

Submission to the UN Human Rights Council by NGO Education Partnership
(NEP)

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1 Introduction

1.1 This submission will focus on the period 1st April 2010 to the present day, 24th June 2013. In a plenary session on 17th March 2010, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) accepted all 91 recommendations contained in Section II of the Report of the Working Group A/HRC/13/4 and this submission will consider the extent to which these recommendations have been implemented as well as highlighting other issues.

2 Education Funding

2.1 Recommendations A-11 and A-76 advising that more resources should be directed towards education, and the RGC has provided annual real increases for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). However, the increases that MoEYS have received are smaller compared to those of other ministries so that the share of the national budget allocated to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) has fallen since 2010 from 16.4% to just over 15% for 2013.¹

2.2 In addition to MoEYS receiving a smaller proportion of the national budget, MoEYS have also reported large underspending against that budget for every year between 2010 and 2012. In 2012, the underspending was \$25,705,498., equal to 10% of the total budget allocated. This could indicate a gap between planning and delivery or be explained by funding allocated for MoEYS being used to fund expenditure by other Ministries, as other ministries have overspent their budget in the same years that MoEYS has underspent².

2.3 The declining share of the national budget for MoEYS and an even lower share when considering actual expenditure would indicate that education has not been prioritised for extra resources as has been indicated.

2.4 There is also concern that shortages of cash within MoEYS is being disproportionately felt at the school level. The Program-Based budget is the source of government funding for all school operational costs, excluding staff salaries. All staff in schools, including administrative staff, receive their salaries and other re-numeration directly from another budget. MoEYS offices at district, provincial and national levels also receive a program-based budget for their activities.

2.5 For 2012, 94.96% of the allocated program-based budget at the national level was expended; provincial offices of education expended 83.52% of their allocated program-based budget³. A study by NEP with 50 schools found that they received only 64% of their expected program-based budget in 2012.⁴ These 50 primary schools were in 5 provinces that each received an average of 79.82% of their allocated program-based budget.

¹ PDF copies of Budget Law documents from 2004 - 2013 are available at: <http://cambodianbudget.org/budget-law-series.php>. Accessed on 25th April 2013.

² Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. (2013). *The Education, Youth and Sport Performance in the Academic Year 2011/12 and Goals for the Academic Year 2012/13*. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

³ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2013). *The Education, Youth and Sport Performance in the Academic Year 2011/12 and Goals for the Academic Year 2012/13*. Phnom Penh: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

⁴ De Jong, R (2013), 'Public Expenditure Tracking Survey in Cambodian Primary Education'. Phnom Penh: NGO Education Partnership

- 2.6 This is obviously a small sample and only provides an indication that there could be a problem in schools not being a priority for cash distribution within MoEYS.
- 2.7 The same study by NEP also found that school directors and staff from district offices of education felt that the method of distributing budgets should be improved by using the banking system. Currently, district offices of education receive money for all schools in their district in cash and this cash is distributed to schools.
- 2.8 Disbursement by bank accounts would be more efficient and also safer, since school staff would not have to travel with cash. Also, the budget would be saved in bank accounts and doesn't have to be stored in safety boxes at school or at the school principal's home, which is common. This would assist transparency and good governance at the school level.
- 2.9 ACLEDA is the bank with the most numerous offices in Cambodia, 238, which are located in approximately 80% of districts, with further expansion planned. They also plan to have all offices connected online before the end of 2013. The Government could consider a trial with schools in various urban and rural districts to assess the potential benefits of transferring payments via the banking system.

3 Access to education for all

- 3.1 The Education Law in Cambodia advises that every citizen has the right to access quality education of at least 9 years in public schools free of charge and that there is a right of enrolment for grade 1 from the age of 6 years or at least 70 months on the date of the beginning of the school year.
- 3.2 MoEYS reported net primary enrolment (grades 1-6) to be 96.4% in 2011/12, a rate that has shown steady annual improvement. However, the reported net lower secondary enrolment rate (grades 7-9) is not improving and is still only 35.1%. Drop out rates continue to be very high in primary and lower secondary education despite every citizen having a right to free education up to grade 9.⁵
- 3.3 Late enrolment is a problem with 31.5% of students beginning primary school over the age of six, and there is no trend of progression regarding this rate⁶. Overage enrolment in grade one is strongly correlated with dropout in later grades. If a child enrolls in grade 1 when aged 7 or 8 then because of high repetition rates it is likely that the child will be 13 or 14 when finishing primary school at which point the parents begin to think that the child is old enough to begin working or helping in the house.
- 3.4 Additionally, it appears that children are not experiencing a right to a free education with informal school fees being common. 53% of primary school children sampled advised that they give payments as part of their education and 67% of their parents advised they made payments as part of their child's education. These are often for items that you would expect to be the responsibility of schools and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS).

Table 1: Informal fees at primary school⁷

Types of expense	Students	Mean average of	Parents	Mean average of
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⁵ EMIS, Department of Planning (2012), *Education Statistics and Indicators: 2011/12*, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

⁶ EMIS, Department of Planning (2012), *Education Statistics and Indicators: 2011/12*, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

⁷ Ang, S & Conochie, G (2012), *Promoting Rights in Schools; The state of children's rights in Cambodian primary schools*. Phnom Penh: NGO Education Partnership

		expenditure (Riels)		expenditure (Riels)
Teacher's learning materials/stationery	18%	1400 per time	11%	6870 per time
Bicycle parking fee	6%	2860 per month	7%	No data
Examination fee	19%	2300 per time	15%	2500 per time
Extra tuition fee inside of school	33%	12500 per month	28%	12,480 per month
Extra tuition fee outside of school	20%	18400 per month	20%	16410 per month
Teacher's note	14%	1800 per time	7.5%	3090 per time
Daily teacher's fee	12%	13200 per month	11%	16200 per month
Appraisal record book	26%	1200 per month	16%	1100 per month

* Riels is the Cambodian currency; 4000 riels = US\$1

3.5 Unsurprisingly, our research found that students in urban areas are more likely to pay fees, which are also likely to be higher. Furthermore, in Phnom Penh, nearly 90% of students in Phnom Penh reported paying a daily fee to teachers whereas such fees were rare in other provinces. Additionally, over 90% of students in Phnom Penh were asked to pay monthly performance appraisal fees, which again was much higher than in other provinces.

3.6 At least two students in 84% of urban schools reported paying for extra tuition inside of school, compared to only 44% in rural schools and 37% in remote schools with others paying for extra tuition outside of school. The fees are prohibitive for many families therefore, only children from wealthier families can afford to pay and benefit from this extra tuition, which appears to lead to better student performance.⁸

3.7 This creates inequalities based on the student's family's ability and willingness to pay for extra tuition as the researchers did not find any student who attended but did not pay. Furthermore, Brehm found that extra tuition classes were used to continue teaching of the national curriculum that would not be repeated in the classroom. It could be that approximately half of students are not receiving the full curriculum because they cannot afford to pay for it.⁹

3.8 In Cambodia, 90% of poor urban youth do not have the chance to complete lower secondary education, compared with 82% of the rural poor and 31% of the urban rich. Urban poorest are at a greater disadvantage than rural poorest but Young women in rural areas are the most likely to lack foundation skills (to have less than lower secondary education).¹⁰

⁸ Brehm, Silova and Mono (2012, *Hidden Privatization of Public Education in Cambodia: the Impact and Implications of Private Tutoring*, Open Society Foundations

⁹ Brehm, Silova and Mono (2012, *Hidden Privatization of Public Education in Cambodia: the Impact and Implications of Private Tutoring*, Open Society Foundations

¹⁰ UNESCO (2012), 'EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012'. UNESCO.

4 A lack of teaching hours

- 4.1 Brehm advised that teachers explained that an inability to complete the curriculum in the allotted teaching hours caused them to include the curriculum in extra classes. This could be true as there are only 633 hours and 20 minutes in a primary school year to teach the national curriculum, which is very compared to other countries. This is a crucial barrier to producing quality education as advised in recommendation A-86.
- 4.2 MoEYS is unable to increase the number of teaching hours because of a shortage of teachers compared to the number of students, which means that 20% of primary school teachers are teaching one class in the morning and one in the afternoon. 75% of primary schools are operating this double shift system.¹¹ This would make it very hard to increase the normal teaching hours in a school day without asking many teachers to be working 12-hour days with preparation and reviewing time in addition. It must be a priority for MoEYS to increase the number of primary teachers available to reduce the need for primary teachers to be doing a double shift. This would then allow them to expand the number of teaching hours in primary school, which would greatly improve student learning.
- 4.3 In 2011/12, the primary pupil-teacher ratio was 47.3:1¹², which is the highest outside of Africa and the 15th highest in the world.¹³ There is also a problem with teacher deployment as in rural areas the ratio is 51.4:1 and some of the poorest provinces such as Ratanakiri and Siem Reap have ratios of 66.8:1 and 65.4:1 respectively.
- 4.4 The lack of teaching time is exacerbated by high rates of teacher absence and unofficial school closure. A study of teaching hours by MoEYS found that approximately 46 days, up to 153 hours, were lost a year with two main causes being teacher absenteeism and teachers teaching for fewer hours when they were present.¹⁴ NEP is currently doing further research on this and is finding high rates of unexplained teacher absence and unofficial school closure, especially on days close to official public holidays. However, an indication that is still a problem was that 43% of teachers advised they would not be absent as much if their salary was increased to \$100 per month allowing them to give up a second job.¹⁵
- 4.5 In the same study, 78% of teachers said that they would be able to spend more time preparing lessons if their salary was increased because they would concentrate only on teaching. The study of 461 primary teachers found that 67% of them had a second job.

¹¹ EMIS, Department of Planning (2012), *Education Statistics and Indicators: 2011/12*, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

¹² EMIS, Department of Planning (2012), *Education Statistics and Indicators: 2011/12*, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

¹³ Unesco Institute of Statistics. (n.d.). *Education - Teachers*. Retrieved March 31, 2013, from Unesco Institute of Statistics: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/teachers-statistics.aspx>
UNESCO Institute of Statistics. (n.d.). *UNESCO eAtlas of Teachers*. Retrieved March 31, 2013, from UNESCO Institute of Statistics: <http://www.app.collinsindicate.com/uis-atlas-teachers/en-us>

¹⁴ Department of Curriculum Development (2008), *Teaching Hours in Primary School*, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

¹⁵ Ang, S. (2012), *Assessing the Impact of Incentives on Teacher Motivation*, NGO Education Partnership