priorities underscore the extensive scope and scale of work to be accomplished before Cambodia successfully addresses poverty. The priorities reflect the need for extensive resources—financial, human, and systems—and a rich and collaborative process consistent with sectors that are interdependent and stakeholders. For example, the reform of administration and civil service, including pay reform has a significant impact on the value given to teaching and to teachers. The NPRS makes it very

clear that the growth of any sector is enhanced by administration that is free of corruption, decentralized, and transparent. Accountability is less clear.

Education for All National Plan 2003-2015

Education for All (EFA) is a global movement in which governments from over 150 countries work in partnership with civil society toward the achievement of comprehensive educational systems. The most recent World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, resulted in the *Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments*. This framework consists of the following goals which attending countries agreed to reach by the year 2015.

Dakar Goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
4. Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

DAKAR GOALS

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.

Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

These six goals are incorporated in the RGC's *Education for All National Plan 2003-2015* objectives—Early Childhood Care and Education, Primary Education, Life and Work Skills, Adult Literacy, Gender Equity, and Quality—and identify as their highest priority expanding and improving the quality of basic education.

The EFA is tightly tied to the NPRS in its assumption that equitable access to education and training opportunities for the first nine years of basic education will be the most important single objective in helping the poorest families move out of poverty. To this extent the EFA emphasizes three priority directives:

- To broaden the availability of education services, especially lower secondary provision.
- To alleviate cost barriers to access to primary and secondary education.
- To examine equitable resource allocation policies, including affirmative poverty indexing, in government spending on basic education services.

Challenges for the EFA in Cambodia begin with the scope and scale of the activities required to achieve its objectives, especially in rural and remote areas. (Remote is the classification given to an area

where communication with and transportation to the school is difficult and where population density is less than 10 persons per square kilometre.) As with the NPRS, donors have been the catalyst for the EFA and have provided guidelines for their development. Full implementation of the EFA requires substantial human, financial and systems resources at national, provincial and district levels. It also requires support by teachers and parents, both of whom lack specific information on their role and responsibility for achieving the EFA. Broad-based dissemination of information about the EFA has just begun. CITA was not involved in EFA planning and the KTA's role was minimal. The long-term plan of the EFA is supported by the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) 2002-2006, which emphasize medium-term implementation strategies for the EFA.

Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2001-05

The ESP offers four key policy priorities and six strategic priorities to guide activities up to and beyond 2005.

1. *Basic Education.* Equitable access to grades 1 through 9 will be achieved for all children through an increase in enrolment; improved gender, social and urban/rural parity; higher survival rates; and better standards.

2. *Post-Basic Education.* As with basic education, participation in upper secondary, technical, vocational education and training (TVET), and higher education also will be enhanced through increased enrolment, improved gender, social and urban/rural parity, improved survival rates and improved standards.

3. *Institutional Development and Capacity Building for Decentralisation.* ESP strategies emphasize greater decision-making responsibility at the district, community and school levels in education services planning, management, services delivery, reporting and monitoring. Decentralisation will be assisted by improved legislation and regulatory mechanisms for implementation.

4. *Sector Financing.* The ESP strategies were designed to encourage parity by increasing financial support within governmental and private sectors to enable the poorest families to attend school.

The following six strategic priorities outline policy priorities. MOEYS will:

1. *Ensure More Equitable Access to Basic Education* by lowering financial demands on parents, increasing performance-based teacher remuneration, eliminating the need for informal parental payments to teachers, and increasing school operating budgets.
2. *Provide Quality and Efficiency Improvement in Basic Education* through an emphasis on learning materials, continuous professional development for teachers, student remedial classes and progression, non-formal programs for adult literacy and re-entry into mainstream schooling for school drop-outs, and decentralisation.
3. *Increase the Selective Use of Information Technology* through the introduction of new technologies in upper secondary and post secondary institutions, distance learning programs, and technology-based approaches for sharing management and monitoring information.
4. *Encourage More Public/Private Partnership in Post-Basic Education*, specifically, higher education and technical vocational education and training (TVET).

5. *Increase Capacity for Decentralized Education Service Management* by delegating responsibility for program planning to strengthen central and provincial planning and monitoring systems; enhancing district and school/institutional management systems; and improving governance and regulatory systems.
6. *Focusing Capital Budget Spending on Policy Reforms* by rehabilitating existing facilities, expanding primary and secondary schools, and improving residential facilities at teacher training institutions.

The ESP calls for reducing the average parental contributions for basic education and increasing classroom teacher salaries which are projected to double by 2005, including a substantial upfront increase over 2001-2003. Special incentives and increased differentiation in salary scales are intended to be used depending on performance of revised tasks and responsibilities (e.g. for head teachers and remote school postings). The plan projects a doubling of the school operating budgets, alongside allocations for continuous, nationwide training of all teachers and head teachers.

Efficiency gains in the use of staff and facilities will complement these six strategic priorities through, for example, increased pupil/teacher ratios for secondary education, increased use of double shifts in primary and secondary schools, and increased public spending on quality improvement, including for textbooks. Annually, the ESP is anticipated to benefit from sector performance monitoring; program impact, progress and operational monitoring; and a systems performance audit. Other ministries and stakeholders will participate in monitoring and in deciding how to use their findings for adjusting the ESP. Teacher participation is notably absent, i.e. there is no evidence of consultation, much less negotiation, with teachers or their representatives concerning any of the salary or workplace issues, yet teachers are a source of valuable assessment and monitoring information.

Operationalizing the EFA requires diverse strategies and well-articulated implementation plans. The current ESP is a four-year plan. MoEYS has one year left to achieve objectives outlined in the plan. Though progress has been made—more students are attending school, more teachers are being trained, more students in remote and rural areas are receiving an education—there is far to go to ensure

consistent quality, full enrolment, increased retention and gender equity.

Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) 2002-2006

The ESSP provides the EFA and the ESP with implementation strategies. It presents proposed mechanisms for the planning, management and monitoring of ESP/ESSP policies, strategies and programs at the provincial, district and school levels. The program priorities for the ESSP are the following:

1. *Education Service Efficiency and Performance.* Both the efficiency and quality of learning in Cambodia have suffered due to the fact that many schools across the country lack sufficient staff, especially in difficult and remote areas, while other schools have surplus staff. The ratio of office staff to teachers is also high compared to neighbouring countries. To balance these MoEYS has developed strategies for assigning teachers to difficult and remote areas, establishing standards for minimum performance and ensuring that primary and secondary teachers comprise at least 82 percent of total staff. They comprised 76 percent in 2000.
2. *Primary Education Quality and Efficiency.* MoEYS' challenge is to find a proper balance between the increased quantity of students enrolling and the quality of education provided. As student enrolment improves, MoEYS anticipates also improving teacher/student ratios, increasing instructional hours, and abolishing informal payments by parents (payments to educational personnel that are in addition to required fees—often used to supplement salaries). These outputs are intended to result in more equitable access to basic education for low income parents, improve enrolment and progression rates, and ultimately enhance the quality and efficiency of basic education.
3. *Secondary Education Quality and Efficiency.* Funds for school operating budgets, supplies and instructional materials are insufficient, there is a limited capacity for monitoring, and there are too few qualified teachers. Again, activities in the ESSP cite removal of informal spending for parents and an interest in designing other pro-poor policies that improve access to secondary education in addition to increasing the number of graduates from remote areas who attend teacher training schools.
4. *Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Quality and Efficiency.* MoEYS will develop an effective and efficient TVET system able to assist with expanding the economic development of Cambodia. This will be a priority of the National Training Board which will work with both public and private TVET schools to design curricula, introduce better testing, and train staff. Additionally, effective management and accounting procedures and poverty indexed scholarships and incentive programs will address efficiency and access.
5. *Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Higher Education.* Public and private partnerships will be an emphasis of MoEYS to improve the quality of management and educational programs. Equitable access, transparent and accountable financial and admissions systems and improved facilities are some of the outcomes expected from partnerships.
6. *Continuous Teacher Development.* Continuous teacher de-



velopment incorporates elements of teacher-training school curriculum and in-service programs, performance-based salary reforms and collaboration among the departments of personnel, finance and teacher training. Teacher development incorporates plans for a teacher training system that is flexible, able to adapt its curriculum to various methodologies (multi-grade, multi-subject) and to respond to emerging best practices information. Levels of competence for staff and directors of training schools will be established as a means to articulate expectations for quality performance.

7. *Sustainable Provisions of Core Instructional Materials.* It is difficult to identify relevant curricula available in Khmer. Consequently, MoEYS will develop improved and more relevant teaching materials to be published through a Publishing and Distribution



House (PDH) that will be transitioned to a public institution. This change is anticipated to improve materials and make them affordable and available.

8. *Expansion of Non-formal Education.* This focus requires an improved analysis of learning needs and non-formal educational opportunities to ensure effective, efficient and sustainable services for most disadvantaged and under-served out of school children and functionally illiterate adults. MoEYS anticipates partnerships with parents and NGOs to assist with this non-formal education.
9. *In-school AIDS Awareness.* Cambodia has the highest HIV/AIDS rate in the region. In order to reduce the HIV/AIDS prevalence nation-wide, the ESSP proposes strategies that work through partnerships within the schools.
10. *Youth and Sport Development and AIDS Awareness.* Strategies here focus largely on partnerships with others to both increase access to high quality sports and physical education and to integrate programs that increase awareness among youth and children about HIV/AIDS.
11. *Strengthened Monitoring Systems.* To evaluate the effectiveness of the ESSP as implemented, MoEYS anticipates strengthening capacity at central, provincial and district levels to monitor finance and program operations and to ensure that work plans and reports are consistent with guidelines and targets. When feasible, MoEYS will encourage independent assessment of outcomes.
12. *Scholarships/Incentives for Equitable Access.* To increase enrolment, retention, and progression of such underserved student populations as girls, the poor, and the disabled in primary and secondary education, ESSP actions address on-site feeding programs and local planning and administrative capacity in addition to scholarships and incentive programs for attendance at teach-

ers' colleges, higher education and TVET institutions. Additionally, educational facilities will be established or improved to ensure uncrowded and pleasant learning environments.

As with the ESP, the ESSP has experienced some success and movement has been made in each of its priority areas; more students enrol in primary school and more students transition to secondary school. Only two years remain to fully achieve the objectives outlined in the ESSP and MoEYS remains understaffed and under-funded for this implementation.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATION PLANS

The education plans are comprehensive and clearly designed to move Cambodia forward on such multiple fronts as economic development, poverty reduction, and human resource development. It cannot be overstated—education reform is essential to the revitalization of post-conflict Cambodia. However, the timelines to implement it are short, resources are limited, and processes for accountability are often undefined.

Many objectives and strategies identified in the education plans have a direct impact on the professional and personal lives of teachers as a group and as individuals. Teachers link students and learning, and as pivotal stakeholders it is critical that they have ownership in the plans. In the absence of ownership the disconnection will grow between teachers and community, teachers and parents, and teachers and teaching. Consultation in government sector plans is time consuming and avoiding conflict between different stakeholders needs careful facilitation and well-defined processes to be successful. Consultation will be strengthened as partnerships are developed that are committed to the viability of education plans. Education labour issues are integral to achieving these plans.

The Educational Sector and Teachers

The following core issues are important indicators of teachers' status: teacher education and professional development, teachers' professional responsibilities and rights, terms and conditions of employment, gender equity, and social dialogue. Teachers were encouraged by MoEYS through their provincial offices to participate during EFA, ESP, and ESSP planning stages on these and other issues, but no formalized provisions for consultations—or negotiations over these issues as planned—or implemented—have been established.

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Education Sector Planning

Processes culminating in the EFA and its implementation plans, the ESP and the ESSP, were reported to be highly participatory. Planning for the ESP was grounded in a sector analysis carried out jointly by MoEYS and the donor community. Input from meetings with 500 provincial and district education staff, NGOs, donors and multiple Ministries generated the information and the suggestions that resulted in the EFA, the ESP and the ESSP. The ESP states that “partners will engage in constructive and active strategic negotiation in a frank and transparent manner in order to implement a shared

vision and agreed set of long-term and medium-term policy priorities and targets” and to some extent this has been so. Teachers have had input into many educational policies and strategies, but it has been difficult to confirm the extent or consistency of teacher involvement. As described above, however, this occurred during large-scale fact finding missions in which policy makers convened forums throughout the country and met with local educational leaders and teachers to assess issues and solicit opinions on their proposed solutions to improving the educational system.

This assessment found no consistent, identifiable presence representing a broad range of teacher interests, rights and responsibilities in the planning processes. There is no mechanism through which teachers are informed about upcoming initiatives or are able to convene, discuss and make recommendations as an organisation of professionals.

Mechanisms that include teachers' organisations become increasingly important as educational planning is decentralized and as multiple layers for communication and problem solving are established. Teachers' organisations have access to thousands of teachers nationally and the national EFA coordinator states that 2004 will be the year to build bottom up ownership in achieving EFA objectives. To this end, MoEYS is preparing for a UNICEF-supported pilot in a few rural and remote provinces to engage in EFA planning at a commune level. Strategies to ensure teachers' ownership of education planning would also strengthen the achievement of EFA goals.

The mechanism most used for input and discussion with MoEYS is the NGO Education Partnership (NEP). NEP was formed at the request of MoEYS and is integrated into a consultative process at the national level by MoEYS regarding the ESP and other education sector reforms. The NEP is an association of 50 organisations working in education throughout Cambodia. Increasingly, the membership is diversifying to include more

Cambodian NGOs. The five-member NEP Board represents NEP members on various MoEYS' committees and working groups. Members have participated in the development of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and prepared written submissions to the development of the EFA plan. They have been represented at Ministry/Donor/NGO meetings, Education Sector Working Group Meetings and Social Sector Working Group meetings.

They have made formal written submissions to the 2002 and 2003 Consultative Group meetings and to the 2002 Education Forum meeting.

NEP supports the plans produced by MoEYS and is recognized by MoEYS and educationally-focused NGOs for its constructive critiques of MoEYS in documents produced as input to the Consultative Group and in annual assessments of the ESSP. NEP has made overtures to CITA, requesting that CITA become a member. CITA, however, views NEP as an organisation unwilling to hold MoEYS accountable to its plans, especially when it comes to teachers' rights and benefits, and has therefore declined to participate.

This assessment found no consistent, identifiable presence representing a broad range of teacher interests, rights and responsibilities in the planning processes.

Teacher Education and Professional Development.

There are 26 teacher training centres in 24 provinces, including a pedagogically focused teacher training institute in Phnom Penh. In addition to training teachers in core curriculum, these schools assist teachers in learning to teach multi-grade and multi-subject classes. Teacher education and professional development is of significant concern to MoEYS as clearly indicated in the education reform and planning documents. Building the capacity of teachers is fundamental to achieving goals cited in EFA, especially goals related to education quality and addressing poverty. The EFA document cites Continuous Teacher Development as one of its priority action programs.

The system for teacher education and professional development is an evolving one. It is guided by long-term goals of meeting targets for increased enrolment in primary and secondary education by expanding the cadre of trained teachers and deploying trained staff to under-served, remote and disadvantaged areas. Teacher training centres have been established throughout the country to encourage upper secondary graduates from remote areas to develop teaching skills and remain in their home districts as teachers.

Interest in teaching as a career has increased. In 2003, over 11,000 vied for 1,250 available slots to train as secondary teachers. MoEYS is proud of the Regional and Provincial Teacher Training Centre programs. They raise the level of expectations for teachers, they improve access to teacher training for remote and rural citizens, and they have begun to re-establish teaching as a profession. In 1999 the Director of Teacher Training and EFA Coordinator wrote: "At all levels of teacher education, the system is limited in scope, curricula are outdated, facilities are limited, teachers are insufficiently trained, and are often unresponsive to the changing needs of the rapidly emerging economy" (Bunroecun, 1999, p. 43). This 1999 statement continues to hold some degree of accuracy.



The EFA, the ESP and the ESSP all stress the importance of establishing minimum standards for staff performance and workloads and for strengthening the appraisal systems. The ESSP notes that a critical objective is improving human resource management processes and capacities and demonstrating that "any improvements in staff remuneration and incentives are clearly translated into staff performance and productivity gains." The Department of Personnel will prepare staff performance appraisal guidelines, including a framework for defining career paths for education managers and teaching staff that will incorporate requirements for planning, training and pay reform. Outside of references to behaviour expected of civil service employees, a code of conduct for teachers is not readily identifiable. Currently KTA and CITA have not participated in the draft Education Law that will influence the implementation of national education plans. There is a great missed opportunity to improve the Education Law through incorporating the ideas of teachers and their organisations, in accordance with the international Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966.

Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Review of the NPRS, the EFA, the ESP, the ESSP and related assessment documents identified several policies and strategies that directly or indirectly affect teachers. Teachers, and the EFA goals they work to achieve, would benefit from regular forums to discuss or negotiate issues that consistently surface in education plans and that directly affect teachers: performance based pay, multi-grade teaching and other strategies in under-served areas, decentralized operations, planning and management, facilities and provision of instructional materials, teacher/student ratios and work hours. With the exception of salaries, it was difficult to identify a KTA or a CITA-generated position on any of these issues. Again, KTA voices interest in the professional development of teachers and the KTA newsletter supports these voiced concerns. CITA is most concerned with teacher salaries and conducts advocacy on this issue, but its positions on other terms and conditions of employment are less evident. As noted earlier, civil service legislation does not presently permit negotiation or collective bargaining on any of these issues.

Teachers' Salaries. All RGC civil servants are underpaid and most are unable to support themselves on their salary. The basic salaries of teachers are: beginning primary school 66,000 Riel (US \$16.29 month), beginning lower secondary schools 75,600 Riel (US \$ 18.66), beginning upper secondary school 92,400 Riel (US \$22.81) and upper secondary school, 92,400 Riel (US \$22.81) (Yos, 2003). Basic salaries are affected by years of work experience, position, family allowance (e.g. 5,500 Riel each month for a male teacher with a wife and child). Managerial and administrative workers benefit from extra

Teachers' Professional Responsibilities and Rights.

Though still undergoing extensive drafting, a planned Law on Education is intended to outline the rights and obligations of educational personnel. Notes in the draft Education Law indicate that the rights of learners, parents and educational personnel (public civil servant educational personnel, contract educational personnel and private educational personnel) will be based on international treaties, Constitutional provisions, and standard-setting instruments and recommendations of UNESCO and the ILO. It is anticipated that employees will have the right not to be penalized due to membership in workers' organisations, the right to training that enables them to fulfil their responsibilities as teachers, and the right to fully and actively participate, directly or through representation, in developing, implementing, monitoring and assessing local and national educational policies, plans, strategies and standards. Education staff working outside of the civil service system will be required to follow the rights and obligations of Cambodian Labour Law and any employment contract they have signed.

incentive rewards, as do merit and model teachers and teachers in remote and disadvantaged areas (Yos, 2003). Additionally, teachers engaged in multi-grade and multi-subject teaching usually receive additional payment to compensate for the extra work required. Multi-grade teaching and multi-subject teaching are logical strategies for maximizing available resources. They are also challenging strategies that represent additional work obligations for teachers and require a skill set outside of traditional teaching methodologies.

Salary is one of the most important issues for teachers, both the amount and the timeliness with which they are paid. An extreme example is the faculty at the Royal University of Phnom Penh who waited two years to receive a pay check; consequently, salary has been the primary focus of CITA in its recruiting activities. A March 2002 publication by the Institution for International Cooperation (IIC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a country study for Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), commented on the need for a majority of teachers to hold a side job to supplement their low pay, a fact they cited as contributing to a decline in professionalism.

MoEYS recognizes the necessity for an equitable and effective teacher payment strategy, and the EFA acknowledges that teachers' salaries are low in terms of living costs. Yet RGC respondents described available funds as too small to increase and sustain the increase of teacher salaries. NEP suggests that: "The percentage for teacher salaries is a difficult question for the layman, but a suggestion is that slightly over 18.3 of the national budget goes to education and of that, 56 percent goes to school staff."

One consequence of low salaries is the continuation of informal fees. This practice interferes with parent/teacher relationships and good will, limiting support for teachers by parents. Parents have reported teachers threatening to ignore their children unless the teacher received an informal payment. This makes it difficult for parents and teachers to work collaboratively. Many teachers also are required to make informal payments to their superiors. Occasionally teachers do not teach full days, reportedly so they can work the second job needed to support themselves.

Performance-based pay is an issue of particular concern to teachers and to government. It has become one mechanism for rewarding merit and hardship teaching and allows MoEYS to focus limited resources on reinforcing objectives of Education for All. It is an issue for teachers who are concerned that guidelines for performance will be developed without their input and used to limit salary increases. These issues, central to teachers' employment, are not at present the subject of any negotiating or consultative forums.

Teacher supply and deployment. *Education Statistics and Indicators: 2001/2002* reports that there are 19,027 urban teachers of whom 9,861 are women; 50,508 rural teachers of whom 16,814 are women and 1,063 remote teachers, of whom 245 are women. In the interests of increasing access to education by students in rural and remote areas, a system of one-time incentives has been established within the Department of Personnel to attract and retain experienced teachers, including women teachers, to remote and isolated schools. Clearly the preferred strategy is to induce individuals from remote areas to

attend teaching schools and continue to live and teach in their remote home areas.

The adequacy of one-time incentives is unclear. Some teachers have reported sanctions such as removal from teaching assignments for refusing to move to remote areas. In line with international standards and accepted practices, the process for deployment deci-

Labor and the Education Sector are **inextricably linked.**

sions should be well-defined and governed with emphasis on transparency of procedures and objectivity in decisions. Such issues belong in discussions with teacher organisations about terms and conditions of employment—as does the issue of job security. As mentioned earlier, teacher supply is improving largely through the extensive system of teacher training institutions, but a government suggestion has been made to replace older teachers with newly trained teachers as the teacher supply continues to grow.

Decentralized planning and management. The move to decentralize educational planning and management is promising. The development of local ownership in education and the EFA will be enhanced as commune councils and provincial educational leadership have the confidence and skills to engage in collaborative dialogue, use information rather than politics to drive decision making, and ensure transparency in their budget and decision making processes. Decentralized planning and teacher development provide accessibility for teachers. The potential for locally-driven, bottom-up decision making is an opportunity for teachers' organisations to organise and advocate for themselves, presenting, justifying and negotiating local and national policies and strategies. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to work with parents and other community members on behalf of education—emphasizing community over partisanship. The issue of building the capacity of commune councils, parents and teachers to engage in such partnerships would need to be addressed in the decentralisation process.

Facilities and instructional materials. Many facilities were destroyed or in disrepair following the Khmer Rouge. *Education Statistics & Indicators: 2001/2003* estimates that 2,274 teachers work in disadvantaged schools. Working conditions are not negotiated in teacher contracts though teachers in disadvantaged schools do receive additional payment. Facilities, class size, support for professional development, hours, informal payments are all appropriate issues for negotiation, but since there are no negotiations, discussions with teachers on these issues do not occur. Their impact on teachers and students is likely to have an effect on teaching quality. Rebuilding and upgrading educational facilities is a priority for MoEYS. The improvement of core instructional materials for students and instructional guides for teachers has been identified as a priority action program within the ESP. Teachers could play a fundamental role in developing curricula thus keeping the instructional materials grounded in the educational realities of Cambodia.

Teacher/student ratios, work hours. The ESP proposes that the Cambodian educational system will attain 100 percent net enrolment for 9 years of high quality education through increasing the representation of the poor, girls, and other disadvantaged groups. Additional objectives are a 95 percent progression and transition rate at all levels and a reduced drop out rate of fewer than 5 percent in primary and secondary schools.

One result of MoEYS success in increasing enrolment rates for schools is an increase in pupil/teacher ratios. Student/teacher ratios are high, with a 2002-2003 average of 45.8 students to every teacher in most classrooms; there is an average of 29.7 students in preschool classes and 56.8 students in primary school classes (Education Statistics and Indicators, 2002). Some teachers have reported as high as 70 students in a classroom, a situation that almost guarantees inefficient and ineffective teaching and learning. MoEYS objective, a pupil/teacher ratio of 35 for secondary and 25 for post secondary is reasonable, but MoEYS will be challenged to meet this objective by 2005 without additional resources.

There are anecdotal reports of teachers who are content with their teaching positions and with the changes in local education and in teacher training. There are also reports of teachers who feel as though MoEYS and education administrators treat teachers unfairly. The accuracy of either has not been validated although the general level of salaries of teachers which puts them below the poverty line and results in the need for them to hold more than one job is enough to indicate the potential for teacher dissatisfaction.

Gender Issues

Education Statistics and Indicators, 2001/2002 reports a total of 70,608 teaching staff in Cambodian public schools; 26, 920 (38%) of these are women. Almost all of the 2,148 teachers in preschool were women, but only 18,655 of the 47,654 primary school teachers. Slightly over 5,100 women teach in lower secondary out of a total 16,405 teachers (31%) and only 990 women teach in upper secondary out of a total 4,401 (22%) teachers.

Most RGC/MoEYS documents reviewed for this assessment support the importance of gender equity. Implementation targets emphasize an increase in the number of girls who enroll and remain in school, and the EFA calls for an official Gender Secretariat to advocate for gender issues within MoEYS and in other ministries. EFA strategies call for gender equity among students; the EFA and the ESP target greater representation of women at management levels within the education system, an increase in the number of women who are secondary teachers, a review of departmental plans to ensure integration of gender related issues and gender awareness training. The activities outlined in the ESSP do not support gender related issues. Strategies for increasing the number of women in management and in secondary schools as teachers are less well-defined than strategies to redeploy teachers, and neither CITA nor the KTA have expressed an opinion on the efficacy or implementation of these strategies.



Social Dialogue

The absence of a concerted attempt to dialogue with teachers' organisations by the RGC is noted in each of the above areas of focus. The Ministry of Education reportedly plans to identify a unit responsible for facilitating active participation in public education policies, plans, and strategy development, as well as their review and revision. This is an ambitious undertaking; stakeholders in education are numerous and include government, teachers, teachers' organisations, parents, student, and private sector employers.

A commitment to social dialogue that is inclusive of teachers is a common theme in the EFA, the ESP and the ESSP and is expected to be incorporated into the Education Law. Participation by CITA and the KTA, both of whom represent member teachers, could mutually benefit the government and teachers. Government could acquire advice about realistic ways to reach their goals and how to inculcate better teacher ownership in the plans, and teachers could experience meaningful consultation with the government and teachers on plans and their implementation. Though the intention exists, the vehicles for ensuring their translation to action are missing. There is no legislative basis in the Civil Service Law for civil service employees to organise or bargain collectively and most educators are civil servants. There is no institutional mechanism for consultation and collective bargaining in education and no formal means of information sharing or consultation with teachers on key educational policy issues. Consequently, an essential element to social dialogue in the implementation of an effective and viable education system is missing from education reform documents.

The distribution of information about the EFA throughout the country is a first step in preparing to develop local ownership in education through commune councils, the new locally-elected government bodies as of February, 2002 designed to promote participatory democracy in Cambodia. Commune councils are charged with planning, mobilizing and managing resources using participatory processes at the commune level. They have the potential to act as mechanisms for social dialogue and provide a forum through which local stakeholders can address educational issues. The specific role and responsibility for education of each commune council, and the training and support they will receive to fulfil their charge, have yet to be defined. Similarly, for teachers to play a meaningful role in new local government management of education, mechanisms will need to be defined for their participation, and their capacity to do so developed through training.

Teachers have a right and a responsibility to negotiate over issues that affect the quality of their professional lives and the educational outcomes for which they are responsible. Delegating CITA and the KTA to facilitate forums to elicit the wishes of teachers on specific work related issues and their impact on EFA and ESSP implementation would assist MoEYS to consider alternate strategies and contribute to teacher ownership in the EFA.

PRIVATE EDUCATION

Cambodia has six state universities offering bachelor and master degrees and five state institutes offering diplomas and certificates. Each year 14,000 students apply to attend one of the six state universities; only between 2,100 and 2,300 are accepted. An additional 10 private universities and 13 higher education institutes have been recognized by MoEYS (Yun, 2003). Many of these have branches in the provinces, thereby increasing access to higher education for more students. An association of private higher institutions is emerging.

The explosive growth in private universities has been mirrored by rapid growth in all school levels, from private primary through vocational technical schools. MoEYS has stated its interest in partnerships with private education. Expanding offerings in a variety of technical areas, in adult and non formal education, and in traditional undergraduate programs will allow Cambodia to more rapidly address economic growth and reduce poverty—providing the education is good and accessible.



MoEYS established an Accreditation Board, but the format and composition of the accreditation board were considered unsatisfactory by the World Bank. MoEYS had proposed to borrow \$216 million from the World Bank for libraries and other academic improvements (Sokheng, 2003). This loan was not granted. MoEYS then hosted a meeting of private universities to discuss accreditation, but there has been no follow up. Lax educational standards, weak monitoring, and minimal regulation have resulted in many private education programs that do not meet universal standards. However, such schools continue to operate despite a lack of MoEYS approval (Shaw, 2003). This situation has also burdened employers seeking to hire. Accreditation would provide employers with some confidence in the quality of education an applicant received as would an examination attesting to the knowledge, skills or abilities of an applicant.

Other issues have surfaced in private higher education leading to complaints by private educators. An effort by the government to establish tuition rates for private universities was halted, at least temporarily, by the concerns from private education institutions. MoEYS requests for information from higher education institutions were occasionally viewed as time consuming and without purpose. Private schools and private school teachers have yet to establish a private teachers' organisation, and there is no available information on teaching conditions different from those in public schools. Additional research or investigation is needed on this point.

THE BUSINESS SECTOR

Education planning documents emphasize the importance of partnerships in advancing the goals and objectives of the ESP and the ESSP. These partnerships are most noted in reference to relationships among the private business sector, higher education, and technical vocational training. The need for the business sector to more

easily hire a prepared workforce will likely push the establishment of outcomes for students at various levels - a move that will also lead to more comprehensive discussions of teacher expectations. Organisations such as the Asian Development Bank have financed the construction of over 200 schools and many schools have arranged for student internships in business. However, the business and education sectors interact most often on an ad hoc rather than a formal, organised basis and rarely provide input to education plans.

In other countries, for example in several Western European countries and in the United States, the business sector has been an integral part of developing learning objectives for students leaving secondary schools. As higher levels of learning are required in employees, the expectations of business for education outcomes are likely to increase. The challenge to the education sector will then to ensure diverse members of the business sector are represented in developing and assessing these outcomes.

TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS

CITA.

CITA has worked over the past two years to develop a representative and membership-based teachers' organisation. Individual teacher complaints consumed much of CITA's time in its early years, diverting its attention away from building a base able to speak on behalf of Cambodian teachers. Increasingly, CITA has focused on building solidarity among teachers by focusing on salaries as a commonly shared issue. CITA has also supported groups deemed vulnerable, for example, CITA has advocated for the right of persons with disabilities to become teachers. Information available in the course of interviews with various stakeholders suggested a number of reasons why CITA could have difficulties in developing its role as the voice of teachers in collective social dialogue. The following comments were expressed equally by respondents from NGOs, governmental, and donor organisations.

CITA's small membership base. There are over 80,000 teachers in Cambodia; over 2,500 of them are members of CITA. Two years ago, CITA had a membership of 200. CITA has grown slowly, but the organisation has a largely volunteer staff and limited financial resources. By early 2004 CITA expects to have 3,000 members in 14 provinces. CITA has tapped into a previously unmet need for an organisation that represents teachers who feel their profession is disrespected, impotent to address labour issues, and who desire a voice. The American Center for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS) estimates that when 10 percent of Cambodian teachers are members of CITA the organisation will become the negotiating voice for teachers.

CITA's politicization. Some interview respondents suggested that CITA has political ties to the opposition party despite disclaimers by CITA principals that CITA is a non political organisation. This perception often results in the actions of CITA seeming duplicitous. Conversely, CITA supporters have reported police opposition at organizing forums. Threatening leaflets against a CITA activist were distributed in Kompong Cham and Kampong Thom police reportedly stopped teachers as they gathered for a recruitment meeting. School administrators have been known to threaten teachers who wish to participate in CITA. Many other instances of government interference were reported and Education International sent letters to the RGC on two occasions calling on the government to cease its opposition to and to begin negotiations with CITA. The RGC has not responded to EI's letters.

CITA's confrontive tactics. Some respondents viewed CITA as antagonistic in its advocacy for teachers and unconstructive criticism of MoEYS, a stance that was difficult to separate from political criticism. The perception of close to half of those interviewed was that it is difficult to consider CITA participation in decision-making when the perceived agenda of CITA is confrontation through the threat of a strike rather than collaboration or other advocacy methods on behalf of more progressive educational reform.

CITA's fixation on increasing salaries for teachers. All respondents recognized that the base salary of teachers is unacceptably low. Of the 163,000 civil employees in Cambodia; 65 percent work as teachers or in the health sector and raising and sustaining teachers' salaries for over 80,000 teachers is a challenge. CITA's focus on salaries—and the corruption that has resulted from inadequate funds available for salaries—is seen as unreasonably narrow. This makes it difficult for many to consider CITA as a problem solving partner with a broad mandate to improve the situation of teachers and the education system.

KTA

The KTA's large membership suggests it might expand its role in representing teachers, but its history and activities do not include advocacy. The KTA has a very low profile among those interviewed. It was difficult to find a respondent who had heard of the KTA or, if they knew of the KTA, who understood what it does outside of serving as a benevolence organisation. However, this organisation is responsible for managing the 100 Riel paid each month by each of over 80,000 teachers and has a stated interest in the professional development of teachers. The KTA has an independent board, but a volunteer director who is paid by the National Commission for UNESCO, the government organisation created to coordinate with UNESCO.

It is unclear how local branches of the KTA are monitored to ensure transparency in KTA operations. One teacher complained that she received less than half of the funds allocated to her by the KTA for a death in her family and that her local office took the remainder. The KTA was also unable to respond when asked how many individuals had benefited from the KTA loan fund for Phnom Penh teachers.

The Director of the KTA is most concerned with the quality of education, especially teacher training, and has participated in teacher training discussions with MoEYS. The KTA magazine consistently addresses teachers' professional development and the Director's current personal concern is to prepare teachers to assist in developing computer and language expertise in students. He prepared and presented a paper, the *National Case Study on Improving the Status of Teachers*, in which he advocated for more and better training for teachers and for an increase in their salaries.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Tremendous work has gone into planning for education. In order to achieve the goals for education a more consistently collaborative process among all stakeholders will be required. As the RGC places building the capacity of its educational system on a fast track, teachers' organisations have the potential to become a positive and collaborative part of the policy development and implementation process.

The inclusion of representatives from teachers' organisations in developing or negotiating educational policies requires change in MoEYS' attitudes and behaviour. Likewise, the teachers' organisations in Cambodia are encouraged to increase their commitment to constructive collaboration and to engage in social dialogue with government regarding educational objectives.

Achieving the goals of the EFA is dependent upon good teacher recruitment and training, facility development, teacher and student standards, manageable student/teacher ratios, and enhanced economic, gender, and geographic access. Most of these strategies directly affect teachers. Teachers' ownership in education plans and processes through collaboration and social dialogue with MoEYS can only contribute to success in implementing the plans.

TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS

Currently two teachers' organisations claim to speak with and on behalf of teachers—CITA and the KTA. Both are concerned with solidarity among teachers and with their living conditions, but each expresses these objectives through differing strategies. The KTA's history is rooted in its role as benevolent organisation while CITA was founded on a union model. The KTA emphasizes the professional development of teachers, encouraging methods and training to improve teachers' competence. CITA advocates for a presence in policy making and challenges the RGC to raise the salaries of teachers. The KTA has been included in MoEYS planning; CITA has not. The KTA is less controversial than CITA, primarily in the eyes of MoEYS, and has not assumed an advocacy role. Both are encouraged to alter their strategies.

The KTA might consider expanding its focus on teacher training, professional development and education sector planning that addresses curriculum and student outcomes. The KTA monthly publication focuses on teaching and learning and KTA has access to a large number of teachers through this publication and its provincial structure.

For a small but increasing number of teachers CITA is becoming the teachers' advocate organisation of choice and its members and skills are growing. CITA is more prepared to serve as a negotiating and bargaining organisation concerned with responsibilities and rights, social dialogue, and terms and conditions of employment for teachers. Consequently, sustaining CITA's growth and leadership development initiatives are a priority. A membership base that is geographically distributed will provide CITA with a substantial power base. The KTA already has a substantial membership. Both organisations want to improve the quality of life for teachers and the quality of education in Cambodia, objectives that would be strengthened by working collaboratively, especially in areas outside of each organisation's specialization—education sector planning, gender and social dialogue.

Support for consultative and negotiation capacity. The capacity for consultation and negotiation requires significant improvement. These two processes are relatively new in Cambodia and depend upon a set of skills that have been slow to develop. Openness to consultation and negotiation by the government is tentative, especially when addressing labour issues or concerns that are likely to involve conflict. There is a need for financial and technical support for teachers' organisations and government to develop consultation and negotiation skills.

Diversification of Strategies. A full range of advocacy strategies are available to CITA and to the KTA. Developing a comprehensive advocacy campaign would include the activities of information gathering, awareness raising, organised action and facilitating engagement with each including multiple options for implementation. CITA, the KTA, MoEYS and NEP are all concerned with teacher salaries, with teacher rights and responsibilities, with working conditions and with the development of human resources in Cambodia through education. The NEP consistently advocates for teachers salaries in its assessment of MoEYS plans and in its presentation of these critiques.

One option is for teachers' organisations to join with MoEYS in a sector-wide advocacy plan on behalf of education. The education sector and labour are interdependent. A strong link between the two organisations in support of EFA goals would strengthen a collaborative and non-partisan advocacy campaign resulting in awareness on behalf of both the education and labour sectors. MoEYS and teachers' organisations would greatly benefit from training in preparing an advocacy strategy, developing an advocacy campaign, reviewing and modifying a campaign and reaching key players—government, parents, students, teachers and the media. Trust is often established while working for similar goals.

Another option is for CITA to integrate teacher accountability with discussions on salaries. The connection between salaries and accountability surfaced several times during interviews with government and donor organisations. Many stories highlight the cases of teachers who don't work full hours or who solicit informal payments as a means to supplement their low salaries. These suggest that a commitment to eliminate informal payments—both from parents to teachers and from teachers to principals and other officials—and other critical education reform issues identified in the various education planning documents of MoEYS will strengthen the ability of CITA and the KTA to collaborate and to negotiate.

In the short-term, while CITA focuses on building its membership and developing its infrastructure, it might consider joining with NEP where it can create alliances. Collaborative working partnerships with educational organisations will strengthen and broaden support for teacher advocacy. Networking also provides a natural forum to educate and be educated. NEP has developed a positive working relationship with MoEYS while continuing to take seriously its role as an objective and often critical partner in education. In cooperation with other members of NEP, CITA would gain access to information about educational issues and would have an opportunity to work with NGOs and with MoEYS representatives who have advocated on behalf of teachers.

Additional Resources and Infrastructure. A strong demand-driven representative teachers' organisation requires resources. Likewise,

an advocacy campaign implemented by such an organisation with and for teachers—gathering and disseminating relevant information, raising awareness and concern, organizing action, facilitating engagement and networking—requires resources. One of these resources is a credible information base. There is little concrete information to accurately describe the situations of teachers. Lack of complete information leads to poor planning. A credible survey of teachers: hours worked, training attended, class size, job satisfaction, salaries, formal and informal payments, perceived needs, etc. would insure information-based statements about teachers and the teaching profession. For example, some respondents report that most teachers are very happy with their salaries and their situations as teachers. Other respondents cite unhappy teachers and focus on the barriers to effective teaching. CITA and KTA's role in conducting surveys on the needs of teachers would be invaluable to providing more complete and accurate information to the education sector.

The continued growth of CITA will require additional financial and staff resources to assist in ensuring organisational processes and procedures that are transparent, efficient, and democratic. CITA was not able to provide an annual operating budget, a request that suggests the need for assistance with financial management systems. An estimated 15 percent of CITA members are current with dues. This must be increased both to begin a base for financial sustainability and to demonstrate the support of members for CITA.

Ombudsman Role. It is understandable that CITA and KTA members want help to resolve individual teacher problems. There are many. Focus groups interviewed for this report included frightened, vulnerable, and frustrated teachers. For example, one teacher spoke of receiving a summons to move to a remote area to teach. She declined, citing her status as a single woman and recent kidnappings that had occurred in the area to which she would be relocated. She was then removed from teaching duties. As a new organisation, however, CITA is advised to be cautious in advocating for individual members at the expense of growing in numbers, establishing a solid management infrastructure, and developing a capacity to consult and negotiate terms and conditions of employment on behalf of Cambodian teachers. Linkages with legal services organisations might provide the needed resources for individual legal battles without overextending those of teachers' organisations.

Teacher Input. Repeatedly, MoEYS documents have emphasized an intention to insure inclusive and transparent decision-making processes. Information gathering activities from a wide variety of stakeholders reinforced the commitment of MoEYS to encourage local community ownership in the education of its citizens. The UNESCO packet introducing the EFA calls for "a civil society that includes all non-governmental and non-profit groups and organisations involved in education for all. NGOs, teacher organisations and religious organisations, community organisations, research networks, parents' organisations, professional bodies, student groups, and the private sector are all expected to collaborate." CITA and the KTA can support provincial teachers by hosting forums and debates and taking the lead in developing local mechanisms for teachers' input, plus,

where appropriate and resources permit, becoming involved directly in consultative forums on educational issues at local or national levels. In collaboration with MoEYS and NEP, CITA and the KTA are encouraged to develop mechanisms through which teachers can contribute to strategies in support of EFA goals.

Professional Development for Teachers. Good quality training, consistent supervision and continuing education for teachers contributes to more effective teaching and learning and is an expressed interest of the KTA director. Continuous teacher training is one of the 12 Priority Action Programs in the ESP/ESSP. As an advocate for teachers, CITA can ensure that the performance of teachers is evaluated only on practices for which they have had appropriate training and mentoring. The KTA can gather information from teachers on their professional development needs, subsequently advocating to ensure teachers have what they need to do their jobs well.



MoEYS AND TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS: FINDING COMMON GROUND THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE

MoEYS advisors and donors state their support for inclusive and transparent planning, implementation and assessment processes. For many reasons noted previously, MoEYS has ignored rather than engaged CITA and the notion of working together toward a common goal does not seem to be a priority. Establishing and sustaining a mutually respectful professional working relationship will not be easy—prejudices on both sides should be put aside—but objectives of both will be better served in collaboration.

Formalizing Social Dialogue. Several areas must be addressed to establish effective social dialogue including organisational capacity, skill development, formal mechanisms, and legal support. First, however, an openness to prepare for social dialogue is essential and none of the key participants—teachers' organisations or the RGC—appears eager to change how they work. The active commitment of international donors to social dialogue would assist in moving the education sector toward social dialogue methodologies and mechanisms.

- 1. Formal Mechanism.** MoEYS is encouraged to move forward with plans to identify a unit responsible for facilitating active participation in policy development and planning, and for ensuring the process is clear, consistent, transparent and meaningful. In addition, MoEYS is encouraged to establish a structure similar to the RGC's Labour Advisory Committee which includes representation from several ministries, unions and an umbrella employers organisation. A ministerial level Education Advisory Committee with representation from teachers' organisations, MoEYS, and other appropriate stakeholders can address issues affecting personnel, beginning with smaller technical issues that can be successfully negotiated, and not necessarily focus on salary which is more difficult and part of a long-term strategy. Collective bargaining can follow as the legal support structure is established to link MoEYS, the employers, and teachers' organisations. Adherence to decisions could be monitored by a quasi-independent monitoring mechanism with a presence in each district. However, sooner, rather than later, proper dispute resolution mechanisms based on international labour standards should be established.
- 2. Capacity Building.** Mediation and negotiation are more productive when organisations participating in social dialogue can meet as equals and when both are skilled in social dialogue processes. CITA is encouraged to acknowledge the importance of smaller issues—such as teacher deployment—in attaining its salary goals. It is also important that CITA continue to be assisted in defining strategies for change using social dialogue as it also persists in growing a broad-based representative and dependable constituency willing to implement negotiated decisions. Additionally, CITA and the KTA must be assisted to demonstrate their credibility, legitimacy, and accountability as organisations. The perception that all players are, in part, politically motivated suggests that any capacity building assistance be provided by a non-partisan team or organisation informed by relevant best practices. Again, the commitment of international donors to social dialogue processes must be backed up with adequate and appropriate financial and technical support, assisting in building the capacity for true social dialogue.

- 3. Legal Support for Social Dialogue.** Teachers are unable to participate in full social dialogue due to civil servant restrictions on bargaining and unions. The proposed amendments to the law governing civil employees would support the rights of teachers to freely associate, organise and bargain collectively under the law. Until the right is established, teachers are caught between the largesse of government and the commitment to fairness, whereas developing the skills of the parties—government, teachers' organisations, and, as complementary actors, attorneys—to understand labour law and the process of collective bargaining would provide the protection needed for all parties.

CONCLUSION

MoEYS is responsible for reducing poverty and accelerating economic development by crafting a large-scale education system able to meet EFA goals. The challenge is to facilitate successful outcomes within the context of emerging rights for workers, a growing civil society profile, a nascent governmental infrastructure, and an uncertain political environment. Education is both a labour and a sector issue. In the rush to achieve country-wide goals it is impossible to ignore the rights of individuals, in this case teachers, whose efforts are required to reach these goals.

Problems in implementation of the government's education plans have and will continue to surface. An insufficient implementation budget, the slow release of funds, questionable data, and corruption have moderated the enthusiasm and hope of educators. High teacher student ratios, the lack of a forum for presenting and resolving complaints, fear of penalization for refusal to relocate to remote areas, and low salaries have limited the support of teachers. Yet the quality of the educational system is largely dependent upon the knowledge, skills and commitment of its teachers. Teacher-government collaboration through social dialogue would increase the commitment and support of teachers in reaching aggressive objectives in the education sector.

A consistent and acceptable voice for teachers has yet to surface outside of MoEYS. There is hope that the Education Law will expand the rights of teachers and the Civil Service Law will be amended to become more consistent with ILO conventions. The Cambodian Independent Teachers Association, established in 2000, an affiliate of Education International, has become the most vocal advocate for teachers. Its support for increasing teacher salaries, growing membership, three teacher strikes, and presence in 10 provinces with 2,500 teachers attest to a niche that this organisation has begun to fill. CITA, however, lacks legitimacy and credibility with the RGC as a representative body of teachers. Its perceived political undertone, its small size, and its position as a critic rather than a collaborator have resulted in its being shut out of any meaningful participation.

The importance of education in Cambodia and the enormity of what must be accomplished to ensure an effective, efficient and just education system suggest that all education stakeholders consider how they can contribute to ensuring its success. The Cambodian educational system has made significant progress in the past five years and identifying ways to support this progress would be of benefit to all education stakeholders. The position of teachers' organisations would be enhanced by advocating strongly a broad-based rights agenda for teachers while fully supporting and being integrated into the EFA initiative. These are complementary objectives which will increase the legitimacy of teachers' organisations as viable stakeholder in the education sector and essential ingredients to the government's ambitious education reforms.



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INTERVIEWS

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Phone interviews were conducted with representatives from the Asian Development Bank, the Association of Business Councils, the American Chamber of Commerce, Mobitel, MoEYS: Higher Education, and the Phnom Penh Chamber of Commerce

Focus Groups with teacher members of CITA: seven in Phnom Penh, twenty in Kampong Cham

Interviews were requested, but not scheduled with Chhay Aun, Director General, Administration and Finance; Koeu Nay Leang, Director General, Education; and Sar Nak, Deputy Director, Planning, or a member of his staff.

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE EDUCATION AND LABOUR SECTORS CALLS FOR A SUSTAINED PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO, ONE THAT IS GROUNDED IN THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF TEACHERS TO FREELY ASSOCIATE, ORGANIZE AND COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN. INDEED, THE ABSENCE OF A TEACHER'S VOICE NEGLECTS THE WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE OF A KEY EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER AND LIMITS THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE EDUCATION SECTOR. ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE WOULD STRENGTHEN BOTH SECTORS, REINFORCING THEIR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE

EDUCATION FOR ALL.



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