

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CAMBODIA: A BRIEF REVIEW FROM THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD TO THE PRESENT, AND AN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

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Abstract

Because of the scattered pieces of documents both in Khmer and English about the education systems in Cambodia from the prehistoric period to the present, we have tried to collect all the related documents to review and then combined them into one piece. The combined piece from this review makes it a lot easier for all the researchers and readers who want to know about the education system in Cambodia from the past to the present since the piece has highlighted all the stages of the education process in Cambodia along with the review from the look into the history of Cambodia. This article also looks into the future of the education strategic plan (ESP) in Cambodia based on the policy of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia and ESP put forth by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS).

Keywords: Education system, Disāpāmokkha school, Nokor Phnom, Funan, Chenla, Zhenla, Khmer Empire

Introduction

Cambodia is one of the Southeast Asian nations, located in the southeast of the Indochina Peninsula. It borders Vietnam to the east, Laos to the northeast, Thailand to the west and northwest, and the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest with a land area of 181, 035 km² (Chandler, 2007). There are one capital city and twenty-four provinces in this country. Phnom Penh is the capital city ("Provinces of Cambodia," 2022). In 2022, Cambodia has a population of 17,109,398 (Cambodia Population, n.d.). Cambodia has two

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seasons: rainy and dry, with a tropical climate and mild temperatures all year round. Most of the people are Buddhists, and they are farmers (Chandler, 2007).

The history of the location of Cambodia dated back to 600, 000 years B.C. (MoEYS, 2020a) (see Table 2). This review has examined what the education process and education system have been like from the prehistoric period to the present and ESP for the future.

History of Education in Cambodia

Education System during the Prehistoric Period

There have not been many documents that pointed out exactly what the education system during the early prehistoric period of Cambodia was like. According to About Asia Travel (n.d.), one of Southeast Asia's first populations was the Khmer. The cave of Laan Spean in Battambang has the earliest relics of prehistoric Cambodia (stone implements), providing proof that the cave was inhabited 6,000 years ago. Although little is known about this period, it is generally agreed that prehistoric men practiced animism and worshipped both the natural spirits of the land and their ancestors. They also lived in caves as tribes and possessed primitive skills like growing rice or domesticating animals, and they also went hunting, fishing, and picking up fruits from the forests to eat. Generally, Neel (1989) noted that many authors have assumed that the earliest education of all races and nations in the world was rooted in the evolutions of nature. Then education was developed through people's activities. Based on this information, we could assume that while going to fish, hunt, or pick up fruits, sons or daughters would go with their parents or elders, and then they watched and followed the activities. That was a kind of informal education related to what the then people saw and did (see also Britannica, n.d.; Lepôl, n.d.).

At a later date, the then people were believed to have made tools from iron and bronze, and they had navigational skills to do business in the far lands. Then Mon-Khmer arrived and intermarried the inhabitants (Dy, 2004a). Ngea (1973) also noted that the then people learned and taught their beliefs of Nakta (sacred stone), drawing pictures, astronomy, astrology, and Sanskrit language. Ourm et al. (1973) additionally noted that the then Khmer had a relationship with Indians too, but the Indians had not come to live and do business yet.

Education System during Nokor Phnom or Funan Period

Funan (Funan Kingdom) was referred to in the Chinese language, and the same thing, Nokor Phnom (Phnom Kingdom) was referred to by the Khmer language (Chandler, 2007). There has been a slight difference concerning the start and the end of the Funan period from different authors (e.g., Briggs, 1947; Solheim, 1967; Stark, 1998). However, MoEYS (2020a) noted that the Funan period lasted from 100 B.C. to 550 A.D. (see Table 2). Based on the date, we could divide the education process during the period into two halves. The first half was before the arrival of Indians which was similar to some aspects of those during the prehistoric period, but a large number of developments was also revealed (Ourm et al., 1973).

Because of the developments, Chandler (1991) highlighted that "increased rice production freed some people to engage in other work, such as elaborate-boat building, house decoration, bronze manufacture, and arranging to feast. Others were freed to be soldiers, and a few became priests and rulers. These men soon become the most honored people in society. Often, they demonstrated their power by the size of their followers and the amount of their wealth" (p. 42).

Currently, Hang (2018) noted that the second half was in the similarity to those in India because of the arrival of Indians along with traditions, beliefs, languages,

religions, and the knowledge of doing business to add to the existing ones. Hang (2018) noted that the people at that time learned the Sanskrit language and laws, and they passed on Brahmanism, Buddhism, local structure beliefs, and traditions to the next generations. The then people were also believed to have traded with India and China, and they even went doing business as far as Persia, Greece, and Rome (Basham, 1994; Ourm et al., 1973).

According to Bo (2014); Chan (2016); Hang (2018), Koh Sontepheap (2014), and Ourm et al. (1973), the education during Nokor Phnom period was provided by Disāpāmokkha schools. The Royal Family was the builder of Disāpāmokkha schools. In a Disapamokkha school, the students could learn all the skills and majors that they wanted. However, the most popular majors and skills during the Nokor Phnom period were reading the scripts written in Sanskrit, and Khmer martial arts, and constructing (Ourm et al., 1973).

Noticeably, teachers who taught students in Disāpāmokkha schools were hermits or monks, and the students were mostly from the Royal Family and sons of the Elite. Disāpāmokkha schools also received students from the neighboring countries. However, girls were not encouraged to attend school because it was related to classical Khmer customs that girls should not meet many people, and they should stay at home to look after the property (see Chan, 2016; Hang, 2018; Koh Sontepheap, 2014; Ourm et al., 1973).

Similarly, Ngea (1973) noted that the monks who knew and remembered the Sanskrit language well were promoted to higher ranks. Neau (2022) noted that two monks, named Sangkha Bal and Montrak Sen, were sent to China to translate The God of Trinity. Their work pleased the Chinese King at that time, so the King built them a wonderful pagoda to stay there, and their work was kept in The God of the Trinity of Chinese forever. According to Koh Sontepheap (2014) and Ngea, (1973), these two monks brought Cambodian popularity to the rest of the globe, and people who practiced Mahayana Buddhism were familiar with their names.

Education System during Chenla (or Zhenla) Period

Chenla (Chenla Kingdom) was the name of Cambodia after the Nokor Phnom period ended, and it was given by the Chinese (Chandler, 2007; Ourm et al., 1973). In fact, Chenla Kingdom was originally a neighboring country of Nokor Phnom, but then defeated Nokor Phnom and declared independence (Ourm et al., 1973). The Chenla period started from 550 to 802 A.D. (MoEYS, 2020a) (see Table 2). According to Chandler (2007), “The Chinese, in fact, distinguished between two Chenlas, one associated with the Mekong Delta (and known as “water Chenla”) and the other (“land Chenla”) apparently located somewhere on the upper reaches of the Mekong, perhaps near present-day Wat Ph’u in southern Laos” (p. 33).

According to Hang (2018), education during the Chenla period was similar to the second phase of that of the Nokor Phnom period because the people had been practicing what the Indians had brought them for a long time, but it was not as good as the original system because the two Chenlas often fought each other, and because there were two dominant religions at that time which were Brahmanism and Buddhism, the education system was also made based on the principles of the two. However, the formal education system was not mentioned, but Disāpāmokkha schools (Hang, 2018; Koh Sontepheap, 2014; Ourm et al., 1973).

Even though the then Khmer were busy with their fighting, they did not completely forget the education process. Therefore, along with Sanskrit and Bali, the Khmer language was also used in inscriptions. For example, Ngea (1973) showed that the first inscription found with the exact date was in 611 A.D. The inscription was of the Ramayana story, Mahabharata story, and Ancient Khmer Bibles.

Education System during Khmer (Angkor) Empire Period

Khmer Empire was very powerful (see Production, 2016). Khmer Empire was the most well-known period in Khmer history. The Khmer Empire period lasted from 802 to 1218 or 1221 A.D. (MoEYS, 2020a) (see Table 2). Some people might have a confusing date between 802 and 1431 A.D. as stated by Chandler (2007). In fact, it was right from 802 to 1431 A.D. as stated, but MoEYS (2020a) disclosed that after 1218 or 1221 A.D., Khmer (Angkor) was not an Empire anymore, just an era or a country (see Table 2). Chandler (2007) stated that “Cambodia, known in its inscriptions as Kambuja-desa, was the mightiest kingdom in Southeast Asia, drawing visitors and tributes from as far away as present-day Burma and Malaysia as well as from what were later to be Thai kingdoms to the west” (p. 35).

Education during Angkor Empire was great and glorious. Two universities were built. One was built in Preah Khan temple named Vat Cheysrey, and another one was built in Taprom Temple named Raja Vihear. The two universities were under the administration of King Jayavarman VII’s wife, Queen Andra Devy, between 1181 and 1220 A.D. (Chan & Ab-Latif, 2013; Koh Sontepheap, 2014; Rany et al., 2012). Temples had an important role in supporting educational, cultural, and inventive activities during this glorious period. As a result of this successful time, around 1081 historic and notable temples were built throughout the country. There were also 18 people who held doctorates (cultural and religious intellectuals) and 740 university lecturers to help amend the Khmer elites and improve the country's national human capital (Chan & Ab-Latif, 2013; Koh Sontepheaep, 2014; Rany et al., 2012). Additionally, the earliest formal educational institutions in recorded Cambodian history were erected during the reign of the Angkor pushing learning to become the first formal system (Rany et al., 2012). There were many popular subjects during the Angkor Empire (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Curriculum, skills development, and problems during Angkor (802-1431)

Schools	Curricula content	Skills development	Problems
Primary education (Pagoda Schools) Buddhist Month as Teachers (Kru) Boys stayed in Wat (pagoda) to be educated. Technical education (no data). Higher education (Two universities at Angkor Temples) 18 doctorate degrees and 740 university teachers.	Traditional education religious cosmology (Hindu-Buddhism). Traditional teaching and learning through proverb & Chbab, e.g., Reamke, Gatiloke (folktales). Rote learning.	Basic reading and writing literacy skills. Develop vocational skills such as carpentry. Develop human relations, a sense of responsibility, appropriate behavior, social status, and interpersonal and social relations.	The curriculum had not been employed by the whole educational hierarchy. Less attention to developing vocational skills and teaching methods. Education was influenced by the king, religious concepts, and political tendencies.

Source: Chan and Ab-Latif (2013, p. 150).

Education System after the Khmer Empire Period

After Khmer Empire declined, the Angkor was not yet abandoned. Angkor era still persisted for more than 200 years. It was notified that the period was between 1218 or 1221 and 1431 (MoEYS, 2020a) (see Table 2). During this period, the education system

became not so good and went back to what was called a less formal system. The people felt less interested in education because there were often fights broken out between Khmer and the neighboring countries, like Siam or Champa. Finally, Angkor was abandoned during the reign of King Ponhea Yat in 1431 (Hang, 2018; MoEYS, 2020a).

Table 2.

History of Cambodia from the prehistoric to the Angkor period

Prehistoric period	Nokor Phnom period	Chenla period	Khmer Empire period	Angkor-era period
600 000 B.C. to 100 B.C.	100 B.C. to 550 A.D.	550 A.D. to 802 A.D.	802 A.D. to 1218 or 1221 A.D.	1218 or 1221 A.D. to 1431 A.D.

Source: MoEYS (2020a, p. 123).

The Education System after Angkor was Abandoned

Having abandoned Angkor, King Ponhea Yat moved the capital city to Chaktomuk, present-day Phnom Penh. However, before moving to Chaktomuk, King Ponhea Yat stayed in Tuol Basan, a mountain hill, located in Baray commune, Sreysontor district, Kampongcham province, Cambodia, for about one year (Hang, 2018). Then because there was a very big flood that year at Tuol Basan, King Ponhea Yat moved the capital to Chutomuk in late 1431 or early 1432, and the Kingdom's situation became better because Siamese and Cham were far away, and the wars did not break out for the early period of Chaktomuk, there were still wars happened later after King Ponhea Yat died (MoEYS, 2020b).

According to Neau (2003), after Angkor was abandoned, there were three periods: Chaktumok-Longvek or Phnom Penh-Longvek period (1432-1595), Oudong period (17 and 18 century), and King Angduong period (1848-1860). The then education process was practiced in Wat schools (pagoda schools). The subjects were basic Khmer literature, the studies of religion, moral civics, and skills for daily life, such as carpentry, artistry, craftwork, constructing, playing instruments, and basic mathematics (Dy, 2004b, Khut, 2012; Koh Sontepheap, 2014; Neau, 2003). According to H.E. Dr. Kang Om, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Journalism, Royal Academy of Cambodia, it was also noted that King Angduong formed a university in the Oudong capital city, and he was the rector. The King himself lectured the Royal students and the sons of the Elite the subjects such as Khmer literature, poetry, composition, Bali, Dharma, Buddhist philosophy, and a few other subjects for daily life.

Education System before 1863

Before the arrival of the French in 1863, education was still practiced in Wat schools, and the majors and skills remained similar to those during the post-Angkor era (Dy, 2004b, Khut, 2012; Koh Sontepheap, 2014; Neau, 2003). Buddhist monks played a crucial role in teaching students who were all males (Clayton, 1995; Dy, 2004b, Khut, 2012; Neau, 2003).

Neau (2003) noted that the then parents and guardians only brought their sons to the pagodas for education. Girls were not allowed to study at the pagodas because of three reasons: (1) they were responsible for taking care of their family and doing household chores, (2) they were not allowed to stay close to the monks based on Buddhist rules, (3) and the old mindset of Khmer people restricted girls' education because they thought that literate girls might write love letters and send to their lovers. Those activities would bring shame and bad reputations to the families.

Education system between 1863 and 1953

When the French arrived in Cambodia in 1863, they met with an indigenous style of schooling geared to a Cambodian purpose. Following the establishment of a tiny, independent system of French schools, the French assumed control of Cambodia's indigenous education and redirected it toward a French objective (Ablin, 1991; Clayton, 1995; Charles, 1955; "Education in Cambodia," 2022; Filippi, 2011). Upon their arrival, the French reformed the education system based on the French model (Clayton, 1995; Filippi, 2011; Neau, 2003). Primary education was divided into two cycles. The first cycle was three years in duration ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 3, while the second cycle was three years ranging from Grade 4 to Grade 6. The French language was used as the medium of instruction in the second cycle and thereafter. Secondary education was also divided into two cycles. The first circle was lower-secondary education which the students needed to study for four years in duration. A secondary degree was awarded to students who successfully finished the first four-year cycle and passed a national examination. The second circle was upper-secondary education levels which the students needed to study for three years in duration. Students could take a state examination for the first baccalaureate after completing the first two years of the second cycle, and a similar examination for the second baccalaureate following their final year. The second baccalaureate aimed at preparing the students for tertiary education. The Cambodian secondary curriculum was in the similarity to that found in France (Clayton, 1995; Neau, 2003).

According to H.E. Dr. Kang Om, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Journalism, Royal Academy of Cambodia, the education system during the French period was different from the above-mentioned system. The difference was that the students who started the first grade were not in preschool or Grade 1 but in Grade 12. After they passed the final exam in Grade 12, the student then moved to Grade 11. They did like this until they reached Grade 1. The students then needed to study for one year after Grade 1 as a faculty preparation. In brief, the students needed to spend 13 years in general education the same as mentioned in the previous paragraph. The difference is only how the grades were called, but the activities and duration were the same.

Education System between 1953 and 1970

Cambodia gained full independence from France on November 9, 1953 (MoEYS, 2020c; Thompson & Adloff, 1953). Even though the French retreated from Cambodia, the education system during the period of King Norodom Sihanouk (Kingdom of Cambodia) still followed the French model (6 + 4 + 2 + 1) (Clayton, 1995; "Education in Cambodia," 2022; Neau, 2003). General education was divided into two levels, primary and secondary. Primary education took six years and students needed to enroll in Grade 1 and study till Grade 6. Secondary education was divided into two parts. The first part was four years (Grades 7-10), which the students needed to study at lower-secondary school, while upper-secondary school was three years. The students needed to study for two years plus one year as faculty preparation and the students were taught more specific skills to prepare themselves for tertiary levels ("Education in Cambodia," 2022; Neau, 2003). Because of development during this period, four universities were built, and there was a wide variety of learning and teaching materials for each university. Those universities included the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Takeo-Kampot University, Battambang University, and Kampongcham University.

However, some authors noted that there were not only four universities but more universities built during this period. Those authors noted clearly that higher education institutions (HEIs) were constructed during the People's Socialist Community, also known as Sangkum Reastr Niyum. The Royal Technical University, Royal University of Fine Arts, Royal University of Kampong Cham, Royal University of Takeo-Kampot, Royal University of Agricultural Science, and People's University were the HEIs that

were founded in 1965 (Pit & Ford, 2004). Another HEI was erected in 1967. It was Battambang's Royal University (Rany et al., 2012). Then nine other HEIs were constructed by the decade's end (Clayton, 1998).

Education System between 1970 and 1975

During the 1970s, the King Norodom Sihanouk period declined (Dy, 2004b; MoEYS, 2020c). The new period was born after the Cambodian Head of State, King Norodom Sihanouk, was ousted in a coup d'état on March 18, 1970, following a vote in the National Assembly. The period was named Lon Nol period (Khmer Republic). The education system in this period still followed the French model (6 + 4 + 2 + 1), but due to the intervention of the two blocs (democratic and communist) and chronic wars, education declined sharply. In this period, the Khmer language was more widely used in primary education. English was also introduced and encouraged to learn, but the then people felt less interested in learning English because they were influenced by the French language and culture for 90 years under the French colony, and during King Sihanouk period, French was still used as a main foreign language ("Education in Cambodia," 2022; Neau, 2003).

Education System between 1975 and 1979

On April 17, 1975, as the Communist Khmer Rouge forces marched triumphantly into Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, they did not reciprocate the smiles of the war-weary citizenry who had gathered on the streets with white flags in hand to greet them (Ayres, 1999). During the Khmer Rouge regime (Democratic of Kampuchea), no formal education was practiced (Neau, 2003). The Khmer Rouge destroyed schools and pagodas. The monks were forced to leave monkhood to work on the farms based on orders from Angkar (organization) (Ayres, 1999). The regime was known to the world as the Killing Fields (Ayres, 1999; "Education in Cambodia," 2022; Neau, 2003).

Chandler (1998) noted that the Khmer Rouge regime took control of Cambodia between April 1975 and January 1979. At that time Cambodia was known as Democratic Kampuchea. Chandler (1998) also revealed that "the revolution it sponsored swept through the country like a forest fire or a typhoon, and its spokesmen claimed that over two thousand years of Cambodian history had ended. So had money, markets, formal education, Buddhism, books, private property, diverse clothing styles, and freedom of movement" (p. 209).

Similarly, Sothy (2020) noted that "at the beginning of the 1970s, more than 200,000 teachers lived in Cambodia and 90 percent of all teachers were killed under the Khmer Rouge regime. Educators and teachers were centered on precepts of Khmer revolution, suspicion, and harsh treatment and execution" (p. 36). The children were trained not to obey their parents, but Angkar, and they had to be honest with Angkar. The then children dared to kill their parents if their parents were not honest with Angkar (Sothy, 2020).

Education System between 1979 and 1986

After the Khmer Rouge regime was defeated on January 7, 1979, the education system in Cambodia started again from year zero (Neau, 2003). The lack of teachers was the biggest problem because most intellectuals, especially teachers were killed during the Killing Fields. Thus, people who knew a lot taught those who knew a little, and those who knew little taught those who knew nothing (see Dy, 2013). Because of the struggle toward educational gain, the people who tried hard could reach Grade 10. The then general education system was four years at primary school levels, three years at lower-secondary school levels, and three years at upper-secondary school levels (see Table 3). In total, there were 10 years of general education ("Education in Cambodia," 2022; Neau, 2003).

However, during this period English and French were banned from learning and teaching. The banning was due to the influences of the communist (Igawa, 2008). Those who wanted to learn English or French had to learn in secret. For example, one needed to have a date with his or her teacher in advance, and he or she had to get up very early in the morning at around 4 or 5 a.m. If seen learning English or French, one would be arrested and punished (Retka, 2018). However, Russian and Vietnamese were encouraged to teach and learn (Igawa, 2008; see also Phann et al., 2023; Soeung et al., 2019; Soeung, 2020).

Table 3.*Education systems from the prehistoric period to the present*

No.	Period	The education system in Cambodia
1.	Prehistoric period	Rather than training (watched and followed)
2.	Nokor Phnom or Funan period	Disāpāmokkha schools
3.	Chenla period	Disāpāmokkha schools
4.	Khmer Empire period	Formal education
5.	After the Khmer Empire period	Less formal education
6.	After Angkor was abandoned	Wat schools
7.	Prior to 1863	Wat schools
8.	Between 1863 and 1953	French model (6 + 4 + 2 + 1)
9.	Between 1953 and 1970	French model (6 + 4 + 2 + 1)
10.	Between 1970 and 1975	French model (6 + 4 + 2 + 1)
11.	Between 1975 and 1979	The Killing Fields
12.	Between 1979 and 1986	10-year-education formula (4 + 3 + 3)
13.	Between 1986 and 1996	11-year-education formula (5 + 3 + 3)
14.	Between 1996 and the present	12-year-education formula (6 + 3 + 3)

Education System between 1986 and 1996

Following 1986, general education in Cambodia was expanded to 11 years (Duggan, 1996). Primary education expanded one year. Thus, students needed to spend five years at primary school levels, followed by three years at lower-secondary levels and another three years at upper-secondary school levels (“Education in Cambodia,” 2022; Neau, 2003). During, this period, English and French reappeared in the curriculum, and the people could learn the languages from government schools and private classes. The private classes during this period were provided at the government schools an hour before the public classes started or after the public classes ended. Some private classes were done at teachers’ houses with a few tables and chairs and a few students. Private English and French classes were not very popular during this period (Igawa, 2008; Neau, 2003).

During this period, the primary school subjects were Khmer language, mathematics, social studies, and applied sciences. For secondary education levels, there were Khmer language, mathematics, moral civics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, and a few other subjects, like arts, drawing, and agriculture (Igawa, 2008).

Education System between 1996 and the Present

Since 1996 education system in Cambodia has been expanded to 12 years for general education. Students needed to study six years at primary school levels, three years at lower-secondary school levels, and the final three years were done at upper-secondary school levels before pursuing their higher education levels (“Education in Cambodia,” 2022; Khut, 2012; Neau, 2003). However, this formula did not include at least one year of preschool education (kindergarten) for children aged three to six, and four to five years of a bachelor’s degree at a university education (Khut, 2012).

Sciences and Social Sciences for General Education from 2011

From 2011 to the present, Grade 11 students have been required to choose between the natural science or social science track. If students choose natural sciences or social sciences, they are still required to study all the subjects. However, the number of subjects to appear on the exam day, especially the national exam days, is not the same for both tracks. Those who choose the natural science track must work harder on mathematics and science subjects, while those who choose the social science track must work harder on Khmer literature and other social subjects (Khut, 2012). The reason for doing this is because MoEYS has set its goals to make future Cambodian citizens become fully equipped with knowledge, skills, and attitudes when Cambodia upgrades itself to an upper-middle income country in 2030 (see Sam & Dahles, 2015). This reform has been the final one so far (see Table 3 for the stages of education reform).

From the review, stages of education in Cambodia from the prehistoric period to the present can be categorized in the following table.

Table 4.

Education systems in Cambodia nowadays

Study level	Type of study level	Average age
Pre-school education	Low	3
	Medium	4
	High	5
1-6	Primary education	From 6-11
7-9	Lower-secondary education	From 12-14
10-12	Upper-secondary education	From 15-17
13-16	Higher education (BA)	From 18-21
17-21	Post-graduate education (MA and PhD)	From 22-26

Source: Developed from Dy (2004a, p. 19).

Education Systems in Cambodia Nowadays

General Education and Higher Education

The students need to spend at least 12 years to finish general education excluding preschool education. However, if they include preschool education, they might need to spend between 13 and 15 years to finish general education. After Grade 12, students can pursue their studies at higher education levels which include a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree, and a doctoral degree. Students need to spend at least four academic years

for a bachelor's degree, two academic years for a master's degree, and at least three academic years for a doctoral degree. Table 4 shows the details of each education stage.

Technical-Vocational Education

For technical-vocational education, the students are required to study through early-childhood education and basic education before reaching elementary-vocational training and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (see Table 5). Khut (2012) noted that the most popular subjects for technical-vocational education training included "ICT/technology, accounting, business management, local vocational-technical subjects, tourism, arts education, and other subjects" (para. 9).

Table 5.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Types of study level	Type of study level	Average age
Early-childhood education	Low	3
	Medium	4
	High	5
1-9	Basic education	From 6-14
10-12	Elementary-vocational training	From 15-17
13-14	Technical-vocational education	From 18-19

Source: Dy (2004a, p. 19).

Noticeably, TVET has improved a lot these days (see MoEYS, 2015). TVET has aimed to meet national policies, "especially the Industrial Policy 2015-2025" (Daroeman, 2022, p. 81).

Education Strategic Plan for the Future

In a five-year reform, MoEYS with education stakeholders implemented the ESP from 2014-2018 and 15 reforms from 2015-2018. The results from the implementations showed that students' learning outcomes and teachers' job performance had improved, respectively. Hence, the next step was the strengthening of school-based management (SBM) with the betterment of all aspects of education program performance (MoEYS, 2019).

Table 6.

The objectives of MoEYS

No.	The objective of MoEYS
1.	Teacher qualifications
2.	Expanding the scope of schools at all levels
3.	Strengthening comprehensive inspection of SBM
4.	Promoting technical education at upper secondary school levels
5.	Skills education for the job market
6.	Developing curricula and comprehensive textbooks
7.	Being ready for the Southeast Asian Games in 2023

Source: MoEYS (2019, p. 55).

Priority in human resource development was designated in Rectangular Strategy Phase IV of the Royal Government of Cambodia's sixth mandate (RGC, 2018). Along with this, MoEYS set its commitment by focusing on achieving the quality of education,

science, and technology. There were seven main aims of the focus which are included in Table 6.

Consistency with National Education Policy Reform, Teacher Education, and School Reform

MoEYS started three reforms to guarantee that changes were implemented effectively at all levels: implementation of a five-pillar framework for national education policy reform; implementation of teacher pedagogy reform; and implementation of school reforms (MoEYS, 2019).

The Five-Pillar Framework

MoEYS prioritized educational reform in the five-pillar framework. Based on the status of the execution of educational reform programs, the five-pillar framework included implementation of the teacher policy action plan (TPAP) containing six points of priority, review of curricula and textbooks and improve learning environments containing six points of priority, enforcement of inspection containing nine points, improve learning evaluations to meet national, regional and international levels containing five points of priority, and higher education reform containing nine points of priority (MoEYS, 2019). The points of priority in each pillar framework were the keys that educational reform was to focus on (see Table 7).

Table 7.

The five-pillar framework

No.	Pillar 1: Implementation of the TPAP
1.	Continue to motivate high-performing teachers and principals, awarding winners among principals and teachers who perform well, particularly in first-grade Khmer and math subjects.
2.	Implement a policy on career pathways for teachers.
3.	Implement a policy on continuous professional development for principals and teachers.
4.	Continue to develop infrastructure and the capacity of teacher training institutions, and develop the capacity of teacher trainers.
5.	Strengthen the capacity for both in- and pre-service teachers to roll out health education subjects including comprehensive sexuality education.
6.	Review teachers' rationalization and promote the effective deployment of new teachers.
Pillar 2: Review curricula and textbooks and improve learning environments	
1.	Develop core textbooks for all subjects at all education levels.
2.	Strengthen reading methods and numerical teaching methods in primary schools and strengthen teaching methods for secondary education.
3.	Increase reading habits in the classroom and library, conduct national reading day, improve school libraries, and create a digital library network at HEIs and teacher training institutions.
4.	Promote the implementation of an education policy on science, technology, Engineering, mathematics, or digital education.
5.	Advance the implementation of health education subjects including comprehensive sexuality education.
6.	Renovate and repair old buildings, build clean-water facilities, washrooms, toilets, and science and computer labs.

Pillar 3: Enforcement of inspection	
1.	Continue training education inspectors and regularly inspect all 25 provincial education institutions.
2.	Harmonize the inspection tool by integrating the child-friendly schools measuring tool and SBM monitoring tool.
3.	Conduct thematic inspections on key topics related to education reform.
4.	Strengthen the internal inspection system based on school self-assessment and the preparation and implementation of regular internal inspections.
5.	Strengthen the role of District Training and Monitoring Teams (DTMTs) in evaluating school and classroom performance.
6.	Carry out external inspections, based on thematic and regular inspections at the provincial level.
7.	Use the inspection results to improve curricula, Pre-Service Teacher Training (PRESET) and In-Service Teacher Training (INSET), and various management tasks.
8.	Develop staff capacity for preparing evaluations and testing and analyzing results
9.	Develop and train new educational inspectors and principals on the internal and external inspection system.
Pillar 4: Improve learning evaluations to meet national, regional, and international levels	
1.	Continue to strengthen all types of exams, especially lower and upper secondary education exams.
2.	Disseminate a framework for evaluating student achievement in pre-primary and general education.
3.	Strengthen national assessment testing at Grades 3, 6, 8, and 11 on Khmer, math, and physics.
4.	Carry out student achievement assessments of primary school students using the South-East Asia Primary Learning Metric for Grade 5.
5.	Participate in the International Student Assessment Program (PISA 2021).
Pillar 5: Higher education reform	
1.	Increase resources for training in science, technology, engineering, arts, creativity, and mathematics in response to the implementation of Cambodia's industrial development policy 2015-2025.
2.	Establish funding for research.
3.	Improve the accreditation system of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and monitor training at HEIs.
4.	Promote access to higher education with equity, inclusion, and life-long learning.
5.	Allocate a package of funding for HEIs with priority training programs to meet economic and social development.
6.	Build dormitories to promote access and equity in higher education.
7.	Improve teaching and learning capacity in higher education.
8.	Develop a curriculum that responds to economic, digital, and social development.
9.	Increase the number of professors with doctoral degrees by 20%, and 60% for master's degrees.

Source: MoEYS (2019, p. 55-56).

Education Management Reform Strategies

Learning management reform, administration management reform, financial management reform, and human resource management reform were the four key reforms in education. There were two other sub-components including policy and planning, and improvement of the education management information system. From these components and sub-components, MoEYS 2019 aimed to improve 27 points of priority (see Table 8).

Table 8.

Education management reform strategies

No.	Learning management reform
1.	Implement an assessment framework for the national examination system of Grades 9 and 12, and the assessment of Grades 3, 6, 8, and 11.
2.	Conduct early grade reading and math assessments for Grades 1, 2, and 3, classroom and school assessments, and the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) at the regional level to measure learning outcomes, improve teaching and learning, and identify the functions and roles of the assessment management structure.
3.	Improve the assessment of Grades 3, 6, 8, and 11 in Khmer, maths, and physics.
4.	Participate in regional and international tests.
5.	Improve guidelines on standards and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems for national examinations.
6.	Build capacity and decentralize the responsibility for Grade 9 examinations to the sub-national level.
7.	Establish an incentive system to promote high-quality teaching of teachers to meet national standards.
Administration management reform	
1.	Implement the education policy and ESP.
2.	Implement school-based management (SBM).
3.	Ensure the participation of students, parents, and local communities.
Financial management reform	
1.	Promote financial autonomy and the accountability of schools.
2.	Conduct regular education budget auditing.
3.	Promote budget allocation that is consistent with education policy.
Human resource management reform	
1.	Implement payroll reform with threefold increases in salaries, use the banking system in the fourth week of each month, double the allowance for remote and disadvantaged areas, and double the allowance for overtime teaching hours.
2.	Introduce measures to improve the efficiency of management staff, assess teachers' performance based on their job description, and staff turnover, and deploy new teachers to target schools.
3.	Continue to encourage the implementation of teacher deployment measures from schools with an oversupply of teachers to schools with teacher shortages.
4.	Strengthen efficiency when promoting management officers by using selection criteria, performance assessments, capacity assessments, and interviews.
5.	Continue to develop the capacity of management officers and teachers by promoting the implementation of teacher career pathways.
Policy and planning	
1.	Strengthen the quality of educational policy and planning systems in alignment with budget plans at all levels to improve the education system and students' learning achievements.

2. Develop the capacity of education officials at all levels to formulate sustainable educational plans and policies and to manage budgets.
3. Strengthen the preparation of the education budget to align with the ESP and respond to the public financial management reform in Phases III and IV.
4. Improve the quality of the ESP and the annual operational plan at the provincial, district, and school levels to meet the needs of local and national priorities.

Improvement of Financial Management Information System (EMIS).

1. Develop an educational statistics structure that enables the collection of reliable and accurate data from various data sources, based on a reliable methodology that complies with international standards.
 2. Promote institutional and technical capacity to produce more specific and efficient data and to harmonize the EMIS.
 3. Integrate various information systems, such as EMIS, the Human Resources Management Information System, the Financial Management Information System (FMIS), Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), and Non-Formal Education-Management Information System (NFE-MIS).
 4. Enhance the technical capacity to compile, produce and disseminate data to make data more efficient and effective.
 5. Develop and upgrade the online information system.
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Source: MoEYS (2019, pp. 57-58).

Teacher Education Reform at Teacher Education Institutions

Teachers' capacity development and teacher education institutions strived for the core development of the country along with the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia's policy. Thus, MoEYS (2018) put forth 14 points (see Table 9) as the priority of teacher education reform to guarantee producing qualified teachers to build qualified human resources for Cambodia (Em et al., 2021; MoEYS, 2019).

Table 9.

Teachers' capacity and teacher education priority

No.	Aims and objectives of teacher education reform
1.	Review teacher training programs at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Teacher Education Colleges (TECs), and Regional Teacher Training Centers (RTTCs), and ensure training equivalence, especially in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), ICT and foreign languages.
2.	Strengthen the capacity of trainers on subject-based knowledge, teaching methods, and ICT.
3.	Review the operation of provincial Teacher Training Centers (TTCs).
4.	Conduct training on school leadership and for school principals.
5.	Improve infrastructure and equip colleges with teaching materials for efficient training
6.	Develop teachers with quality, competency, and accountability in line with the code of conduct, and provide the required conditions for effective and efficient performance.
7.	Develop physical infrastructure to meet the requirements of the Teacher Education Professional Standards.
8.	Transform Regional Teacher Training Centers (RTTCs) into high-quality Teacher Education Colleges (TECs).
9.	Strengthen the functioning of teacher development centers to provide continuous professional development.

10. Promote career development by establishing a clear career pathway; promote position and rank based on performance; update the payroll scale through a policy on educational professional development, and a master plan on continuous professional development (systematic INSET / in-service teacher training ONSET) prepared in a coordinated manner. The INSET/ONSET budget will be incorporated into the school's operational budget.
11. Review the criteria for recruiting teachers, following the formula for preschool teachers 12+2.
12. Modernize the standards of teacher training programs to meet national needs and to be competitive regionally and globally by developing teacher education provider standards and teacher educational standard assessments. Develop a policy on TECs; create a master plan on the development of TECs by revising the terms of reference/names, and the mapping of TTCs to become TECs.
13. Develop INSET and ONSET at TECs.
14. Develop a teacher management system and assess teachers' performance.

Source: MoEYS (2019, p. 58).

School Reform

To ensure the efficiency of educational service provision at the school level, MoEYS launched a school reform program (see Table 10) that included the following components: the establishment of new-generation schools, the creation of 150 model schools through SBM implementation, as well as encouragement of SBM implementation in schools that meet the appropriate conditions (MoEYS, 2019).

Table 10.

Conditions of school reform

No.	Youth development reform
1.	Provide opportunities for youth to access education and professional skills training with quality and equity.
2.	Motivate youth to be creative and innovative, and to develop an entrepreneurial spirit.
3.	Develop young people's bodies, knowledge, skills, and morality, and teach them to live together in peace and harmony.
4.	Provide opportunities for youth to express their ideas, concepts, and decision-making in the community, and in developing society.
5.	Strengthen management mechanisms and monitor youth development programs.
Physical education and sports development reform	
1.	Develop legal and regulatory frameworks.
2.	Develop advanced sports.
3.	Develop sport for all.
4.	Develop the physical education and sport sector at all educational institutions and in communities.
5.	Conserve and develop all kinds of sports.
6.	Develop a sports industry.
Promotion of digital education	
1.	Integrate ICT into a tool for teaching and learning, and sharing knowledge across the whole education sector. Equip students with knowledge and skills in ICT to transition into 21st-century employment.

2. Adopt new management and administrative processes to modernize performance and increase the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of governance and performance monitoring in the education sector.
3. Ensure all students complete formal education with knowledge and skills in ICT to support their further education and professional work.
4. Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning in teacher training centers, schools, and other educational institutions by using ICT tools and e-resources.
5. Use e-learning to support the delivery of education services to all sub-sectors in education, and develop institutional capacity for life-long learning.
6. Increase the efficiency and capacity of institutions for evidence-based decision-making and knowledge sharing through the systematic use of information. At the same time, promote their capacities in educational administration, operation, and data collection through digital systems.
7. Create standards for infrastructure and network connections at national and subnational levels by integrating systems into a single internal network.
8. Provide the necessary financial resources to support ICT in the education sector using the RGC budget. Coordinate public-private partnerships and development partner support for both capital and recurrent costs.

Source: MoEYS (2019, p. 58).

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming in education is an important step toward achieving the Royal Government's Rectangular Strategy Phase IV and the Neary Ratanak Strategic Plan, particularly in closing the gender gap in the educator sector (RGC, 2018; see also Heng, 2022). Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (see Table 11) in Education Sector 2016-2020 was implemented, and some issues were mainstreamed into educational policies of all sub-sectors, including the ESP 2019-2023, TPAP, and pushing each entity to have specific measures through planning, educational program projects, educational service delivery, and management, with a focus on ensuring that boys have equal and full access to education. MoEYS will continue to invest in the following areas in order to meet the 4th objective of sustainable development in education and the 5th goal of gender equality in education, youth, and sport (MoEYS, 2019).

Decentralization and De-Concentration Reform

Through the transfer of functions and resources, decentralization and de-concentration reform in the education sector strived to increase the autonomy and responsibility of sub-national and public institutions. This will increase the quality, openness, and equity of services to the public, as well as their accountability. MoEYS's Services assessed its mandated functions and resources and was working at both the national and subnational levels. MoEYS were carrying out 573 major functions, all of which were carried out from the school level to the national level. While implementing the decentralization and de-concentration reform, MoEYS maintained its position in constructing a full and unified education system without isolating schools from the education management system. According to the government's requirements, MoEYS would execute decentralization and de-concentration reforms, notably in accordance with the rule on the administrative management of the capital, provinces, municipalities, and districts. This rule specifies how functions can be transferred and delivered. MoEYS examined and defined its duties and resources in preparation for their scheduled transfer to the sub-national level (MoEYS, 2019).

Accordingly, decentralization and de-concentration (D&D which were named as Organic Law) reform policies were also piloted in 2011. However, the scheme was not successful. Therefore, it was then suspended for a later date (see Seng et al., 2013).

Table 11.

Gender mainstreaming

No.	Gender mainstreaming
1.	Ensure gender equality in access to education and the quality of learning outcomes at all levels, both formal and non-formal.
2.	Increase women's participation in delivering education services.
3.	Ensure the establishment of gender-sensitive educational environments and social behaviors.
4.	Ensure efficient interventions and measures to improve access to education for girls, including the strengthening of infrastructure; increase the number of secondary schools, especially in communes.
5.	Create interventions and measures to ensure the retention of female students in schools, especially in continuous learning, from primary to secondary and higher education.
6.	Create interventions and measures to promote and encourage female students to study science, technology, and mathematics, such as orientation programs and career counseling for female students in secondary and higher education.
7.	Education on sexual and reproductive rights in schools, gender relationships, sexual commitment, and prevention of young pregnancy.
8.	Promote education quality through teacher training and ensure adequate allowances for teachers.
9.	Review the Mid-term of Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan 2016-2020.
10.	Develop Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan 2021-2026.
11.	Continue gender-mainstreaming training for trainee teachers and support ongoing training for boards of management and trainers at NIEs, TECs, RTTCs, and TTCs.
12.	Continue training on the Establishment and Management of Girl Counselling to school principals and girl counselors to support counseling for girls with problems at school.

Source: MoEYS (2019, p. 60).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS)

MoEYS was in charge of establishing policies and regulatory frameworks, as well as designing the ESP curriculum, and teacher training. MoEYS recruited and trained teacher trainees, as well as providing in-service training to current teachers. MoEYS also performed a variety of other tasks to guarantee that high-quality educational services were provided. MoEYS was in charge of analyzing and specifying functions and resources for transfer to sub-national administrations as part of the decentralization and de-concentration process. It was also in charge of school technical decentralization. The tasks of MoEYS were outlined in the Royal Government of Cambodia's legal papers (MoEYS, 2019).

Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sport (POE)

Provincial Office of Education, Youth and Sport (POE) acted as a supervisor to MoEYS, with defined duties, responsibilities, and functions as a result of MoEYS delegation or de-concentration. By offering facilitation and assistance, POEs served as a link between the ministry, the District Office of Education, Youth and Sport (DOE), and schools. They were back-end entities that supported educational services and reported to

their respective governments. POEs had a new role to play in executing the decentralization and de-concentration reforms outlined in the Law on Administrative Management of the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, and Districts (Organization Operation Law). They served as a provincial technical coordination committee as well as a supervisor for provincial councils and boards. After the functional transfer, MoEYS would examine and amend the duties and responsibilities of POEs, particularly when transferring DOEs to the District Unified Administration (MoEYS, 2019).

District Office of Education, Youth and Sport (DOE)

DOE acted as a link between MoEYS and the schools, providing coordination and assistance. They, too, reported to their respective jurisdictions as back-end companies that supported educational services, much like POEs. They, too, were implementing decentralization and de-concentration reforms in accordance with the Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, and Districts Administrative Management Law. They adhered to national programs for subnational democratic development as well as government decisions about the reform of the district unified administration's duties, responsibilities, and structures (MoEYS, 2019).

The whole functionality of DOEs was transferred to MoEYS. Human resources, money, and property (excluding DOEs house in schools) were all managed by the district unified administration, as per the ministry's legislative standards. DOEs would be integrated into the administrative framework of the district (MoEYS, 2019).

The unified administration of the district was in charge of coordinating the implementation of education, youth, and sports duties (MoEYS, 2019). Under the direction and cooperation of the district unified administration, schools were independent in their management and leadership in both technical and administrative sectors. DOEs are in charge of them (MoEYS, 2019).

Educational Institutions

Educational institutions were responsible for the sector's services, management, and teaching as the major provider of educational services. Teachers, facilities, school buildings, and school budgets had all been provided by MoEYS so far. To save bureaucracy, schools could use bank accounts to handle their financial flows. Schools were granted autonomy in terms of planning and development activities, administrative administration, and learning and teaching methods (MoEYS, 2019).

As schools' autonomy grew, they would become more responsible. Since 2000, MoEYS have transmitted funds directly from the National Treasury to schools, ensuring efficient service delivery and a decrease in bureaucracy. Based on experiences in other nations, budget administration at the district level might be cumbersome and hazardous. Furthermore, because the education sector would play an increasingly significant role in national growth in the future, the district administration's management of school finances would have a detrimental influence (MoEYS, 2019).

By paying schools directly, MoEYS decentralized public service delivery. With the advent of sub-national education administrators at the provincial level, staff administration and appointments were similarly decentralized. Other duties connected with organizing school operations are handled by DOEs. In general, to increase the quality of public services in the education sector, technical decentralization was required to boost the autonomy of school administration at the school level (MoEYS, 2019).

The SBM technique had been used by MoEYS. This method of education decentralization at the school level included the formation of school management committees, the participation of principals, teachers, local authorities, village, and commune representatives, post office staff, monks, parents, youth and children's councils, and the establishment of school management committees. This gives schools more

authority and responsibility in terms of administration, financing, management, and teaching and learning methodologies. To provide schools with autonomy, MoEYS established a strategy for technical decentralization reform. This was accompanied by an action plan and a capacity-building strategy (MoEYS, 2019).

According to World Bank (2017), expanding lower secondary education is a goal of the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP), which also seeks to offer a rapid and efficient response in the event of a qualifying crisis or emergency. The initiative consists of three parts, the first of which is raising the level of lower secondary education. By establishing 130 successful lower secondary schools (i.e., schools that meet LSSSES), this component seeks to complement the objectives of the ESP and TPAP and to give MoEYS lessons for replication as it expands spending in the sub-sector. Approximately 8% of all lower secondary schools countrywide are the focus of this component. In order to improve SBM, teacher performance, and learning environments, this component will be implemented utilizing a comprehensive strategy that targets national, sub-national, and school levels. The improvement of project administration, monitoring, and assessment makes up the second element. For the project's coordination, administration, monitoring, evaluation, and audit, this component offers technical and operational support. Additionally, PISA for Development (PfD) assistance activities will be included to improve MoEYS's assessment capabilities in advance of PISA 2021. The contingent emergency reaction is the final element. With a preliminary zero allocation, the contingent emergency response component's goal is to enable the International Development Association Immediate Response Mechanism to reallocate funding as needed to offer an immediate response to a qualifying crisis or disaster. For actions under this component, an Emergency Response Manual will be created, outlining simplified financial management, procurement, safeguards, and any other necessary implementation procedures.

Main Strategies and Action Plans

MoEYS had to undertake essential initiatives to effectively implement the decentralization and de-concentration reform (see Table 12).

Table 12.

Main strategies and action plans

No.	Main strategies and action plans
1.	Prepare a legal framework and restructure the current structure, roles, and responsibilities of education, youth and sports institutions at both national and sub-national levels.
2.	Prepare and re-design the accountability roles of institutions and sub-national units based on functional and resource transfers.
3.	Prepare a legal framework and policy on public education institutions' autonomous systems.
4.	Transfer functions and resources to sub-national administrations.
5.	Develop education capacity for sub-national administration and all stakeholders.
6.	Create staff capacity development plans at national and sub-national levels.
7.	Enhance social inclusion and equity.
8.	Strengthen monitoring and evaluation.

Source: MoEYS (2019, p. 62).

The Final Goal of Education Reform: Fully-Equipped Citizens

All things considered, what MoEYS had been doing and planning was to produce fully-equipped citizens with knowledge, skills, and attitudes as indicated earlier. The fully-

equipped citizens had to know about numeracy, literacy, foreign languages, information, communication, and technology (ICT), and they also needed the skills of applying knowledge, analyzing and creativity, and communication and teamwork. Finally, people would live in peace and harmony when they had the attitudes of personal, family, and social development, entrepreneurship and leadership, responsibility, fraternity, and integrity (MoEYS, 2015). The fully-equipped citizens can be categorized in Table 13.

Table 13.*Future Cambodian fully-equipped citizen*

Variable	Item
Knowledge	Literacy and numeracy
	Foreign languages
	Information communication and technology (ICT)
Skills	Communication and teamwork
	Analysis and creativity
	Applying knowledge
Attitudes	Personal, family, and societal development
	Entrepreneurship and leadership
	Responsibility
	Fraternity
	Integrity

Conclusion

The review showed all stages of the education system in Cambodia from the earliest times until these days. The review also revealed what MoEYS was going to do alongside the Royal Cambodian Government's policy.

As presented in each stage of education, the primitive Khmer, those living in the prehistoric period, revolved around their daily activities. The people then learned from each other by watching and doing, and they also learned to worship some aspects of nature as their beliefs. That means early people learned informally by doing activities and following the activities. Because people have been intelligent creatures and have been able to develop their thinking, their education then improved stage by stage from one generation to another. Even though there were some pictures of them destroying one another, Cambodian people are still persisted today.

Without the past, the present could not be made, and the present was said to be the starting point of the future. Cambodia has experienced both harmonious times and many tough times, including some interior conflicts. Angkor was the most glorious period, while one of the most tragic events occurred between 1975 and 1979. Most of the intellectuals, especially teachers, were killed during these years. However, the Royal Government of Cambodia, especially MoEYS, has done everything it could to ensure a bright future for all Cambodians after the dark years ended.

As a result, the Cambodian Government put forth its policy to upgrade Cambodia from a lower-middle-income country to an upper-middle-income country by the year 2030, and a high-income or developed country by 2050. In response to this policy, MoEYS has planned to educate Cambodian citizens, especially students, to be fully equipped with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for the coming years.

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