



NGO EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP (NEP)

SPOTLIGHT REPORT

On

“The Status of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)”

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CDHS	Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSDG	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
DP	Development Partners
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EWC	Education Working Group
EMIS	Education Information Management Systems
IP	Implementing Partners
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MOEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoEF	Ministry of Economic and Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoND	Ministry of National Defense
MoPWT	Ministry of Public Work and Transportation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
P-ESWGs	Provincial Education Sector Working Groups
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
PED	Primary Education Department
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWG	Sub-sector Working Group
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national coalition of educational CSOs, NGO Education Partnership (NEP), coordinates the creation of policy priorities and interaction with the government and development partners. The group strives to increase underprivileged students' access to education. This SDG 4 Spotlight Report aims to showcase the objective's progress toward its objectives throughout Cambodia. Globally, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) was established with other development goals in 2015 by the Sustainable Development Summit and seeks to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone. The execution and achievement of goals have been said to be lagging, but the COVID-19 epidemic further slowed and sometimes even stopped the development by burdening the administration.

The Royal Government of Cambodia approved the Rectangular Strategy IV entitling Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency: Building the Foundation toward Realization the Cambodia Vision 2050¹ in 2018. One of the four priority areas is Rectangle 1 is to improve the quality of education, science and technology. This strategy links to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2020)². The ministry has the strong commitment to achieve the national goals with implementation of the education strategic plan 2019-2023 (ESP, 2010)³ and global goals with achievement of targets of SDG 4. In Cambodia, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of the agenda 2030 is closely aligned with education sector development plans and government commitments to achieve SDGs and specifically SDG 4: to strengthen the quality education in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In November 2021, Cambodia government approved the national strategic plan⁴ on the mitigation of the Covid-19 impact and on restoring economic, health system improvement and saving life from endemic – including the education adaptation to pandemic. The effective solution and action, MoEYS (2019)⁵ aimed to improve education systems through Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, to improve teacher quality, school infrastructure and material, youth education, and skills match the market working demand.

Cambodia Education Impact by Covid-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools had to close for nearly two academic years as a necessary precaution to stop the virus' spread. The COVID-19's effects on education both internationally and in Cambodia caused the SDG 4 aim for the whole education system to be postponed. Girls, children with impairments, children from ethnic minorities, and children who were already deemed vulnerable before the epidemic all had it worse in this condition. Girls

¹ Rectangular Strategy IV, Royal Government of Cambodia, Sept 2018

² Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap, UNESCO 2020

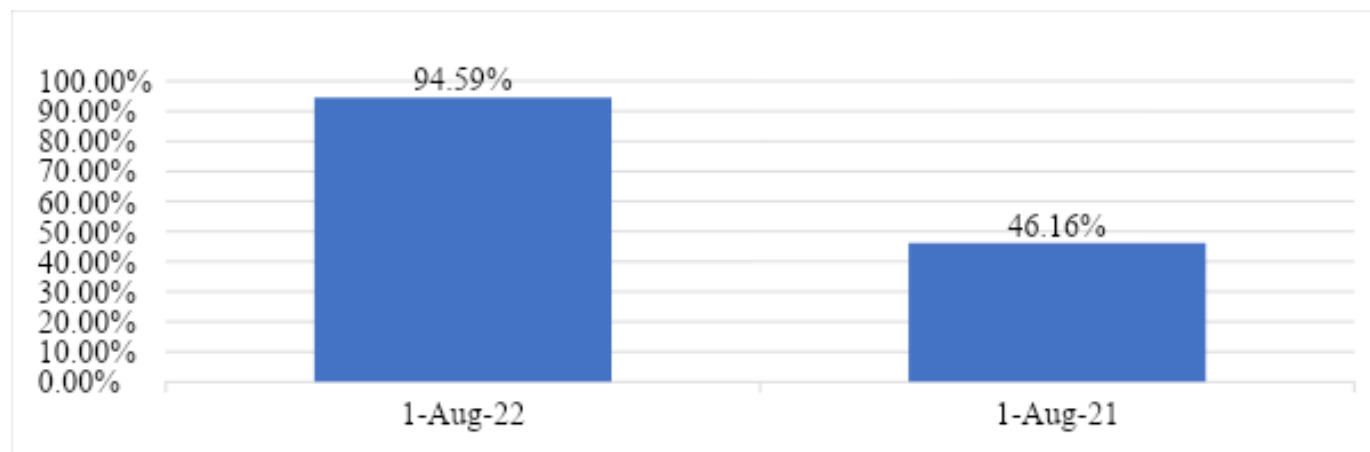
³ Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, MoEYS, June 2019

⁴ National Strategic Plan of Cambodian adapting and living with Covid-19, Royal Government of Cambodia 2021

⁵ Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023, Cambodia Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport 2019

gain less from online learning, particularly in households with few gadgets and access to remote learning technology, according to a quick study of the data by CARE International. Instead of concentrating on their studies, girls are required by gender conventions to spend more time on unpaid work and providing care for the household's children, elderly, and sick family members.

Figure 3: Vaccinated People of Total 16 million Population⁶



Source: Ministry of Health (2022)

Of the 16 million people in the country, 46,16% (2021) and 94,59% (2022) have received vaccinations as a result of the government's pro-active immunization effort. The MoEYS approved the opening of all public and private schools beginning in February of 2022 as infection cases continued to decline. With the assistance of teaching assistants, the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) for Education, which is made up of MOEYS, development partners, and CSOs, identified and agreed upon the objectives, activities, and indicators for the COVID-19 Response Plan for Education. It also advised the Asian and Pacific countries to lessen the effects of the pandemic and school closings by matching teaching to students' learning levels. By rewriting or condensing the curriculum to devote more time to basic or fundamental abilities, including reading and mathematics, the education ministry needs to concentrate on the important skill. The ministry must strengthen re-enrollment campaigns to entice the return of students who dropped out during the pandemic and are at risk of not returning and consider increasing learning hours through supplementary classes, a longer school week, or a shorter break between academic terms. The extended learning time is also crucial (ADB, 2022).

The Education COVID-19 Response Plan outlines how MoEYS technical departments, including the Departments for EMIS, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, ECE, Primary Education, School Health, Curriculum Development, Teacher Training, and Education Quality Assurance, keep MoEYS on track towards the accomplishment of policies and reforms outlined in the ESP 2019– 2023. The MoEYS would have to use both the two major reforms of deconcentration and decentralization, as well as digital education, to lessen the effect of COVID-19 on its ESP policy goals. The Covid-19 epidemic has disrupted education in

⁶ Ministry of Health 2022

Cambodia and increased already-existing inequalities, making it harder for the most vulnerable students to enter education and resulting in lower-quality instruction. The epidemic brought to light the severity of the digital divide issue, as well as the incapacity of schools, the government at all levels, and other stakeholders to offer emergency education for the populace. The hardest to reach and use online teaching and learning tools were students and teachers from disadvantaged backgrounds who lived in distant regions. The greatest impact on accessibility was in rural regions due to a lack of equipment, expertise, and adequate internet.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)

SDG 4's primary objective is to guarantee that all people have access to inclusive, high-quality education. This mission resulted from a coordinated effort between world leaders' extensive consultation process and broad-based involvement from development sectors, teachers' unions, civic society, bilateral agencies, regional organizations, and research foundations. The targets of the development goals are meant to evaluate the deliverables related to teacher performance, primary and secondary school infrastructure and learning outcomes quality, early childhood care and development access, skills and vocational training, literacy, the learning environment, and scholarships, once these targets are met, SDG 4's objective will have been effectively attained. It is believed that education is important for global development and essential for eradicating poverty on a global scale. Since the SDG 4 was adopted, there are now around half as many children out of school globally, and in 2015, the global enrollment rate in emerging economies was 91%.(UNDP, 2022)⁷. However, the level of education improvement varies from place to place in accordance with the level of poverty. For instance, in Western Asia and North Africa, which is having an ongoing armed conflict, the number of children out of school is increasing while in Sub-Saharan African, the primary school enrolment has increased by 52% in ¹⁹⁹⁰, up to 78% in 2012. The richest and poorest children still have large disparities which threaten the goal targets of SGD in 2030. 57 million primary-aged children remain out of school. Moreover, there is 103 million youth, which comprises more than 60 percent women, still lacking basic literacy. About 6 out of 10 children and adolescents are not achieving a minimum level of proficiency in reading and math (UNDP, 2022).

Despite the existing challenges, the COVID-19 outbreak added another great obstacle in the process of reaching the SDG 4 (UN, 2022)⁸. First, the global education system did not function regularly since the majority of schools had to close. The advent of virtual education in the traditional classroom meant that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds were unable to adjust to this new teaching methodology. As a result, during the previous two years, 147 million schoolchildren are estimated to have missed more than half of their in-class education. Present value lifetime earnings for this generation of children might decline by a combined amount of \$17 trillion. (UN, Goals 4, 2022)⁹. Second, there are only 10 years left to achieve the goal of 2030, yet from 2015 to 2020, the percentage of youths who can graduate upper secondary school improved just little, from 54% to 58%. If the COVID-19 pandemic is still present, this figure demonstrates less improvement and discrepancies in educational engagement and outcome, making it very difficult to meet the aim. Lastly, the infrastructure for supporting

⁷ <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

⁸ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/>

⁹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

education in schools is also viewed as being too distant from the end aim. In 2020, 25% of elementary schools worldwide lacked access to essential amenities including power, clean drinking water, and simple handwashing facilities. Limited infrastructure and technology for people with disabilities make it difficult to implement the new educational system during the epidemic. Asia and The Pacific SDG Progress Report (2021, p.9)¹⁰ concluded that “Compared to other goals, the overall progress on quality education is relatively good in Asia and the Pacific”. In ASEAN, all countries in the community are fighting together to eliminate education challenges. The ASEAN’s vision reflecting SDG 4 is to build an ASEAN Community that is people-oriented and people-centered and vibrant and socially responsible which promotes constructive engagement of academia, parliamentarians, women, youth and civil society groups (Lancet, 2022)¹¹. The development and harmonization in the higher education system and TVET has been actively improved throughout the region. Several actions, which includes identifying priority cross-cutting areas that support the synergy between the ASEAN Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ASEAN-UN Secretariat-to- Secretariat (S2S) meeting, Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016-2020) and revising and discussing the ASEAN-UNESCO Framework Agreement for Cooperation, are taking place to support its vision. However, it is accepted that educational challenges still arise in the region. There are still diverse educational systems and limited information sharing.

According to Laumann, Felix & von Kügelgen, Julius & Barahona, Mauricio. (2020). Non-linear interlinkages and key objectives amongst the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are inherently inter-linked as progress towards some of these objectives may accelerate or hinder progress towards others. The researchers investigate how they influence each other by defining networks of 18 nodes, consisting of the 17 SDGs and climate change, for various groupings of countries. They found that SDG 6, clean water and sanitation, and SDG 4, quality education, are most central across nearly all groupings of countries. In developing regions, SDG 17, partnerships for the goals, is strongly connected to the progress of other objectives in the two agendas whilst, somewhat surprisingly, SDG 8, decent work and economic growth, is not as important in terms of eigenvector centrality.¹²

Localization of SDG 4 in Cambodia

Of the 10 global targets for quality education, Cambodia picked up several, making it one of the goals most comprehensively adopted in the Cambodian SDGs (CSDGs). It has gone even further with the indicators – Cambodia has identified 18, where there are only 11 indicators in the global framework for SDG 4.

The CSDGs were announced at the end of 2018.¹³ The general targets for CSDG 4 are, by 2030:

¹⁰ Asia and The Pacific SDG Progress Report 2021, by UN ESCAP (ESCAP, 2021)

¹¹ <https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/files/session-2asean-cooperation-education-sdg-4.pdf>

¹² https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340806285_Non-linear_interlinkages_and_key_objectives_amongst_the_Paris_Agreement_and_the_Sustainable_Development_Goals

¹³ Royal Government of Cambodia 2018. op. cit.

Target 1 – to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Target 2 – to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Target 3 – to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Target 5 – to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Target 6 – ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Cambodia has clearly picked up unfinished business from the CMDGs around, for example, primary school completion rates, but also added new goals around access to early childhood education and tertiary education.

Means of implementation for SDG 4 in Cambodia

The two implementation targets Cambodia has picked up are:

4a – build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

4c – substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in Cambodia.

Cambodia tended not to adopt targets which it perceives are not within its control, so the SDG means of implementation target of expanding the number of scholarships available to residents of least-developed countries is not included in the CSDGs. In cooperation with government agencies, UNESCO, NGOs and other development stakeholders, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) joined forces to develop several initiatives in education. They include improving the quality of education, the introduction of better salaries and work conditions for teachers, accomplishing reforms on vocational training programs and the evaluation system.¹⁴ Initiatives such as “BEEP”, an ICT-based program for basic education equivalency, is an example of the results of MoEYS’s cooperation with other entities. For the improvement of education facilities, MoEYS will work in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD).¹⁵ The Cambodian Industrial Development Policy acknowledges the importance of the development of technical knowledge and skills in the workforce.¹⁶ The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, published in April 2014 a policy on Higher Education vision 2030, envisioning and connecting targets for the implementation of SDG 4.¹⁷

Features of monitoring of SDG 4 targets in Cambodia

¹⁴ The Phnom Penh Post 2017. “[Literacy target of a Sustainable Development Goal](#)”. Accessed 15 March 2019.

¹⁵ Kingdom of Cambodia 2018. op. cit.

¹⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia 2015. “[Cambodia Industrial Development Policy 2015-2017](#)”. Accessed 15 March 2019.

¹⁷ Kingdom of Cambodia Nation Religion King 2014. “[Policy on Higher Education Youth and Sport](#)”. Accessed 15 March 2019.

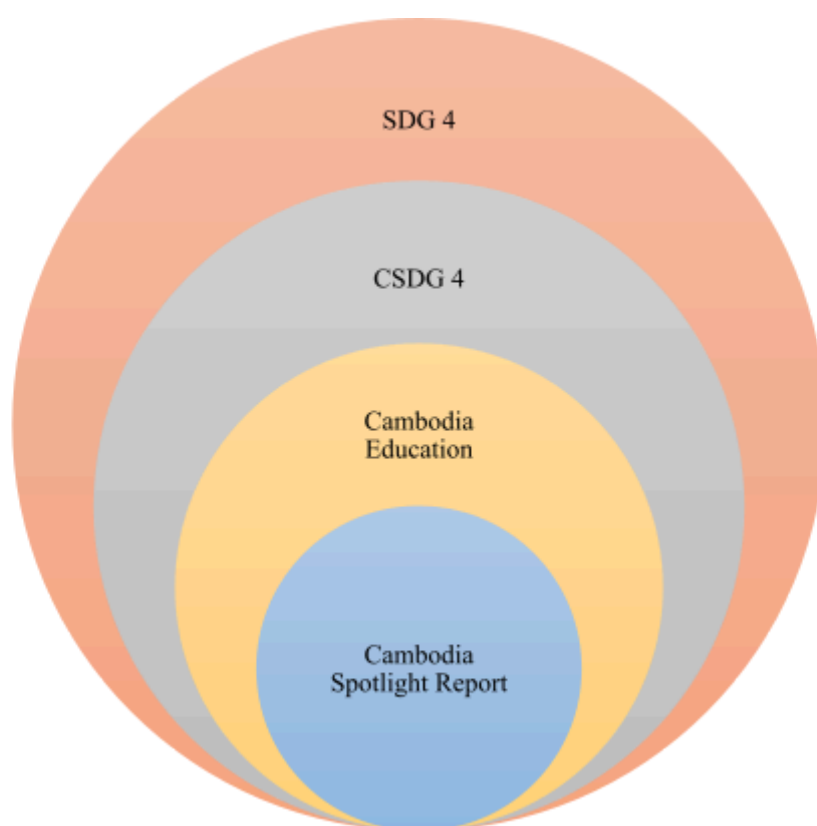
In Cambodia, the education data management and structure are under the Department of Non-Formal Education of MoEYS (NFE-MIS), the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (TVET-MIS) and the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) of the Ministry of Planning (MPP).¹⁸ The agency responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of all CSDG 4 targets and indicators is MoEYS. In some cases, MoEYS will cooperate with other government agencies.¹⁹

Target 4.3 (gender balance of tertiary education enrolments) is monitored by MoEYS and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Art (MCFA).

In the case of target 4.a (building and upgrading education facilities), MoEYS and the Ministry for Rural Development (MRD) are involved.²⁰

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Figure 1: The Research Framework



Three layers of education context analysis are provided by this study. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) examination of the current state of education in the globe is the first level of the framework. The framework of education analysis from a global to national context, challenges and commitments, and suggestions for actions form the outcomes of Cambodia's SDG 4 Spotlight Report. The Cambodia SDG 4 Spotlight Report was developed

¹⁸ Pitin 2017. "[Monitoring SDG4-Education 2030 in Cambodia](#)". Accessed 15 March 2019.

¹⁹ Kingdom of Cambodia 2018. op. cit.

²⁰ Ibid

using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. For data validation, the main data, secondary data, KIIs, and field observations were triangulated.

Qualitative Method

The secondary material evaluated in the documents was taken from the official government framework, policies, initiatives, and research on the accomplishment of Cambodia's SDG 4 objectives at the international and national levels. Key informant interviews (KII) with government representatives from the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, Provincial Department of Education Youth and Sport, and school directors were used to gather the main data. The following conversation was held with academics, UN personnel, provincial education sector working groups (P-ESWGs), and experts in early childhood development (ECCD). The debate focused on official and informal education, youth specialists, higher education, and basic and secondary education. The majority of pupils from ethnic minority groups attended primary schools in Ratanakiri province and secondary schools in Kampong Cham province during the fieldwork observation period.

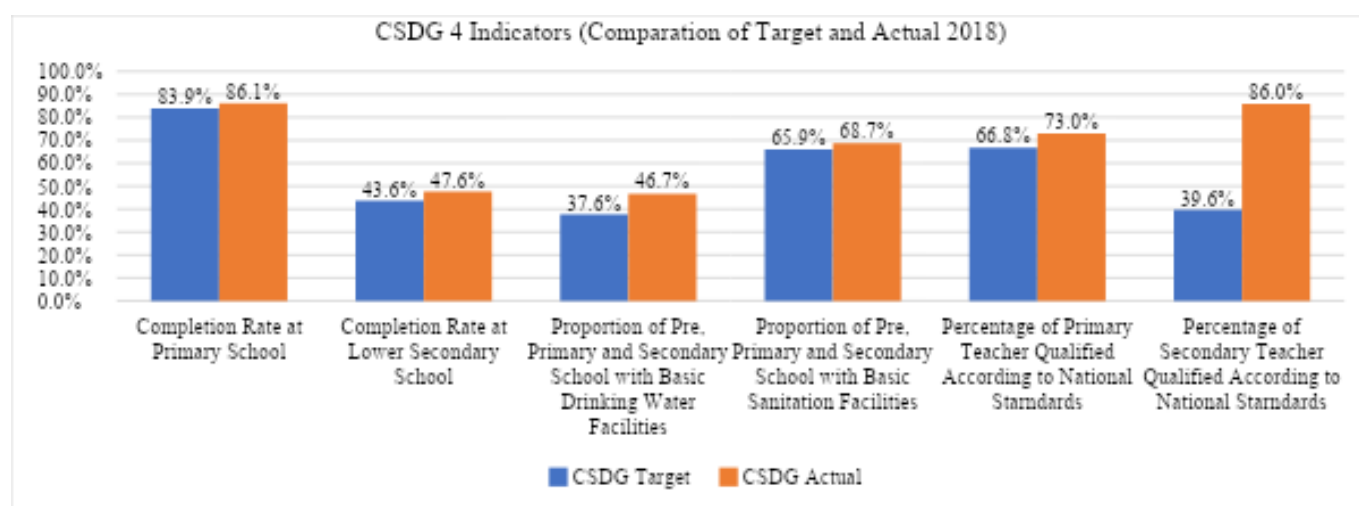
Quantitative Method

The research and data generation used secondary data from recognized national official reports of the Cambodian government such as The Ministry of Economic and Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, as well as the Council of Ministers, provided the majority of the data. The data was prepared for processing and analysis, and graphs were created for the report.

FINDINGS

Cambodia Sustainable Development Goal 4 (CSDG 4)

Figure 2: CSDG 4 Indicators Targets and achievements in 2018



Source: Cambodia Voluntary National Review 2019

The indicators target set by MoEYS had been reported as achieved in 2018 (CSDG, 2019)²¹. As in figure 2, the completion rate at the primary school was set at 83,9% versus actual 86,1%, and

²¹ Cambodia Voluntary National Review 2019, Royal Government of Cambodia

the percentage of secondary teachers qualified according to national standard set 39,6% versus actual 86,0%. The positive achievements are from the commitment from the MoEYS, and the contrition intervention and monitoring from CSOs and IPs.

The status of the education sector after Covid-19 recovery addresses the challenges and commitment of the government for education recovery. It links to the strategy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) cooperating with the UN Agency, International and local CSOs, other implementing partners in Cambodia.

C-SDG 4 Targets on ECCE

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Target 4.2 by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. The global benchmark (UNESCO, 2021) Cambodia set the percentage of children attending all aspects of ECE aged 3-5 years old as 26,8% (in 2018), 75,4% (in 2025) 82,8% in 2030. As the result of the CVNR (2019)²², Cambodia reached 39.9% of ECCE, and 61.1% in 2021 (Education Congress, 2021)²³. “This reflected that early childhood education service responded to the National Policy on Early Child Care and Development in equitable manner, and it was well prepared for receiving education at primary education”, (Education Congress, 2022)²⁴. The number of pre-schools increased by 2% from 4,493 (FY 2020-2021) to 4,563 (FY 2021-2022). The key challenges include ensuring thorough implementation of the policies, principles and directions for school-based management for kindergarten education. RGC issued the National Plan for ECCD but lacked development of Plan for ECCD at provincial level. Recently, MoEYS organized a visit in Kratie to allow other provinces to learn from on how to develop their Provincial Plan for ECCD. Lack of access to supporting mechanisms for changing community kindergarten as annex to public education settings. The MoEYS plans to launch a vigorous campaign to motivate parents to bring their children to community preschools (Khmer Times, 2022)²⁵. The Minister of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Dr. Hang Choun Naron addressed in education congress 2022²⁶ that early childhood education is vital and the ministry will work on five priorities - increasing the number of public kindergartens, increase standard kindergartens and convert the community kindergarten gathering into a public school, establishment of kids care and also to provide service to pregnant women, and develop professionalism among teachers both at public and private schools (Education Congress, 2021).

Figure 4: Cambodia Target of Primary and Secondary Education on Completion Rate

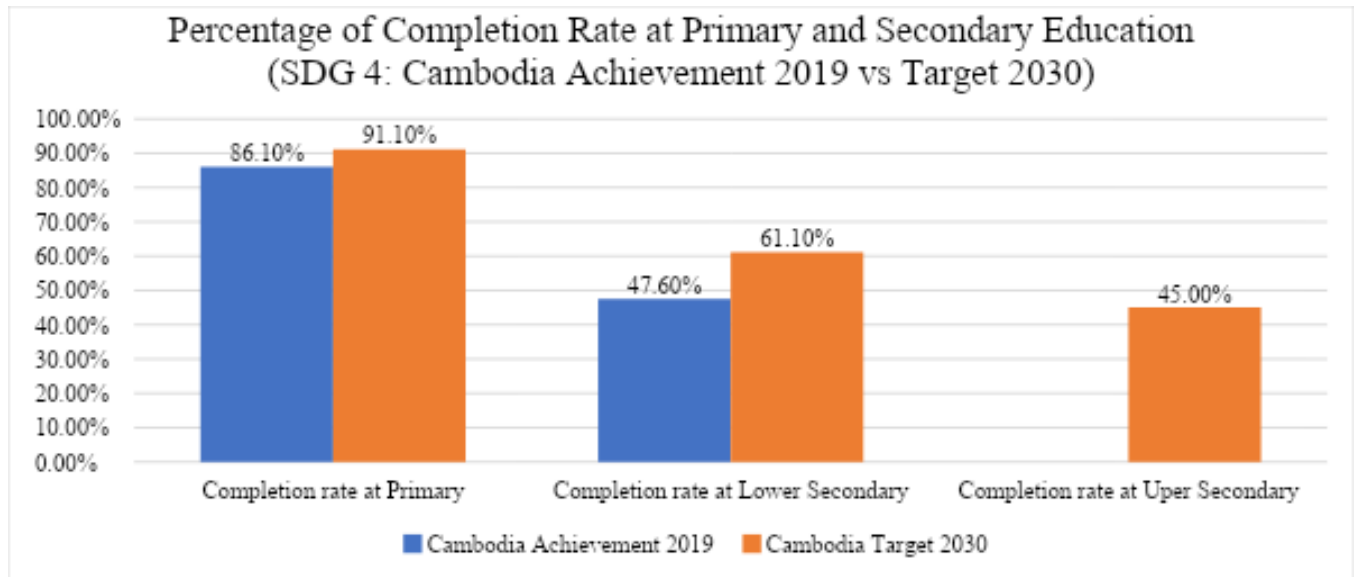
²² Cambodia's Voluntary National Review 2019

²³ Education Congress by MoEYS 2021 (FY 2020-2021)

²⁴ Education Congress, MoEYS, April 2022

²⁵ Khmer Times: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501094260>

²⁶ Khmer Times: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/>



Source: National SDG 4 Benchmarks, UNESCO 2021 & CVNR 2019

C-SDG 4 Targets on Primary Education

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

The primary education targets, as shown in figure 4 showed the benchmarks target of SDG 4 of the completion rate at the primary and secondary education levels. Cambodia set its target that the completion rate at primary education is 83, 9% in 2018 (CSDG, 2019), and 91.1% in 2030 (UNESCO, 2021). As the result of the CVNR (2019)²⁷, Cambodia reached 86.1% on the completion of primary education in 2019, and 87.4% in 2021 (Education Congress, 2021)²⁸. And it was 87.3% of the completion rate at the primary education (EMIS, 2021)²⁹.

However, the completion rate slightly decreased due to the low level of enrollment and lack of school readiness for most young children after school closed and the limited access to the online learning during Covid-19 in 2020-21. The Education Congress (2021) claimed some challenges on primary education. There is a shortage of teachers for schools in remote areas and faced difficulties especially the problems of teacher surplus and teacher shortage at schools. There is also limited teacher capacities – knowledge, teaching methodology, experience and classroom management especially the online teaching platform. Moreover, the lack of infrastructure like the access to the internet and electronic devices, lack of accessible and clean WASH facilities in schools was also a significant challenge. Cambodia education roadmap 2030 (MoEYS, 2019)³⁰ set a high priority to pre-primary education as the priority program intervention. The net enrolment rate of primary education dropped from 92,4% (SY 2018-19) to 86,7% (SY 2021-2022) – due to impact of Covid-19 (MoEYS, 2022)³¹. Children living in rural and remote areas, especially the poor and disadvantaged, have limited access to education services.

²⁷ Cambodia's Voluntary National Review 2019

²⁸ Education Congress by MoEYS 2021 (FY 2020-2021)

²⁹ Public Education Statistic Indicator 2021-2022, by MoEYS 2022

³⁰ Cambodia Education 2030 Roadmap: Sustainable Development – Goal4, MoEYS February 2019

³¹ Public Education Statistics and Indicator 2019 and 2022, MoEYS

As the result from rapid assessment by the MoEYS Primary Education Department (PED) on access to distance learning showed that 24 per cent of the 513,303 primary school students (Grades 1–6) in 2,858 primary schools surveyed have access to e-learning on television, and 22 per cent have access via Facebook. Of these, only 17 per cent viewed more than 50 per cent of the length of every video. The assessment concluded that only 24 percent of teachers assigned homework for students, and only 7 per cent of students were engaged with teachers on question-and-answer sessions (Education Congress, 2021).

C-SDG 4 Targets on Secondary Education

4.3 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

The Cambodia youth aged 15-35 represented 35.8% (46.8% female) of the total population around 16 million³². And the labor force participation rate of population aged 15-59 years is 81.7%, however the unemployment rate of population aged 15-59 years is 1.2%. MoEYS prioritize the education quality nationwide. However, the EMIS³³ data showed the dropout rate in primary school is 7.2%, lower secondary school level 16.6%, and upper secondary level 18.5%. It shows the adult dropout more than double compared with primary education – they mostly jump into the income generation as the migration inside and outside Cambodia. The Cambodia youth (population aged 15-35) represents 35.8% (46.8% female) of the total population of around 16 million³⁴. Cambodia's government strategy is focused on improving the youth quality through quality of education, skills training, accessible health facilities, job market, decent working conditions and opportunity. The secondary education is separated by lower and upper secondary education. Completion rate at lower secondary education for Cambodia was targeted for 61.1% in 2030 (UNESCO, 2021). Cambodia reached 47.60% on the completion of lower secondary education in 2019 (CVNR, 2019)³⁵, and 48.1% in 2021 (Education Congress, 2021)³⁶, and it was 52.9% (EMIS, 2021)³⁷. For the upper secondary education, Cambodia also set the completion rate at upper secondary education as 45% in 2030 (UNESCO, 2021). EMIS (2021)³⁸ reported that Cambodia completed 31.1% of the completion rate at the upper secondary education.

The Covid-19 limited access to conventional schooling and the online learning was not readily available to learners in 2020-2021 (MoEYS, 2021)³⁹, and it caused the most dropout students in lower and upper secondary education. Responding to the challenges, MoEYS (2021) set up the Strategic Plan for Secondary Education Sub-sector 2021-2030 – gather all inputs, education quality reform, equity and quality education service reform, and post- Covid-19 recovery on education to restore and increase the completion rate to achieve SDG 4 target 2030. Education Congress (2021) showed that the Royal Cambodia Government (RGC) allocated 48 million USD to MoEYS on secondary education from 2017 to 2021 – 45 million USD loan from ADB

³² General Population Census of the King of Cambodia 2019, NIS of Ministry of Planning

³³ Public Education Statistic and indicator 2021-2022, Cambodia Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

³⁴ General Population Census of the King of Cambodia 2019, NIS of Ministry of Planning

³⁵ Cambodia's Voluntary National Review 2019

³⁶ Education Congress by MoEYS 2021 (FY 2020-2021)

³⁷ Public Education Statistic Indicator 2021-2022, by MoEYS 2022

³⁸ Public Education Statistic Indicator 2021-2022, by MoEYS 2022

³⁹ Strategic Plan for Secondary Education Sub-sector 2021-2030, MoEYS 2021

and 3 million USD from the national budget. And in 2019-2023, RGC allocated a budget of 53.5 million USD (50 million USD loaned from ADB, and 3.5 million USD from RGC).

A Save the Children small-scale assessment found that 97% of the children across primary and secondary school grades expressed concern about their learning during the pandemic. About 80% of the students who took part in the survey understood the benefits of e-learning. Moreover, more than 70% claimed they faced many challenges to obtaining knowledge through non-traditional ways of learning. The challenges included additional expenses for purchasing internet services and devices to continue learning, as well as the loss of time caused by slow and interrupted internet services. Some students mentioned that they were not ready for online learning, that the learning process was complicated, and that they felt stressed.

C-SDG 4 Targets on Non-formal Education (NFE)

4.4 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

4.5 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

CSDG 4 set the adult literacy rate (15+year) of 82.5% in 2018. As a result, CSDG 4 already completed 82.5% in 2017 (CVNR, 2019) and achieved 88% (MoEYS Education Congress, 2021). MoEYS approved NFE policy, which was implemented since 2002 to set up the key non-formal education priorities to make sure the functional literacy for youth and adults at the primary and lower secondary equivalency programs. For out-of-school children including youth and young adults, the short-term income generation skills training for youth and adults, sustain and expand levels of literacy, and the family education for early childhood development. Lifelong learning principle is a crucial component of SDG 4 of 2030 Framework which re-emphasized in Incheon commitment (RGC 2019)⁴⁰. The literacy rate of the adult population aged over 15 was 63% in 1999 (RGC, 2002)⁴¹ and Cambodia reached out 81% (75% female) from SCES, 2016⁴², completed 82,5% from CSDG 4 2019, and 88% (85% female) in MoEYS Education Congress, 2021.

C-SDG 4 Targets on Higher Education

4.7 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

The human capacity in science, technology and innovation roadmap 2030 (MoISTI, 2021)⁴³ set as 50% of the university students are skilled in science technology engineering and mathematics (STEM), of which 40% are women. The roadmap which links to SDG 4 also strengthened the research capacity and quality of the higher education and research system. Cambodia higher education faced key challenges with the education systems, labor market and students (Kimkong & Koemhong, 2022). The universities were monitoring and controlling the

⁴⁰ National Policy on Lifelong Learning, RGC June 2019

⁴¹ Policy of Non-formal Education, MoEYS Aug 2002

⁴² Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey of Ministry of Planning 2016

⁴³ Cambodia's Science, Technology and Innovation Roadmap 2030, MoISTI 2021

quality by multi standards - not the one standard by MoEYS – the university related to agriculture linked to the ministry of agriculture, and the university was on health monitor and supervised by the Ministry of Health. Another issue was about the weak schools (university) management and skill mismatch of the students to the labor market. – The labor market needed technical skills in IT, but the students studied only general skills like management. The last challenge linked to the capacity of the teacher and students in the research, the limited opportunity for the student living in rural areas – the university mostly located in the city and towns.

Addressed the challenges, MoEYS has developed the strategic plan on human resource development for higher education sub-sector 2021-23⁴⁴. The strategic plan had four frameworks; 1-improve teacher, lecturer capacity, 2-funding supports, 3-quality monitoring and evaluation, and 4-school infrastructure.

C-SDG 4 Targets on Youth Development and Adult Learning

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Adult literacy rate (15+year) was 82.5% in 2017 compared to the CSDG set 81.0% - Cambodia achieved this target. The Cambodia youth aged 15-35 represented 35.8% (46.8% female) of the total population around 16 million⁴⁵. And the labor force participation rate of population aged 15-59 years is 81.7%, however the unemployment rate of population aged 15-59 years is 1.2%. Among the total household in Cambodia, 25.6% is the female-head whose responsibility was not only in the housework but also the income generation. Students in rural areas were more likely to drop out of school than their urban counterparts even before COVID-19. In the 2019–2020 school year, the first during the pandemic, 9.6% of rural students in grades 10 to 12 dropped out, compared to 5.4% in cities. Cambodian young people left their education early and looked for work. Since there were not enough decent jobs for adolescents and youth, it resulted in continued pressure on public services and resources in education and health.

Responded the challenges of unemployment, limited education quality, and health survey, Cambodia government strategy⁴⁶ focused on improving the youth quality through skills training, health facilities accessible, job market, working conditions and opportunity with a slogan of “One youth has at least one skill in life”. MoEYS also established Youth Councils for upper secondary (grade 10 to grade 12). The school Youth Council is a network of the MoEYS National Council for Youth Development, which has been implementing several programmes and activities such as through a youth center and vocational skills programme, a short skills training programme, a youth volunteer programme, a labor market information program and internship program. Those programs place students in the state and private enterprises, an entrepreneurship and leadership programme, and a study tour and camping programme (NYDC, 2020)⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Strategic Plan on Human Resource Development for Higher Education Sub-sector 2021-23, MoEYS, Dec 21

⁴⁵ General Population Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019, NIS of Ministry of Planning

⁴⁶ Rectangular Strategy Phase IV 2019-2023, Royal Government of Cambodia

⁴⁷ Youth Situation Analysis in Cambodia, by National Youth Development Council 2020

C- SDG 4 Targets on Inclusive Education

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

The Royal Government of Cambodia set the 2030 vision which is to promote economic inclusion and environmental sustainability to ensure Cambodia becomes an upper-middle income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050 (CVNR, 2019). The government also set the goal in 2030 to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

The policy priority of the Education Strategic Plan (2019) is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all (ESP, 2019). Link to ESP, MoEYS developed the Policy on Inclusive Education (2018)⁴⁸. The goal of the Policy on Inclusive Education is to educate all persons with special needs to have knowledge, skills and attitude so that they can contribute to the development of society. According to the strategic plan on gender mainstreaming in education sector 2021-25 (MoEYS, 2021)⁴⁹. The ministry had completed gender mainstreaming (female student) in pre-school 50% was female, primary education 48%, secondary education 52%, higher education 48%, non-formal education 84%, and education staff 46% in school years 2019-20. The positive results came from the completion of strategic implementation in the period 2016-20.

The key challenge is policy and action plan have no curriculum (teaching and learning methods) on the student with disabilities (general, physical, intellectual, deaf and hard of hearing), autism spectrum disorder, psychosocial disabilities, indigenous people, and LGBT students (NYDC, 2020)⁵⁰. The schools had limited slopes for people with disabilities, some schools were far away from students' homes, the culture of girls marrying at a young age, the limited dormitories for students from rural areas, girl students, ethnic minority group, students with disabilities (MoEYS, 2021).

SDG 4 Targets on Quality of Teaching, Learning and School Management

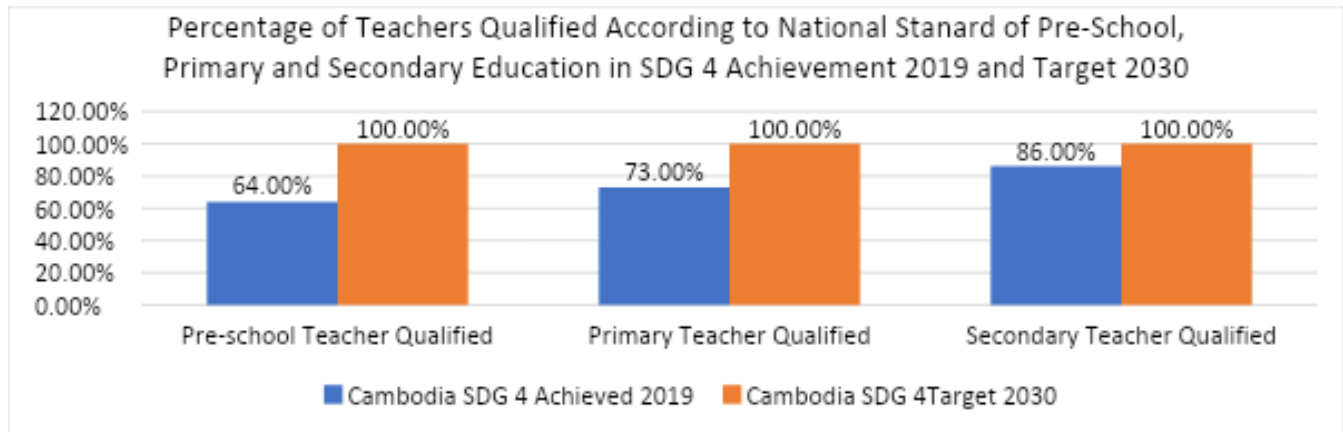
4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in Cambodia.

Figure 5: The global and Cambodia Target of Teachers Qualified

⁴⁸ Policy on Inclusive Education, MoEYS June 2018

⁴⁹ The Strategic plan on Gender Mainstreaming in Education Sector 2021-25, MoEYS March 2021

⁵⁰ Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis, National Youth Development Council 2020



Source: *National SDG 4 Benchmarks, UNESCO 2021 & CVNR 2019*

Cambodia set CSDG 4 targets as 100% of teachers qualified for the pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers (figure 5). As the result from CVNR (2019), MoEYS completed 64% at pre-school, 73% at primary school, and 86% at secondary school for teachers who qualified the national standard. For SDG 4 target 2030, MoEYS strongly expected to achieve by implementing its ESP and CPD policy.

MoEYS develop the Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teachers and School Directors (CPD 2019)⁵¹ link to the ESP 2019 that the second priority is to ensure effective leadership and management of education officials at all levels. “CPD is a wide variety of specialized training, formal and informal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help classroom and specialist teachers and school directors improve their professional knowledge, skills, competence, and effectiveness” (CPD 2019).

The rationale for effective continuous professional development (CPD) programs was that all educators expected to keep their knowledge and skills updated on a regular basis. To assist classroom and specialist teachers and school directors improve. The quality of teaching, learning and school management, MoEYS reformed the strategy of the with framework of 5 pillars by implementing teacher policy action plan, review and update curriculum and textbook, putting inspection systems into practice, strengthening learning assessment and exam, and reforming higher education.

Physical Education and Sport

SDG 4 has no specific indicator and target related to physical education and sport. CVNR (2019) also has no indicator, target and achievement on physical education and sport. However, MoEYS practiced the physical education and sport with the international and oversea sports competitions, support budget for National Sport Federation, promoting physical learning and teaching activities during school hours and after-school sports training, Capacity development of physical education and sports officers, and Development of Standard Instruments for Physical Education and Sports (Education Congress, 2021).

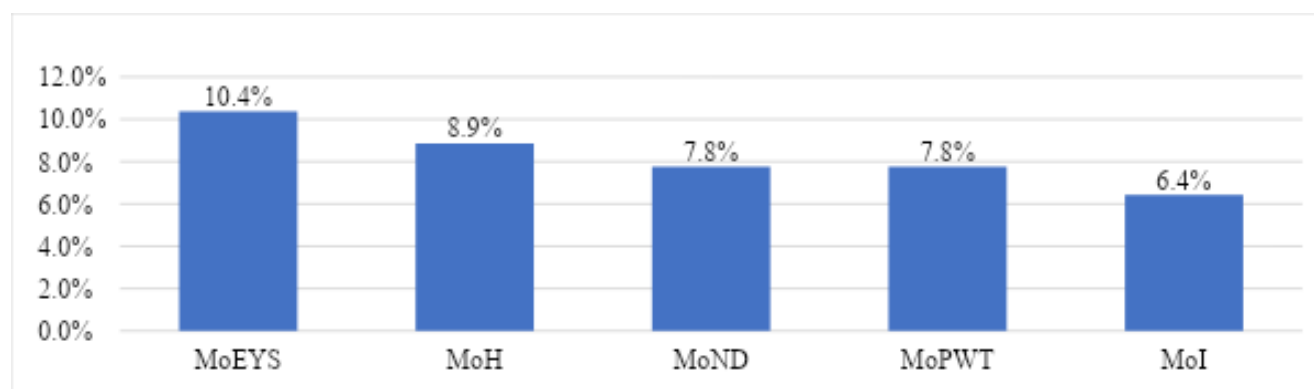
⁵¹ Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teacher and School Director, MoEYS August 2019

However, lack of access to sports education, especially for marginalized learners continues to impact and challenge the sub-sector on physical education and sport where the implementation of the physical education program framework in some educational institutions is not 2 hours/1 week complete. There was a lack of professional technical officers in sports categories who have undergone international training. The number of people participating in exercise and sports for health is still limited, and there is a lack of sports medical staff in health care, diet and anti-doping in sports.

Overview of the Situation on Education Financing

Cambodia set its target 20% (or 4.5% of GDP) of the total national budget spending on education in 2030 (UNESCO, 2021)⁵². However, education sector is mostly impacted by Covid-19 – all the public and private schools were closed in 2020-2021 (MoEF, 2022)⁵³. The COVID-19 pandemic has generated adverse impacts on the education sector budget, not only the government budget but also budget availability in private education institutions. The government has issued directives for budget reductions in all line ministries and the re-allocation of some budgets for immediate response to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the kingdom and among its citizens. The table below explains how the budget chapters have been affected by COVID-19 budget reductions, as instructed by the Royal Government of Cambodia (MoEYS 2019)⁵⁴.

Figure 6: Cambodia National Budget Spent 2022 by Ministries



Source: *Budget in Brief Fiscal Year 2022*

The national spending for the education sector in 2022 is one of the five priorities among 25 ministries and institutions in Cambodia (MoEF, 2022). As shown in figure 4, it stands for 10,4% of total budget spent in 2022 followed by the Ministry of Health (MoH) 8,9%, the Ministry of National Defense (MoND) 7,8%, the Ministry of Public Work and Transportation (MoPWT) 7,8% and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) 6,4%.

However, the comparison of the total budget spent for MoEYS in 2022 is lower than 2019 (10,4% compared to 13,7%). The percentage of the total budget spent for MoEYS has not

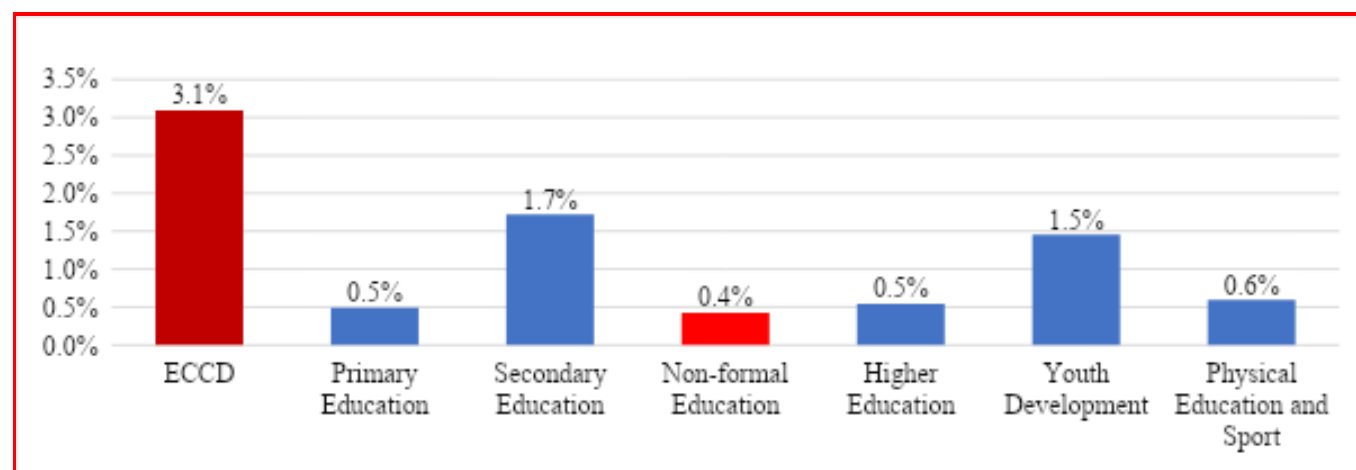
⁵² SDG 4 Data Digest 2021: National SDG 4 benchmarks: fulfilling our neglected commitment

⁵³ Budget in Brief Fiscal Year 2022, MoEF

⁵⁴ Cambodia Education Response Plan to Covid-19 Pandemic (July, 2020)

reached the global benchmark of 20% of the total national budget as set out in the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action adopted in 2015 (BWG, 2018)⁵⁵.

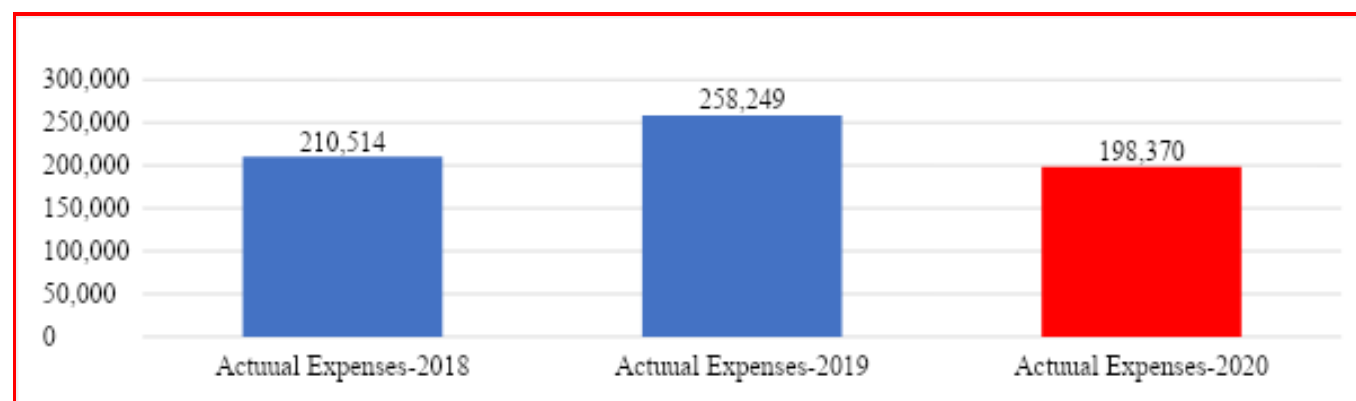
Figure 7: Cambodia National Budget Spent 2022 by Ministries



Source: Cambodia Budget Law 2022

The total budget spent in 2022 for MoEYS was separated into two policy objectives; objective 1 focused on strengthening education quality for the students by sub-sector – followed by four programs, and objective 2 is to improve education personnel with one program. The analysis in figure 7 expressed the percentage of direct cost by sub-sectors compared with the total budget of policy objective 1. It was shown that the highest direct cost was pre-school education (ECCD) 3,1%, and lowest was non-formal education 0,4%. This budget excluded other indirect expenditures such as library development, curriculum development, research and other cross-sector costs. The budget allocation linked to the resilience education sector from pre-school level to higher education for the achievement of SDG 4 targets.

Figure 8: Development Partners Contributed to Support the Education Sector



Source: Education Congress 2021, MoEYS

Figure 8 shows that MoEYS got the finance support from IPs around 210 million USD Dollar in 2018 and 258 million USD Dollar in 2019. However, during Covid-19 in 2020, MoEYS got only 198 million USD Dollar – it decreased 24% compared to 2019 (Education Congress, 2021)⁵⁶. It

⁵⁵ Education Budget Policy Brief 2018, Budget Working Group (BWG) 2018

⁵⁶ Education Congress, MoEYS April 2021, by NEP and ASPBAE

was a big challenge that MoEYS needed more budget allocation from the government and budget support from implementing partners, but the budget was decreased by both. MoEYS planned for the budget support from IP around 211 million USD Dollar in 2021 for strengthening education quality after Covid-19 – the ministry also needed more technical support. The budget supports can contribute to restore the education systems on the track of SDG 4 target 2025 and 2030.

CSOs Role in SDG 4 Monitoring and Implementation Process

CSOs have produced remarkable activities in collaborating with the Royal Government of Cambodia to support the government on the monitoring and implementing process of the CSDG4. NGO Education Partnership (NEP) coordinated CSOs in SDG 4 localization and implementation. NEP has also contributed to strengthening provincial dialogue through Provincial Education Sector Working Group (P-ESWGs), which serves as a key driver for accountability to the 2030 Agenda (Cambodia Spotlight Report, 2018)⁵⁷. NEP worked with 144 Education NGOs (92 local and 52 internationals based on (NEP database, 2018). Spotlight Report (2018) showed that 70% of P-ESWGs representatives have participated in the NEP's consultative workshops for CSDG 4, and 28% of P-ESWG representatives were also invited directly by MoEYS for CSDG 4 consultation. In a small-scale survey performed by Save the Children (2021), it was shown that 97% of kids in primary and secondary school grades were worried about how they would study during the pandemic. Social Action for Community and Development also discovered that 70% of the students had several difficulties while attempting to study using non-traditional methods. The difficulties included extra costs for internet access and equipment needed to continue studying, as well as time lost due to poor and intermittent internet services. Some pupils said that they weren't prepared for online learning and that the difficult learning processes made them anxious. According to the monitoring report, just 20% of pupils in the north-eastern regions of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri had access to a radio at home for distant learning (Education Congress 2021). In CARE International's fast gender study for COVID-19 (2021), it was shown that females would not gain as much from online education, particularly in households with few devices and little access to distance learning tools. As a result, the survey and quick access from CSOs further stoked their concerns that the Cambodian education issue would prevent the accomplishment of SDG 4 objectives by 2030.

I- CONCLUSION

This investigation reveals a delay in the accomplishment of SDG 4 targets for the year 2030 and issues a warning that enrollment rates at all educational levels will likely decline and dropout rates at all levels will likely rise in the upcoming academic years, as well as an aggravation of issues with rural students, students from ethnic groups, and students who live with disabilities who primarily have limited access to online education and drop out for work and migration. The main suggestions are that MoEYS has to redouble its efforts with line ministries, UN

⁵⁷ Civil Society Spotlight Report on Cambodia

agencies, DPs, NGOs, CSOs, and the corporate sector to keep repairing and enhancing educational institutions in an effort to meet the 2030 SDG 4 objective.

II- RECOMMENDATIONS

MoEYS:

- To increase the national budget on education to meet the Incheon Commitment 20% of the total national budget spent (19.3% in 2025 and 20% in 2030).
- To prioritize recovery and mitigation of the pandemic effect such as learning loss, social inequality, digital divide, and the quality of education after the school closure during Covid-19. The policies, strategic plan, and action plan on the education quality improvement already fully approved by MoEYS – the moving from paper to actions.
- Continue to improve Human Resources Information Management (HRIM) systems and provide capacity building to sub-national education officers to improve and utilize EMIS data to make evidence-based teacher requests.
- Improve teacher capacity development structures
- Increase opportunities for the sub-national level to deeply engage in the process of CSDG4 planning and rollout, including increased capacity-building on SDG4 localization and alignment and timely information-sharing for long-term planning at provincial level.
- To invest (financial and technical supports) to education to strengthen the network at the provincial level as Provincial Education Working Group (P-ESWG), and the existed Sub-sector Working Group (SWG) such as ECCD working, Primary Working Group, NFE Working Group, Education Budget Working Group. P-ESWG brings the voice from the provincial level and SWG coordinates from provincial, sub-national and national levels with specific sub-sectors.

III- ANNEX

Annex 1: The Element, Hypotheses and Question of Spotlight Report

Table 1: The Element, Hypotheses and Question of Spotlight Report

Elements	Hypothesis	Questions	Document to Be Consulted
Analysis at the policy level	MoEYS produced the policies, strategies, guidelines to improve education quality link to SDG 4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the Cambodian government-MoEYS have a policy framework on SDG 4 implementation? How does this relate to existing or other policy frameworks as national development plans? Do local governments in Cambodia actively engage in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cambodia Education Law -Rectangular Strategy Phase IV -Other relevant documents

		the 2030 Agenda for SDG 4? If so, how?	
CSOs role in SDG 4 monitoring and implementation process	CSOs played a key role in the SDG 4 monitoring and implementation process in Cambodia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs engagement with the government in the localization, implementation, and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for SDG 4. (Including the consultation and inputs to Cambodian SDG 4) • CSOs knowledge and preparation to implement the SDG 4 in Cambodia. 	-SDG 4 report -SDG 4 report in ASEAN -Cambodia's Voluntary National Review 2019 -Public Education Statistic and Indicator 2021-2022 -Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 -Cambodia Census 2019 -Education Policies from MoEYS
Education financing	The government increased the budget for MoEYS on education implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of education budget allocation, expenditure, and projection/pledging (budget law 2022)? Have they increased or decreased compared to the last five years? • What effort has been put/reform has been set to better functioning education financing? • What is the framework of Education Public Financial Management Reform (PFMR)? • How is the performance of budget at school level practiced? • What can be concluded about education financing in Cambodia in the context of SDG 4? 	-Budget Law -Cambodia Education Budget compared with regional and global -CDHS 2021-2022
Inclusive education	Inclusive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the current inclusive education practices and policies being implemented in Cambodia? • What are the ways forward to improve the situation of inclusive education in the context of SDG 4? 	-Policy on inclusive education -Other relevant documents

Quality of Teaching and Learning & School Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the policy/framework to control the quality of teaching and learning outcomes? • How are students and caregivers supported to improve learning outcomes? • To what extent does it help to equip teachers to improve their roles? • What is the pupil-teacher ratio? • What should be improved for future deployment and the current management of teachers to the schools with teacher shortage based on existing information to contribute to the SDG 4? • What can be done to improve school management practices in Cambodia? • What is the current policy agenda for building school managers capacity? • What have been the gaps and challenges in school management across the country? 	-Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 -Continuous Professional Development Framework for Teachers and School Directors 2019 -Other relevant documents
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Annex 2: The list of Key Informant Interview, Focus Group Discussion and Field Observation

Table 2: The list of Key Informant Interview, Focus Group Discussion and Field Observation

No	Position	Sex	Methods	Number of People
1	Deputy of PoEYS of Ratanakiri province	M	KII	1
2	Deputy of PoEYS of Kampong Cham province	M	KII	1
3	Primary School Director of Ratanakiri province	F	KII	1
4	High School Director of Ratanakiri province	M	KII	1
5	Teachers at Primary School of Ratanakiri province (9/3female)	M/F	FGD	9
6	Girls Students at Primary School of Ratanakiri province (8)	F	FGD	8

7	Teachers at High School of Ratanakiri province (7/4female)	M/F	FGD	7
8	Boy Students at High School of Ratanakiri province (9)	M	FGD	9
9	Adolescence and Youth Program Manager at UNFPA	M	KII	1
10	Gender Based Violence Program Manager at UNFPA	F	KII	1
11	ECCD Specialist from NGO	F	KII	1
12	The scholar who specialist on Higher Education Specialist	M	KII	1
13	Official of School Health Department (MoEYS)	M	KII	5

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