



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

**EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN CAMBODIA:  
THE ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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*“A child educated only at school is an uneducated child.”*

George Satayana.



## Abstract

Non-formal education (NFE) has become a key element for a proper development process within the educational system, but also out of its boundaries, and always along with the formal curriculum. This study analyses how NFE has an influence over the development process and its linkage with the national education planning.

### ***Research objectives:***

- Explore how NFE can bring development to Cambodia and make the country less dependent.
- Expose the linkage of NFE and formal education.
- Analyse the role of the government and NGO's regarding NFE.
- Identify the strong points and shortcomings of the development process.

### ***Methodology:***

Qualitative methods are used to seek empirical data that can support the initial hypothesis. Interviews to four sources were made: scholars, NGO's, official institutions and civil society. The outcomes were contrasted with a theoretical framework and a secondary data collection to support and operationalize them.

This topic is relevant because NFE – along with formal education – is fundamental to generate inner growth, thus helping individuals getting out of the poverty trap and help the country being less dependent.

**Results:**

NFE is an effective tool to generate growth, hence reducing dependency, if the roadmap is redefined. Outcomes come into clusters, each one has an effect over NFE, plus they are all interlinked:

Education: NFE is a flexible, bottom-up system, thus effective in a short-term basis. It provides, especially to individuals endangered of falling into the poverty trap, the skills the market requires. Formal curriculum must be prioritised though, as one compliments the other.

Society: Education is holistic. NFE uplifts the life of individuals at all levels, reducing social differences, thus making people feel they are into the social system.

Economy: Education needs a generous budget allocation, which not always seems to be a priority. Education struggles with the consequences of low budget allocation, and NFE in particular seems to be slightly out-of-scope.

Policy: A good national policy is fundamental, improving certain shortcomings; there is the need of proper dissemination of information and a more decentralised system.

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## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of South East Asia Nations
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MoYES	Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
WB	World Bank

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cambodia's development index is one of the lowest among ASEAN member states. Its society is still strongly punished by its most recent past and the Khmer Rouge episode: under Pol Pot, the Khmer society witnessed one of the worst genocides ever made by humankind. That period forced a redistribution of the society, a fact that nowadays is particularly noticeable in the education system: there is a lack of qualified teachers and infrastructures (Ang, 2012), and education is not yet universal.

### 1.1 Significance of the study

Following the conflict years, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has achieved remarkable improvements on education with the collaboration of international actors and NGO's, but the transformation is yet to be completed (Pou, 2012). There are a number of present obstacles that need to be considered, such as the global economic slowdown (*ibid*). Within the development process, education is a cornerstone; non-formal education (NFE) plays a key role, as its content can be easily and quickly adapted to the unique needs of the students (Kleis, 1973). The less hierarchical structure of NFE programs and closer human relationships student-educator also maximises its learning effects (*ibid*).

### 1.2 Aims and objectives

Considering the above background information, the aim of this research assessing the role of NFE within the educational system in Cambodia, thus providing a tool of development to the civil society and the country itself to be used with the objective of reducing the external dependency.

### *Objectives:*

- Explore how NFE may bring development to Cambodia and make the country less dependent.
- Expose the linkage between NFE and formal education.
- Analyse the role of the government and NGO's regarding NFE.
- Identify the strong points and shortcomings of the development process.

### **1.3 Actors under investigation**

For the purpose of this piece of research, there are four main actors whom the information will be extracted from: NGO's, official bodies representatives, scholars and civil society.

While the first three are the actors that provide education – each with a specific role – the civil society acts as the receiver: education concerns about people, the grassroots of the issue. Their valuable point of view in form of true stories is taken into consideration, so the reader can see, by means of real examples, how NFE is significantly relevant for those with less access to resources.

### **1.4 Rationale**

This piece of research is a Master of Arts dissertation, encompassed within the program of East Asian Studies – Asia Pacific of the University of Leeds, United Kingdom.

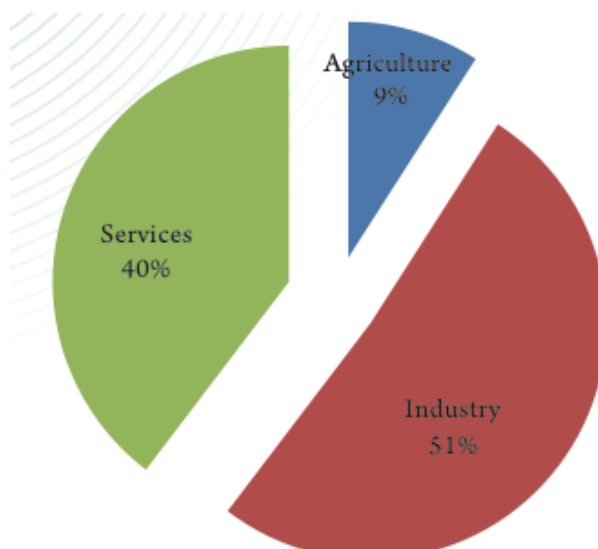
Universal education usually appears as one of the primary goals to be achieved by any developing country. That is because of several reasons: first, it is a gateway out of poverty – poorness cannot be reduced if the civil

society does not have access to education. Second, it is not only about economic growth, it is also about human development. Third, it is a way to promote self-development (UNICEF, 2005). On top of that, this becomes especially relevant in a developing country such Cambodia: the end of an isolation and conflict period of more than two decades represented the beginning of the recovery process. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) declares education – lower secondary school and vocational training – as one of its five priorities (ADB, 2012). The combination of these factors, plus the importance of education and development, makes this topic being relevant; a proper strategy on education seems to be one of the keys to achieve a sustainable development.

The relevance of education and development also concerns integration among ASEAN members: education may be used as a tool to achieve a higher level of development and economic growth, thus reducing the development gap – especially with the original ASEAN founders (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) (Penghuy, 2011).

In this given context, NFE is relevant because it meets a critical need: the shortage of certification of skills and work experience among the students. There is the need to make a move towards a skill-based economy rather than resources-based (Sopha, 2008), which can readjust the inefficient distribution of labour. By means of that, the mismatch between what the traditional education hardly offers – skills – and the abilities that the private sector requires can be rebalanced. That is especially relevant for an ongoing diversifying economy (CDRI, 2011), as seen here:





**Table 1 - Per capita contribution per unit of GDP growth by sector.**

**Source: Cambodia Outlook Conference, 2011.**

As analysed in the review of literature, there is a great deal of information on education, and what is NFE, broadly speaking. That is why the purpose of this study is identifying the role of NFE within the development process in the specific case of Cambodia, considering the big development gap.

Besides the outcomes that this paper provides, it also tries to be tool to disseminate some of the features of NFE, a modality of education that is often not fully understood, and offers several advantages. Sometimes, a better access to information leads to better decisions.

Last but not least, the personal motivation of the author was crucial all along the process of research: a short but intense experience teaching English at CDO Orphanage, Siem Reap, in 2012, was the starting point to notice that formal and traditional education are not the only way of acquiring new knowledge, and that addressing specific and strategic skills makes a great improvement over the individual and the society as a whole.

## 1.5 Structure

Structurally, this paper is broken down in three parts, as follows:

- ***Theoretical part:*** includes chapters 1 to 3, where the introduction, review of literature and the research methods are presented.
- ***Research & field study:*** encompasses chapters 4 and 5, which include the results and findings of the fieldwork carried out in Cambodia after the interviews to experts and civil society.
- ***Conclusion:*** chapter 6 is devoted to extract the conclusions after the analysis of the research outcomes.

## 1.6 Limitations

Several limitations were faced, probably altered the final product. The main one was the word limit: 10,000 words. It makes the topic not being covered as deeply as it could be, though a good overview is provided, along with specific results. The time allowed to carry out the research was also certainly limited – three months roughly, which included research and writing processes – which means that the time spent in Cambodia was also limited. Plus the research took place over summertime, when some potential participants are not in the country. Generally speaking, the more time allowed, the more representative the data would be: a deeper study would allow to find out more the divergent opinions that NGO's and the government may have in some topics, hence more debate.

Another limitation was the capacity of gaining access to official institutions, such as the ministries: the process has a higher level of complexity and requires more time than contacting NGO's or scholars.

The fact that the researcher did not speak Khmer was a limitation. The language barrier became a problem when the factory workers were interviewed: help from an interpreter was required. The communication

researcher-respondent was limited, thus missing many details of the non-verbal communication that often give many hints to understand what is behind the words. In other occasions, English language was enough to maintain a conversation, but not as deep as desired.

Finally, Cambodia celebrated general elections on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July – during the course of writing this research: certain institutions were harder to be contacted before and after the elections, or they run busier than usual. Plus, the *unexpected* outcomes, where the opposition (CNRP) considerably narrowed the gap with the ruling party (CPP), makes us think that the country will be facing changes over the next few years, hence some policies might adopt an acute turn. That is something that is not addressed in this study, but it needs to be considered as it may make some futures policies vary.

## 1.7 Findings

The focus of analysis diverges when assessing the role of NFE in Cambodia, so other fields must be taken into consideration. Analysing education, social impact, economics or politics becomes necessary as all of these fields have direct effects over NFE; all of them define its role, plus they are all interconnected. That is why the outcomes of the study are organised this way, to see in a further step how each one of them has an implication over the main focus of study.

**Education.** Understanding the way NFE fits in the educational system is fundamental: while the formal curriculum provides the student with knowledge, NFE helps developing skills. It is not a two-way process; the two systems work together as one compliments the other. The goal is uplifting the life of the individual by providing the tools to meet the market requirements. NFE is useful as its bottom-up unique structure pays in flexibility. Providing the tools to obtain a job means more economic independence and self-sustainability. Everyone is a potential target of NFE programs, but those who are endangered of being excluded of the system –

or are already out of it – are the main targets. But all of it is senseless without the collaboration of the RGC, which seems to have other priorities besides education and NFE.

**Society:** NFE is not just about skills; it also has the power of socializing the individual. The soft skills, such as teamwork capacity, make the individual feel important and integrated within the system, and the feeling of safety increases; it has a component of emotional healing. In the end, the goal is breaking a negative dynamic – poverty cycle – by making the individual getting in a positive dynamic. This is a means of reducing the acute inequalities among Cambodians. If that wants to be achieved, an education scheme of high standards remains essential.

**Economy:** the component that can really make the system change, but at the same time, remains as its major obstacle. To a large extent, Cambodia is still dependent, which means that external aid results as huge share of the annual national budget. Education, given its importance, should receive a bigger share of the budget than it currently does. On the other hand, other fields such as defence & military are allocated with a higher share of budget, which makes us think that the problem is more about priorities than scarce resources, so a proper budget management is fundamental. Plus, the implementers of many programs – NGO's – also have a limited capacity of obtaining funds.

**Policy:** the current policies of the RGC, under the correspondent ministries, make the guidelines concerning education being settled by the government, while the programs are largely implemented by NGO's. That being said, working closer together would increase the effectiveness through a higher degree of communication between the two, to know the situation in the field and what are the real needs. Communication government – civil society should also be enhanced, allowing individuals being aware of all the possibilities that NFE offers. For that purpose, two policies would be effective: one, making NFE being more systematic within secondary school, and making the educational system more flexible and decentralised.

Still with its shortcomings, NFE remains as a powerful tool to give skills, thus finding a job, and generate inner growth. This way, Cambodia would be more likely to reduce its dependency.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Education is a vague concept and the points of entry to address this topic are countless. This study assumes that, even though the RGC is committed to the development and capacity building through the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoYES) (Pou, 2012) and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), and is the responsible for setting the guidelines on the national plan of education, the civil society still remains as the main actor in the education field, given that the outcomes of the policies on education, and its in/effectiveness, will be reflected on them. In short, this paper contemplates the role of the administration, but addresses education from the grassroots.

Literature about this field is generous; on one hand, the documents provided by the official bodies, such as MoYES or MLVT, and some NGO's such NGO Educational Partnership (NEP) places us within the legal framework on NFE: the MoYES publishes its policies in a general and descriptive way in its website, as well as statistics on education and future guidelines, including the so-called EFA 2015 (MoYES, 2013). Concerning the interest of this study, the department of NFE published the NFE Outcomes for the Academic Year 2011-2012 that, besides figures, is a precise source of data to get to know the specific programs that they carry out, as well as the plans for the current year 2012-2013 (Department of non-formal education, 2012). The mentioned NGO NEP offers an extensive umbrella of resources; specific reports and surveys on NFE in Cambodia and guidelines are provided.

On the other hand, some studies on NFE have already been done: the most similar case is a study by Daniel Elemchukwu, which assesses how NFE provides human development in Nigeria (Elemchukwu, 2008). Other studies exclusively analyse NFE, above all from a theoretical point of view and also from a structural point of view, but they are usually wide and not focused on a specific emplacement.

This study contributes in increasing knowledge as it addresses NFE in a specific emplacement: Cambodia. Besides analysing how it is implemented, it assesses how it helps in the development process, making Cambodia self-dependent.

## **2.1 Fact sheet**

Here, the basic facts and figures of Cambodia are presented in order to put in context the whole study.

### **Overview:**

Population (2012): **14.86million.**

Median age (2013): **23.7**

Income level: **low income.**

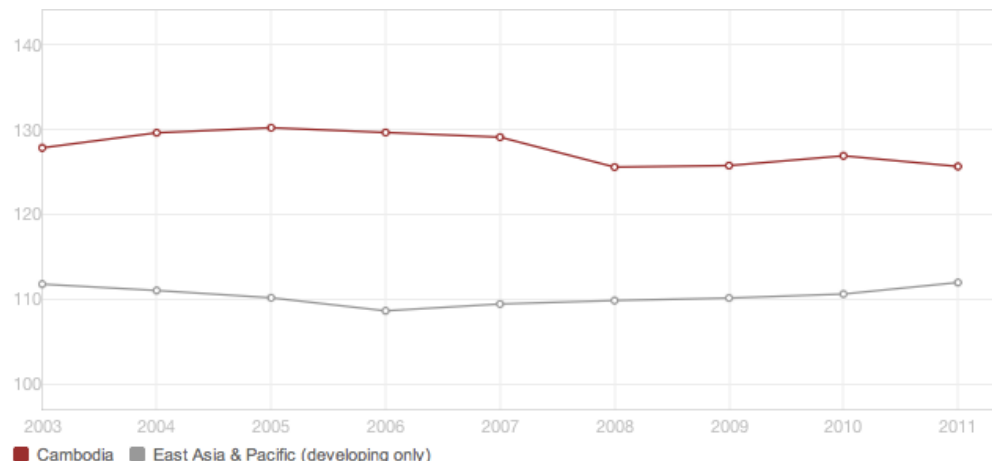
Urbanisation (2011): **20%**

GDP (in US\$, 2012): **14.06billion.**

### **Education and development:**

Youth literacy (15 to 24 years old, in 2011): **87%**

Gross school enrolment in Cambodia compared with East Asia (2003-2011, %). Index may exceed 100% due to the inclusiveness of over and under-aged students because of early or late enrolment, or course repetition:



**Table 2 - Gross school enrolment. Source: ADB.**

Primary school participation, net attendance ratio (2008-2011): **95%**

Secondary school participation, net attendance ratio (2007-2011):  
**44.5%**

Public spending as % of GDP allocated to education (2007-2010): **2%**

Country comparison to the world, on education (2010): **153<sup>rd</sup>, after Georgia and before Bermuda.**

ODA inflow (loans and technical assistance, 2012, US\$):  
**279.56million.**

(Sources: ADB, CIA and UNICEF)

## **2.2 Definition of terms**

Education is a wide concept; many definitions are accepted. Sustaining his words on the University of Easter Kentucky report, the author George Cronk defines *education* as the mere foundation of becoming informed and independent thinker, hence having the capacity to evaluate and address any issue that might concern the individual, and liberate oneself as much as possible from other thinkers (Cronk, 2004).



For the purposes of this piece of research, two types of education are taken into consideration: academic or formal education and NFE.

On one hand, academic or formal education is generally defined as the one in which learning is the main purpose (ACS Distance Education). In words of the scholar Yoshitaka Sakurai, learning is the knowledge construction process (Sakurai, 2009). Since 1996, academic education in Cambodia is a 12-year-old time process (6+3+3) – primary encompasses grades 1 to 6, lower secondary grades 7 to 9, and upper secondary grades 10 to 12 (MoYES)<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, NFE is an organised form of education that is not part of the formal curriculum, with a specific cohort of students and learning objectives (Coombs, 1974). NFE should not be confused with *informal education*, which is the life-long process of learning whereby the individual acquires values from his/her own environment (*ibid*). Making us of the contrast that Simkins did in 1976, the main difference between the two stands in the fact that NFE concerns more about the individual and has better defined purposes, as well as a higher degree of flexibility. Within the socio-economic context, this fact allows NFE to lead the current trend following the changes within the society, which contrasts with the slow adaptation of formal education to socio-economic changes, hence the slow-paced change of the schooling system (Fordham, 1993). In resume, while formal education is described as a top-down system, NFE operates the other way round; from the bottom to the top, which means that the curriculum formation is negotiated considering the needs of the students (Jeff, 1999). Table 1 clarifies the main features of the different types of education:

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information, check the Education Strategic Plan 2009-1013, available from <http://moeys.gov.kh/en/home.html>

	Formal (F)	Nonformal (N)	Informal (I)
Teacher/ Student dynamic	<b>F</b> Pre-established hierarchy	<b>N</b> Equal partnership among facilitators and participants	<b>I</b> Learning may take place individually, or can be shared within a group
Environment	<b>F</b> Classroom environment	<b>N</b> Learning setting is more casual and impromptu	<b>I</b> Learning may occur in any environment
Content	<b>F</b> Determined by teacher or other authority	<b>N</b> Participants actively identify learning needs and methods, guided by a facilitator	<b>I</b> Determined completely by participants who assess own needs and identify solutions
Teaching/ Learning methods	<b>F</b> Lecture primary source of information delivery	<b>N</b> Primarily participatory techniques	<b>I</b> Completely participatory methods; participants assess and reflect on their own learning
Teaching/ Evaluation tools	<b>F</b> Formal test or "proof of learning"	<b>N</b> Formal tests are supplemented with students' application of learning within the community	<b>I</b> Learning is practical and related to real needs; applied in the lives of people within the community

Table 3 - Main feature of formal, NFE and informal education. Source: Peace Corps, 2004.

Many initiatives apply under the term NFE. According to the International Institute for Education Planning, NFE is divided into *para-formal education* and *popular education* (Hoppers, 2006), broadly speaking the two groups that this paper takes into consideration. First, *para-formal education*: it usually runs parallel to the formal system and is largely devoted to those who have not been able to benefit from ordinary school. It mainly gives a second chance and, to a certain extent, substitutes the formal provisions (*ibid*). It traditionally includes literacy, re-entry or equivalency programs. Second, *popular education*: according to Carron and Carr-Hill's classification, next to popular education stands the *professional and vocational training*, which is

the other type of NFE that this paper uses to examine its hypothesis (Carr-Hill, 1991). The aim of vocational training is facilitating the transition from school to employment, especially among the youth, obtaining official diplomas in fields such as industry, commerce or agriculture, among any other sector (Hoopers, 2006). The main advantage remains in the hands-on skill development and, for a period of time, on-the-job learning (*ibid*).

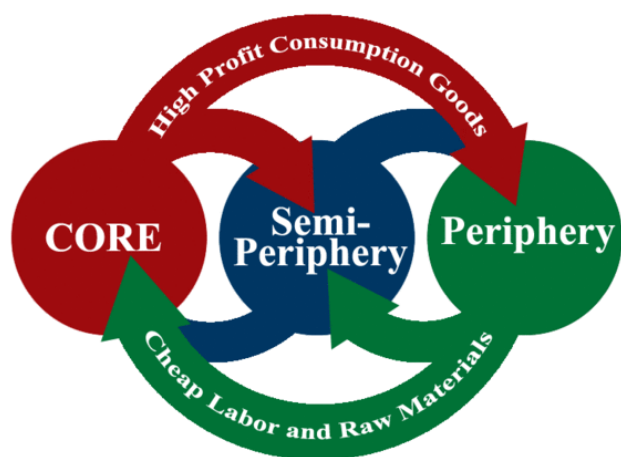
## 2.3 Theoretical framework

These specific types of education are concrete actions within the general framework of education, and are encompassed within a theoretical framework if development is considered. In that case, the aim of using theories is describing a specific behaviour: how acquiring a give type of education might lead to a change of mind and growth from the inside of the society. Two theories are used: dependency theory and development theory.

### 2.3.1 Dependency Theory or World System Theory

It is not a new idea that, generally speaking, there are countries or groups who *have* and other who *have not*. The implication is that those who *have* dominate over the others (Noah, 1988). Most of the authors, such as the most prominent one, Immanuel Wallerstein, describe them as centre and periphery countries; the centre ones influence over the peripheral countries, exercising a form of unilateral power, thus making them dependent – hence the name of dependency theory. In resume, it concerns about the inner development in terms of external influences (Sunkel, 1969). The consequences of such dependency are various: at large, it does not mean that the economic improvement of the rich countries will generate growth to the poorest ones. Contrarily, studies suggest that the performed economic activities by the rich often damage the poor (Ferraro, 2008). The way that

dependency theory works, according to Wallerstein, is well explained in Table 2:



**Wallerstein's World System Theory Model**

**Table 4 - How the dependency theory works according to Wallesteirn.**

For the purposes of this study: schooling has an active role from a theoretical point of view, provided that younger generations learn the values and ideas that best fit to the interests of the dominant countries (Bowles, 1976).

### 2.3.2 Modernisation Theory

As its names indicates, this theory explains the transformation of the society from a traditional basis to a modern basis; a multifaceted process that brings changes at all levels of human activity (Tipps, 1973).

Modernisation is an extremely broad topic usually linked to a strong sense of democracy. Narrowing down its definition to the strict meaning of education, it acts like a string of positive consequences: authors such as Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli underline the importance of a mass schooling program, which is aimed to enhance the individual in terms of equality; the income distribution becomes more equitable. The nation, working as a team, has the unique purpose of being the key element of the national progress. In short, the link between early rise of education and economic take-off is fairly

strong (Morrow, 1995). Plus, education is not just associated to economic growth, but to a better sense of health and sanitation (*ibid*).

Summarizing these two theories, they are extreme ends: while the dependency theory states that the poorest countries are dependent on external actors to generate growth – and are no likely to reduce the development gap – the development theory argues that the growth from within the state is a valid model of development to reduce dependency. The hypothesis of this piece of work assumes since the beginning that Cambodia is a dependent country that has to move towards a state of less dependency. It also considers that education is one of the pillars to give more autonomy to people and generate growth.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The aim of this section is presenting the choice and use of strategies adopted in order to obtain the desired data, as well as the tools to perform the analysis.

This paper uses qualitative research methods to perform its research. Considering the particular features of this piece of research, qualitative methods are appropriate in order to reduce the data – in form of several opinions and points of view – and to transform its meaning beyond the words themselves into a more condensed set of information, hence indentifying the core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002). The aim is finding out a given situation in a given emplacement: the role of NFE in the development process of Cambodia through the obtained opinions (personal and professional), believes, feelings and explanations from experts relevant to the field of study, hence the validity of the data obtained.

#### 3.1 Philosophy

In general terms, interpretivism is the philosophy adopted to perform the research. As the name itself indicates, it is based on the understanding through the way of interpretation (Goldkuhl, 2012). This philosophy allows to do a back-and-forth game at the time of obtaining data – mainly the interviews – as certain features need to be considered: the fundamental principle of interpretivism is the hermeneutical cycle and holism, which beliefs that a given system needs to be analysed as a whole and not part by part (*ibid*). This is applicable to the role of NFE as follows: education never works exclusively by itself within the national system of a country; other fields such as economics, politics, finances, external aid or even, in the Cambodian case, the recent past of the country are some of the factors that will have an

incidence over education, hence the importance of understanding them as a whole along with its linkages.

## **3.2 Strategy**

Predominantly, the study followed a non-linear methodology, though some clarifications must be exposed: an initial game plan was set, but it could be unreal in multiple ways. The strategy had two parts:

First of all, the review of literature: it adopted a more linear procedure, as the background information, theoretical framework and key concepts were defined since the beginning of the study and they were not likely to change.

Second of all, the fieldwork: it consisted of research in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, doing interviews to several different sources of information relevant for the purposes of this study. A flexible option open to changes was required, as the number of interviews was not high and certainly limited, but they were analysed in depth. Each respondent had particular features and background, which is why a flexible method like that adapted well to the needs and, accordingly, the interviews were adapted to each respondent.

In resume, a more linear strategy was followed to formulate preliminary conceptual hypothesis, which was followed by a non-linear method doing interviews to gather evidences in order to support the given hypothesis.

### **3.2.1 Interviews**

That was the main source of empirical data, which was then followed by a data-analysis process. The interviews were cross-sectional and semi-structured: a framework was used to ensure that certain topics were covered during the interviews, which allowed going through concrete clusters of information in a more semi-informal and conversational way. The purpose

was going deep into the meaning of the words of the speaker and, above all, learning during the course of the interview (Harrel, 2009). Plus, being semi-structured, the interview was easily adapted to the features of the respondent, hence being modified according to the on-going process of the interview itself.

There were four targets:

- **NGO's:** the main target for the purposes of the research. NGO's are the main actor responsible for carrying out the NFE programs and are the body that work on the field, hence owning relevant information.
- **Scholars:** the right source of data when looking for a neutral point of view that cannot be associated neither with the government or the NGO's. A point of view of a scholar is seen as valuable because they have a good overview of all the actors under investigation.
- **Official bodies:** as responsible for setting the guidelines of NFE and/or being a big donor for Cambodia. It includes both governmental and non-government bodies.
- **Civil society:** mainly workers or other individuals as receptors of NFE. They are seen as important considering that this piece of work tries to analyse the issue of education from the grassroots of the problem. The individuals are the ones who receive the programs of NFE, hence their importance.

The total number of interviews was 16, distributed as follows: NGO representatives (7), official bodies representatives, both stat and non-state ones (2), scholars (1) and civil society – workers and other individuals who took a NFE program (6).



### **3.3 Data collection and analysis**

Analysing the data is part of the process of operationalization; it helps specifying a set of immeasurable data. For the purposes of this study, the interviews were the main source of empirical data; as a set of qualitative data, there was the need to make the ideas from the interviews measurable. It was achieved through the analysis of the different clusters of outcomes, analysing each interview and the relationship between results, which were contrasted with a second set of data to validate them.

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection**

All the interviews were face-to-face; they took place at the NGO's offices, universities departments and factories. Most of them were in English, otherwise in Khmer with the help of an interpreter. All of them were voice-recorded; it allowed the researcher to be more focused on the speaker, being able to incorporate questions on the go and taking just the indispensable notes. Afterwards, each interview was encoded – the details of each interview can be found in Appendix I.

The profile of the responders varied, so the guidelines of the interview did accordingly. Each interview was structured as follows:

- 1) Exploration of the particular NGO: the responder was asked about the role of the given organization: its role, characteristics and how NFE plays a role in it.
- 2) Specific and prepared questions about education and NFE; a cluster of broad questions not strictly related to the given NGO, and another cluster of questions that linked the NGO with NFE – some of them were questions on-the-go according to the respondent's previous comments and answers.

### 3.3.2 Data analysis

The recorded interviews allowed the author proceeding to an in-depth analysis of the outcomes:

- 1) **Getting to know the data:** listen to the recordings at least two times without taking any notes.
- 2) **Focusing the analysis:** note taking of the main ideas. A literal transcription was not done as the interest was in the identifying ideas more than specific words of the speech. The note taking allowed having a first and vague idea of the main discussed topics.
- 3) **Information categorisation:** coding the information into coherent categories that could summarize the outcomes of the interviews. That helps to see what each responder said about each topic, if there are coincidences, differences and how each bite of data compliments the other bites.
- 4) **Identification of patterns and linkages between categories:** as above-mentioned, the holistic theories state that all the clusters of information need to be understood as a whole and not independently. Once the extracted data is categorised, finding out the linkages among categories becomes easier and allows noticing how education is dependent on other factors, as well as the other way round.

(Tayllow-Powell, 2003)

## 4. FINDINGS

On July the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, the Cambodia Daily published a one-whole page piece of news that contains a shocking first statement: “Numerous studies by multilateral agencies, academic institutions, businesses and governmental internal reviews have all come to the same basic conclusion: the educational system in Cambodia needs immediate and serious attention.” (Wilson, 2013)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, as Wilson points out, there are no objections in saying that great progress has been achieved since the 80’s – starting from nothing – to the present, but the words of the RGC do no always back up the reality (*ibid*). In the government’s strategy called *Rectangular Strategy*, strengthening the quality of education appears as one of the goals, and there is the commitment of achieving the desired goal of Education for All (EFA) (RGC, 2010).

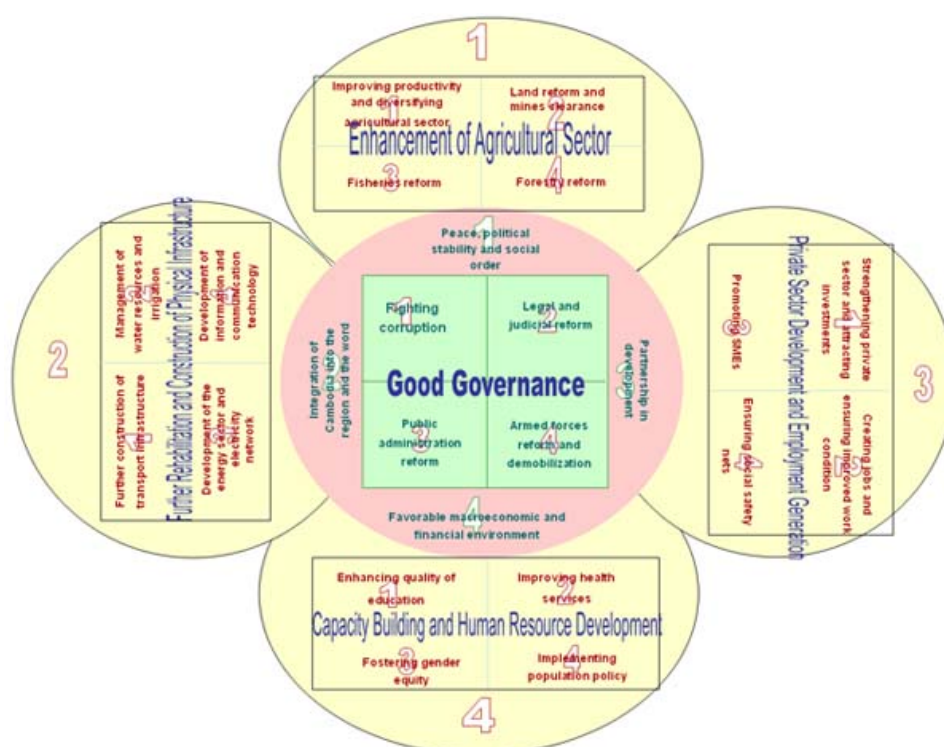


Table 5 - Rectangular Strategy diagram. Source: RGC.

<sup>2</sup> See APPENDIX IV

Wilson's article foresees the main tendency of this study: the core topic of this piece of research, NFE, involves inquiring in many other subjects; education in its broadest meaning, society, economics, policies by the government or regionalism, to name some. This is reflected on Table 5, where the linkages between each of the four clusters are obvious. The meaning of NFE and its forms are already well defined, so this paper analyses the fields that have an influence over NFE and how together have an influence over the development process.

In order to see the connections between the different fields that NGO's and the government have to deal with – regarding to NFE – findings are organised into four different categories: educational system, society, economy, and policies and integration.

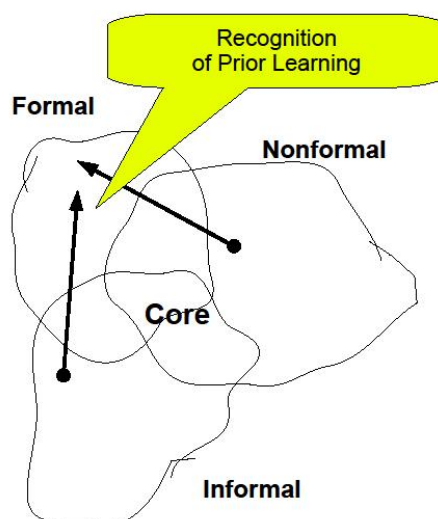
## **4.1 Educational system**

### **4.1.1 Definition and structure of NFE**

There are two main actors involved in the educational process: the supplier – government and educational institutions – and the receiver – civil society. Defining strictly how NFE fits within the educational planning and the role of each actor is fundamental, so each part may perform a well-defined role. This way, the benefits of the programs can be maximised.

The main and broadest aim of NFE is providing practical skills in a concrete field of study (INT1, 2013). In order to make it effective, one must understand the concrete way NFE operates: education is *not* two-way process involving either formal *or* NFE. The formal curriculum of education must go side by side with NFE programs; one compliments the other (*ibid*). This is because, while formal education provides the student with knowledge, NFE gives the skills, which cannot be applied properly without a solid base of knowledge. That being said, the outcome is that the emphasised must be put in the formal education (INT2, 2013). A blending of the two brings the student to

meet the requirements of the market; hence the individuals will be more likely to find a job. Table 6 shows how each type of education is important in the overall learning process, and how prior learning (formal) is a must:



**Table 6 - Lifelong learning process. Source: futofedu.blogspot.com**

The structure of most of NFE programs is the feature that makes them unique, a structure that is diametrically opposed to that of formal education: it is a bottom-up system. That means that it pays more attention to the field and to the receivers' real needs. Consequently, the degree of flexibility is higher. As presented later, the fact that it is flexible is seen as an advantage.

#### **4.1.2 Goals of NFE**

Several goals were identified, some more general than others:

First, providing skills. Second, a goal that is above providing skills: uplifting the life of the poor (INT4, 2013). The uplifting process acts like a chain: at a first stage, NFE enhances the chances to have a job or start an own business, which will give a certain degree of economic independence, which the individual will use to sustain himself – and usually other family members

(INT5, 2013). Third, as above-mentioned, NFE and formal education are strongly interlinked, which is why another of the goals of NFE is ensuring that students stay within the educational system as long as possible (INT8, 2013). The minimum is grade 9, in accordance with the Article 17 of the Chapter IV of the Education Law, which is the general education (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2013). But this is still far away to happen: according to the World Bank, while in primary education the gross enrolment ratio goes beyond the limit, 126% in 2011/12 – some children are allocated to a class that does not correspond to their age, hence the over limit – the ratio drops drastically in secondary school: 46.6%. All in all, and according to the NFE department, the net primary school enrolment is 96%, so the goal of the department is taking care of this 4% that do not have access to education, and also of the 6 to 8%, and 15% who dropout of primary and secondary school, respectively (INT16, 2013). This is achieved by means of functional literacy, post-literacy, income generation, re-entry, equivalency and life quality improvement programs.

In short, all the goals of NFE are designed to fulfil the gap on education and provide integral education, especially to the most marginalised groups, including children and young adults, but never overlap the role of formal education (INT6, 2013). Related to that, transmitting the right message is essential in order to avoid wrong perceptions about NFE: it cannot replace the formal curriculum; it is complimentary (INT1, 2013).

***Practical case:*** *There exists several equivalency programmes for those who dropout of school can join NFE programs with the desirable competences. As one of Cambodia's main aid donors, ADB is aware of that and also tries to keep children within the system as long as possible managing bridging programs, among others: about two million children have not completed grade 7, thus cannot obtain additional training or education. Being aware that possibilities for out-of-school children are limited, technical training is provided through*

*TVET certificate level 1. Another feature of these programs is that the receiver must have been out of the system for at least two years; this measure is to prevent deliberated dropout cases (ADB, 2013).*

#### **4.1.3 Implementation and targets of NFE**

When referring to implementation of programs, two main actors need to be considered: on one hand, the government, under the corresponding ministry – MoYES or MLVT. On the other hand, the educational institutions and NGO's. The corresponding ministry is the actor that sets the guidelines that programs will follow, while in a high number of cases the implementation relies on the NGO's and education centres, which have a certain degree of flexibility (INT1, 2013).

From a wide and pragmatic point of view, everyone is a potential target of NFE: from out-of-school young children, the ones who are in danger of being excluded in the near future or young adults and adults who need a tool to get into the market (INT3, 2013). This thought was found out to be the mainstream among the interviewed NGO representatives. That is from an ideal perspective though, as reality showed us that the target depends on the point of view of each concrete body; it means that the cohort of people that the government puts the effort in does not necessarily match with that of the NGO's. According to the MoYES: the strategic plan for NFE includes programs of para-formal education – those that focus on children out of the system or potential dropouts – and also on popular education – vocational training. In practise, though, the government is strongly focused on the second, being the cohort of people aged 15 to 45 the main one (Kingdom of Cambodia, 2002). On the other hand, NGO's play a stronger role in the implementation of programs for children under the age of fifteen, as well as vocational training depending on each case (INT6, 2013). Another reason that was found out to believe that the real target is everyone, is that education and NFE are a tool of prevention more than damage repairing

(INT2, 2013); the sooner they are used, the most useful they will be to prevent the individual from damage (INT9, 2013).

Analysed from a wider perspective: the main obstacle is not whether the government is more focused into vocational training or literacy programs; the real obstacle for NFE is that *formal* education seems to be the only priority in order to achieve Education for all (EFA) in 2015, a pro-poor development policy and strategy, which covers the whole process: from internalization of the principles to implementation of programs (MoYES, 2003) (INT6, 2013).

## 4.2 Society

Education is not only about skills; it is also about the power it holds to socialize individuals: in its strict meaning, NFE provides knowledge, but the whole process is vital as a contributor to the holistic development of the individual and making the society more compact (INT9, 2013), as the steps of the theory of socialisation shows:

1. Individual education: **socialisation**.
2. Individual knowledge and education: **socialisation and competence**.
3. Effectiveness: **social progress**.
4. **Social modernisation**.

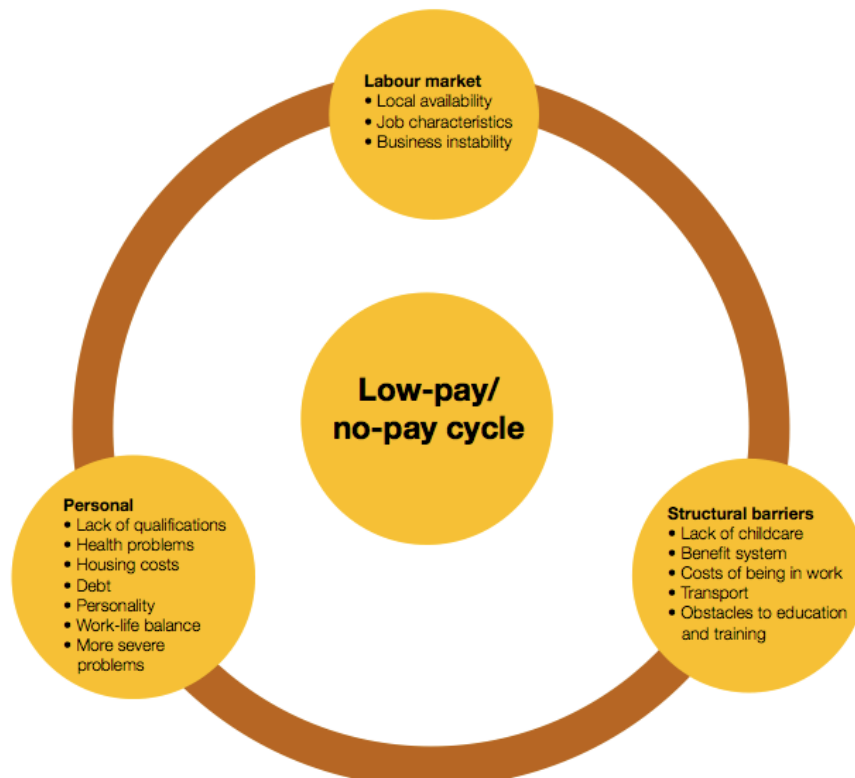
(Meyer, 1977).

Society may become more compact if the gap between rich and poor is reduced – to a certain extent it is an economic matter – by means of building up a stronger mid-class; differences will never be fully eradicated, but they can be narrowed (INT1, 2013). That is especially important considering that,



in 2011, the 20.5% of the population lived under the poverty line according to the World Bank (that means with less than US\$1.25/day). Plus, the Gini ratio – which measures inequality – has increased over the last years: 0 being perfect equality and 1 total inequality, the Gini ratio in 1994 was 0.35 and by 2007 it had increased up to 0.43 (UNDP, 2012). Economic growth is usually the most recurrent way of measuring poverty, a concept that must be understood as multidimensional; it means that poverty can be measured in other terms, such as education (Chambers, 2006). NFE has the power to make people work as a team and engaging them to assume new responsibilities, but in order to achieve a qualified workforce, formal curriculum still remains essential (INT8, 2013).

Socially speaking, a program of NFE is potentially useful in two ways: in a first stage, when the individual takes a program, the feeling of feeling safe and protected increases. In order for that to happen, dealing with their emotions is fundamental, hence targeting the individual's health might also help empowering them (INT9, 2013). In a second stage, NFE it is a tool to break a negative dynamic – poverty in this case – and redirect the individual towards a positive dynamic out of poverty (INT1, 2013). So the combination of both leads to the right learning environment. As can be seen on Table 7, education is just one of the structural barriers one might face in the process of breaking the above-mentioned poverty cycle:



**Table 7 - Poverty cycle. Source: Joseph Rountree Foundation.**

A massive change is not always needed; eventually, just a small step forward might mean a big improvement to the individual, as shown in this real example provided by NGO Education Partnership:

*“A girl participated in a skill training program; after that, she was able to count, calculate the money... Now no one cheat on her anymore. In the past she could not count or calculate properly the prices of the chicken she sells, but now she can sell them according to the market prices.”*

(INT1, 2013)

Similar examples like that are important in a country such Cambodia, where the 80% of the population is still rural.

Cambodia is facing two social issues when it comes about the implementation of NFE programs: access and quality.

- **Access:** still struggling with the consequences of the Khmer Rouge period. The school system was dismantled, and more than thirty years later, the lack of adequate infrastructure is still jeopardizing the goal of EFA (Belgian Development Agency). The RGC has achieved significant improvements over the last ten to fifteen years: more children are attending to school, but the RGC has focused too much on infrastructure, rather than quality.
- **Quality:** the fundamental field to be addressed, which refers to the conditions of teaching and learning given to the students (Ang, 2012).

In resume; socially speaking, NFE has an important potential role in making the society more compact by means of building a strong middle class. Accordingly, more people would be able to get out of the poverty trap in which they see themselves, but this is only going to happen if access and, above all, quality education is provided.

### 4.3 Economy

Concerning education, economy will always be one the key fields to be mentioned and analysed. Economic development – and effective money management – is the starting point to provide top quality education, the tool to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, which has already been mentioned in the *social issues* section (INT1, 2013). Education being integral, NFE remains as one of the most effective tools allowing the individual adapting to the requirements of the market (*ibid*).

Generally, there are two ways through which education gets funded: budget allocation by the RGC and through donors' aid. The first means that the government allocates a share of the annual national budget to education,

and the second is Cambodia being the recipient of aid and ODA programs – which the RGC will manage, usually with the monitoring of the donor.

Let's begin with the money that the RGC allocates to education: expenditure on education can be measure in the share of annual GDP expenditure and government budget allocation: as we have seen in previous sections, educations is one of the pillars that sustains a country, which makes us think that it should get a huge share of the GDP expenditure and budget allocation, always based on the needs of the sector, not on the available budget itself, but it is not always like that. First, let's have an overview of the national GDP growth between 2007 and 2012:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>% Growth</b>	<b>8.97</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>-1.03</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>5.82</b>

**Table 8 - GDP growth. Source: World Bank national accounts data.**

The figures shown on Table 8 show relevant outcomes when they are contrasted with the share of GDP spent on education: 1.4% in 2007 and 1.7% in 2010 (MEF, 2010). In terms of budget allocation, in 2007 it represented the 19.2% of the total and the 16.4% in 2010, according to MoYES. The data in Table 8 data also needs to be contrasted with that of other ministries and other ASEAN countries; the main outcome is that the GDP expenditure is too low:

1. Compared with other Cambodian ministries: the Ministry of Defence and Security perceived a 1.7% of the GDP in 2007 and a 2.4% in 2010.

2. Compared with other ASEAN members: in 2010, Thailand allocated a 3.75% of the GDP to education – reaching a 4.13% in 2009, Viet Nam allocated a 6.56% and Indonesia a 3%.

(Source: United Nations Educational)

The experts usually recommend allocating around a 5-6% of the GDP to education (INT8, 2013).

What happens with NFE? If the data is broken down into pieces, we find out that the allocation of GDP to vocational training was as low as 0.12% in 2010 (MEF, 2010). Vocational training programs depend on the MLVT, and we have seen the lack of funds; now let's have a look to the financing plan of the MoYES on NFE, 2012 – 2013, to address the life-skills and other programs designed for children under the age of 15:

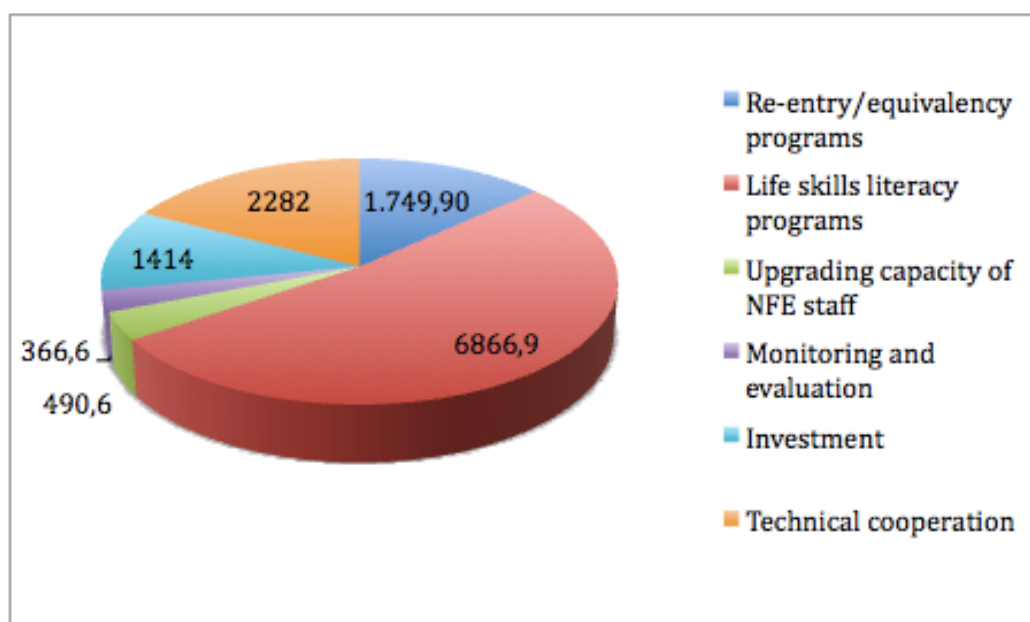


Table 9 - Financing plan (in million riel, 4,000 R=US\$1). Source: MoYES.

In short, seeing the importance of education, the allocation of budget falls short, especially if compared to other fields, such as defence, and also to other ASEN countries, which usually devote 4% of the GDP or more to education. It is also reflected as a challenge in the NFE Outcomes for the year 2012-2013, specifically for progressing the community learning centres. Still regarding on Table 9, it is shocking the small amount of money devoted to improving the capacity of NFE staff: teacher training is a core requirement to establish a system of high standards.

Economically speaking, Cambodia is facing another challenge that has a direct influence over the NFE programs: it is economically dependent, so is on education. That means that the success of Cambodia will depend on the success of others (businessdictionary.com, 2013). Even taking in consideration the estimated US\$792 million that Cambodia has received in 2012 in terms of net ODA (World Bank), the country is still dependent on international aid, approximately between on third and one half of the national budget, according to the scholar Pou Sovachana (Pou, 2012). One of the direct implications of this dependency is the limited fund intended for education, which result in limited capacity building (INT3, 2013).

**Practical case:** *Don Bosco Technical School in Phnom Penh currently teaches approximately 500 students each year. The school itself has the infrastructure and capacity to accept more students, but as they have to seek for their own methods of financing the programs offered at the centre, the intake of new students is limited to their economic resources.*

(INT4, 2013)

That being said; Cambodia strongly relies on the help provided by bodies such ADB, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, bilateral donors and a number of NGO, among others, so it is natural wondering if this dependence is positive. Referring back to the dependency theory, it is not: Cambodia remains as a periphery country, while the centre ones have a strong influence over it – mostly an economic influence, in that case. All in all, if the whole issue is put in perspective, the positive side must be also mentioned: dependency is a game of two, and if Cambodia uses external help efficiently, step-by-step it will create self-development with its own resources (INT3, 2013). Above all, what the country needs to have is good budget management: the donors monitor how each ministry administrate the resources, but in the end, the last responsible is the government itself (INT8, 2013).

So, once it has been seen that the share of budget spent on education is the same or even less than that spend on defence, the main concern is getting to know to what extent the government has economic deficit, or the allocation and management is inappropriate. Despite Cambodia being dependent, some superficial research already shows that the money is there, but it is about priorities, so about management; it includes efficiency and transparency. To name an example: some ministries spend more than the 100% of the annual budget, such Interior, while others do not spend it all (INT8, 2013). About transparency, even listening to the diplomatic speeches

by the political elite<sup>3</sup>, Cambodia was listed as the 157<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world (Transparency International, 2012)

#### 4.4 Policy and Integration

In general terms, this section evaluate the role of three actors: the government/donors/official bodies, NGO's/technical schools and the civil society.

After interviewing several NGO's, the main outcome is that they have a very important weight in carrying out the NFE programs, which confirms that the government is not as focused on this field as much as the importance of the subject requires, further than setting the guidelines. This way of operating – NGO and government – makes us see that both parts should be working closer to each other: the NGO's are the ones who are able to provide the right feedback to the government, as they work on the field. That would be a way to improve the quality and effectiveness of education, which is far more important than access. The key is a government devoting more resources and a proper communication plan in both directions; the NGO's must be aware of the government's ideas, and the government needs first hand feedback (INT1, 2013). A good dissemination of information also affects a third part: the civil society. Individuals are who receive the programs.

One of the main concerns pointed out and agreed by all the respondents, is the issue of centralisation vs. decentralisation of educational policies: needless to be said, Cambodia needs a national plan of action, but it was full agreed that a certain level of decentralisation of the policies would be the right step to take and make the system more flexible (INT6, 2013). A decentralised strategy allows adapting policies more suitable to smaller

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<sup>3</sup> For an overview of aid and corruption in Cambodia, refer to IRIN. 2010. *Cambodia: donors pledge \$1 billion but criticise corruption* [online]. [Accessed 18 August 2013]. Available from: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/89353/cambodia-donors-pledge-1-billion-but-criticise-corruption>



regions, adapting to their needs (INT5, 2013). A decentralised policy should not be understood as fully decentralised, but with a certain degree of flexibility and a monitoring system by the correspondent ministry (INT7, 2013). NFE adopts better this bottom-up system, as the implementation begins with the target and service deliverers. Accordingly, all policies and strategies need to be developed thinking of whom they will impact (Matland, 1995).

## 5. NFE PUT INTO PRACTISE: A TRUE STORY

The vast majority of the research involved assessing education from a theoretical point of view, and also interviewing a number of NGO managers, experts on education, scholars or managers of bodies that implement NFE programs. With the goal of putting some emphasis on the civil society, in this section, three real cases of individuals how underwent through some kind of NFE program are presented. Participating in such programs supposed an enhancing their life standards, which allowed them breaking a negative cycle in which they used to live.

### 5.1 A true story, I:

The story of Roeun Si Da shows us how a young adult who had no chance to work after secondary school took a NFE program in a factory and rapidly got a job:

#### **Roeun Si Da, Phaly Craft:**

Walking around the most tourist area of Phnom Penh, close to the riverside, one can find a store called Phaly Craft; they sell hand-made silk products. But this business, a branch within Khmer Silk Processing Association (KSPA) offers much more than souvenirs from Cambodia: they provide vocational training and jobs to the vulnerable clusters of people, especially women and disabled people. This fair trade business reinvests its incomes in the organisation in order to support the salaries of the workers and to fund the social development within the orphanage that they also run. The factory, which has five full-time employees, also serves as a vocational training for some of their future workers. One example is that of the designer assistant, Roeun Si Da:



*“ My name is Roeun Si Da. I am now 28 years old, but I arrived in this factory some years ago, when I was 23, after finishing my education at school. I did not come straight here; I finished secondary education when I was 21 years old, but then I stayed two years without doing much, without any serious job [...], but now I work as the assistant of the designer. I think that coming here was a good*

*opportunity for me because I get support of all kinds: I get shelter and I could study IT and also English language, but my English is not good enough yet! I like my job because since the beginning they taught me properly, I got the job, and now I am gaining a lot of experience. I think that in the future I want to be a designer and I want to open my own business, maybe in a modern country, such as the United States, in Hawaii.”*

The next two cases reflect how the opportunity to take a vocational skills training program given to some people change their lives and expectations about their future. These cases underwent through programs offered by Empowering Cambodia, an NGO working at the grassroots level with the main purpose of breaking the poverty trap. Among the offered projects to help the poor, there are vocational training programs offered to adults, which aim is supporting the transition to sustainability.

## 5.2 A true story, II:

### **Pheakdey, Empowering Cambodia:**

*“I thank to the directors all they do for me. I am now 38 and I have five children; the older is 18 and the youngest is 9. Before I used to live in a small place, shared with other people; the worse came with the floods, especially for my children. My husband drives a moto-taxi and I used to stay home taking care of the children. Later, thanks to the organization I learnt sewing and printing t-shirts [...], I learnt everything in here, and now that I know how to sew, I think it would be easier for me to open my own business. If I have no capital, maybe I could work from home. I learnt much more than sewing; now I am more patient [...] and I can communicate better with other people. [...]. I know these are hard times for everyone, but I would like encouraging other people to do the same I did by teaching them, I would like to do so.”*

## 5.3 A true story, III:

### **(Anonymous), Empowering Cambodia:**

*“I am (Anonymous), I am 19 and I joined Empowering Cambodia only five to six months ago [...]. Here I learnt sewing, I did not know how to do that before. It changed my life since I went to school until grade 9 and then I worked in a garment factory. [...]. I got lots of new skills and I think that now I want to be a designer and tailor, so I can do my own clothes for other people. [...]. Besides all I learnt here, it was a unique opportunity because I in the past I had not future expectations, because I had no income. Plus, here I also learnt to work in a team, now I do not get angry so easily and I have a better control over my feelings and emotions. I would encourage other people to follow my steps by telling them about myself: my past and my present [...], because a good education combined with a job is important to have a good future.*

*((Anonymous) is the second of three siblings. Her father is a tuk-tuk driver and her mother is housewife.)*

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The first noticeable outcome when analysing NFE is that several other fields further than education must be addressed: economy, politics or society contribute with essential support, as NFE by itself is not very significant and has already been well defined, but it acquires significance when it is put into context, hence the importance of focusing the issue with a holistic point of view to be applied in a given context.

NFE role in bringing development is more than significant in the case of Cambodia, thus making the country less dependent: it is a process that usually takes time and a remarkable effort, which has its foundations in placing education as a national priority. NFE has the distinctive feature of being easily adaptable to concrete needs, thus providing the right skills to find a job or starting an own business. These skills that may be acquired in a short period of time will be applied to the market, generating more growth to the individual, thus uplifting their life. In the case of younger children, NFE is also represented by means of literacy and/or re-entry programs, which will get receivers again into the system, which means that they will have less chances to fall into a poverty trap if their life are uplifted. NFE especially applies to Cambodia, where the 80% of the population is still rural: the bottom-up structure of the programs allows providing a useful tool for Cambodians to be inserted into the market, or reducing their chances to get out of the system, as the programs go straight to the point if combined appropriately with the knowledge provided by formal education. This process is not free of shortcomings, unfortunately; Cambodia is, at a large extent, a dependent country, which makes the national budget being certainly limited. It has been proved that the government has spent more on defence and military than in education over the last years, which should be reversed considering the national needs. All in all, the problem seems to be more about management and the priorities that the government sets than a short budget, generally speaking. This problem stresses in the field of NFE, where

resources allocated by the government are even less abundant – a huge mistake considering that one form of education compliments the other. It is like providing only with knowledge, but neglecting NFE.

There is a strong linkage between the formal curriculum of education and NFE: while many tend to see them as independent processes, they must run parallel as one compliments the other. Formal education provides the knowledge that NFE applies in its programs, thus making the individual more capable and competent when it comes to be inserted in the market or develop an own business. Transmitting the right message is fundamental; people should understand that without knowledge, skills cannot be acquired, hence the importance of prioritising formal education and not discouraging children from attending to school.

With this idea in mind, NFE should be more systematic: skills should also be included in the secondary school programs, thus preparing the student to meet the market requirements or taking further studies on a specialised field. There is no need to say that if systematisation wants to be achieved, quality becomes a priority: starting from the roots, providing proper teacher training and decent salaries in order to motivate the staff are essential issues to be addressed. The government seems to be focused too much on access, but a school that cannot offer quality programs is useless. That being said, the government should develop an effective plan to disseminate the information properly in order to let the population know what are the available options: each individual's circumstances are unique, that is why everybody should be aware of the existing options and which is the one that adapts better to him/her.

Both the RGC and the NGO's have unique roles: the RGC is the actor that sets the guidelines and develops the educational planning, which is why defining well the national priorities should be a must. According to the so-called rectangular strategy, education is a priority, but that is not less than incoherent, provided that the RGC seems to be much more involved in defence and military tasks, and there are many studies showing that

education is the pillar of any society. On the other hand, NGO's are the actor performing the guidelines provided by the government. The shortcoming that appears the most is the limited budget; they have to fund themselves, and even if they have the infrastructure and human resources for a larger intake of students, budget seems to be the main limitation. Seeing the role of each actor, a good communication between the two is important, as the NGO's have to know in first hand what the RGC wants to do, and the RGC needs the feedback from the NGO's to evaluate their policies. Despite this communication already exists, in some occasions seems to fall a bit short.

On the government side, it has been noticed that too many different departments are involved in NFE: first, seeing the importance of education, it seems senseless having a ministry with so many sub-divisions, such as MoYES. There is a department of non-formal education within MoYES, but if vocational training is addressed, it falls under the MLVT. A potential redistribution of functions in less ministries and more focused on education, and NFE in this case, would be likely to enhance its coordination, hence its efficiency.

In short, NFE itself does not generate growth, but it is the tool that may help to do so, allowing students gaining access to the market or avoiding younger generations falling into the poverty cycle. They would be able to generate growth, not only economically speaking, as it also brings human development. This growth should stop Cambodia being so dependent on external aid, but an effort by the RGC to develop a quality program is fundamental, along with the participation of the civil society: the ones who, at the last instance, have the real power to change the country.

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## APPENDIX I

List of interviews:

**Code:** INT1

**Name:** Lay Vutha

**Organisation & position:** NGO Education Partnership (NEP), Non-formal Education Coordinator.

**Date of interview:** 2 July 2013

**Notes:** This NGO acts as umbrella for associated NGO's.

**Code:** INT2

**Name:** Jan Geusens

**Organisation & position:** VVOB education for development, programme manager.

**Date of interview:** 2 July 2013

**Notes:** Focused on teacher training, one of the basis to establish a quality system.

<b>Code:</b>	INT3
<b>Name:</b>	Sitha Chhin
<b>Organisation &amp; position:</b>	PhD and Deputy Director of the Graduate Program in Education, Royal University of Phnom Penh.
<b>Date of interview:</b>	4 July 2013
<b>Notes:</b>	NA

<b>Code:</b>	INT4
<b>Name:</b>	Fr. Roel Soto
<b>Organisation &amp; position:</b>	Don Bosco Technical School, Phnom Penh, Recotor.
<b>Date of interview:</b>	3 July 2013
<b>Notes:</b>	NA

<b>Code:</b>	INT5
<b>Name:</b>	Nget Thy
<b>Organisation &amp; position:</b>	The Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Rights (CCPCR), Executive Director.
<b>Date of interview:</b>	4 July 2013
<b>Notes:</b>	NA

**Code:** INT6

**Name:** Samphors Vorn

**Organisation & position:** Aid et Action Cambodia, Programme Coordinator.

**Date of interview:** 2 August 2013

**Notes:** NA

**Code:** INT7

**Name:** Eng Sok & Chan Narin

**Organisation & position:** Deputy Chief of Party/M&E and Life Skill/IBECP & Chief of Party/IBEC Project, respectively.

**Date of interview:** 2 August 2013

**Notes:** NA

**Code:** INT8

**Name:** Sophea Mar

**Organisation & position:** Asian Development Bank, Senior Social Sevctor Officer, Cambodia Resident Mission.

**Date of interview:** 5 August 2013

**Notes:** NA

**Code:** INT9

**Name:** Carol Kelly

**Organisation & position:** Empowering Cambodia, Director.

**Date of interview:** 12 August 2013

**Notes:** NA

**Code:** INT10

**Name:** Roeun Si Da

**Organisation & position:** Nuon Phaly, Assistant Designer.

**Date of interview:** 12 August 2013

**Notes:** Nuon Phaly is a silk factory.

**Code:** INT11

**Name:** Lang Vanny

**Organisation & position:** Nuon Phaly, worker.

**Date of interview:** 12 August 2013

**Notes:** Nuon Phaly is a silk factory.



**Code:** INT12

**Name:** Som Chantu

**Organisation & position:** Nuon Phaly, worker.

**Date of interview:** 12 August 2013

**Notes:** Nuon Phaly is a silk factory.

**Code:** INT13

**Name:** Pheakdey

**Organisation & position:** Empowering Cambodia, sewer.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2013

**Notes:** Nuon Phaly is a silk factory.

**Code:** INT14

**Name:** Mom

**Organisation & position:** Empowering Cambodia, sewer.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2013

**Notes:** NA.

**Code:** INT15

**Name:** Anonymous

**Organisation & position:** Empowering Cambodia, sewer.

**Date of interview:** 13 August 2013

**Notes:** NA

**Code:** INT16

**Name:** Kuoch Kou Lom-a

**Organisation & position:** Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport,  
Department of Non-formal Education,  
Director.

**Date of interview:** 19 August 2013

**Notes:** NA.

## APPENDIX II

Consent forms signed by the interviewed workers.

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Education and development in Cambodia:  
the role of non-formal education.**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Marc Piñol, who is a MA student from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Leeds, UK. Mr. Piñol is conducting this study for his final dissertation. Dr. Chheang Vannarith is his faculty supervisor for this project.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a worker of the company Phaly Craft.

• **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to see how non-formal education has an important role in the development process of Cambodia.

• **PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

1. We will simply ask you to explain us how was your life before and after joining Phaly Craft, and how it changed your life.
2. These tasks may include: answering questions about what personal life, your attitudes about things, your behaviour and your daily activities.
3. A voice-recorder will be placed in the room and will be operated by the researcher.
4. You want your name to appear: Fully ☒ Only given name ☐ Anonymous / false name ☐

• **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

We expect that any risks, discomforts, or inconveniences will be minor and we believe that they are not likely to happen. If discomforts become a problem, you may discontinue your participation.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is not likely that you will benefit directly from participation in this study, but the research should help to improve non-formal education programs and policies.

- **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for participation in this study. There is also no cost to you for participation.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential if requested by the respondent and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a false name to let Mr. Piñol know who you are. We will not use your name in any of the information we get from this study or in any of the research reports.

Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. Mr. Piñol will, however, may use the information collected in his dissertation and other publications. We also may use any information that we get from this study in any way we think is best for publication or education. Any information we use for publication will not identify you individually.

The recordings that we make will not be viewed by anyone outside the study unless we have you sign a separate permission form allowing us to use them. The recordings will be deleted after the University of Leeds provides feedback and the final grade is reported to the researcher.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.



• IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

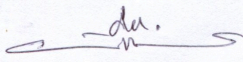
If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

Mr. Marc Piñol  
Principal researcher  
University of Leeds, UK.  
+855 77 859 179  
+34 679642951  
[ml12mpor@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ml12mpor@leeds.ac.uk)  
[i.mark85@gmail.com](mailto:i.mark85@gmail.com)

---

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

ROBUN SI DA.  
Name of respondent

  
Signature of respondent

Date 12.08.13



## **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

### **Education and development in Cambodia: the role of non-formal education.**

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Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you participated in a program offered by Empowering Cambodia.

#### **• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to see how non-formal education has an important role in the development process of Cambodia.

#### **• PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

1. We will simply ask you to explain us how was your life before and after joining Empowering Cambodia, and how that changed your life.
2. These tasks may include: answering questions about what personal life, your attitudes about things, your behaviour and your daily activities.
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It is not likely that you will benefit directly from participation in this study, but the research should help to improve non-formal education programs and policies.

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- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. Mr. Piñol will, however, may use the information collected in his dissertation and other publications. We also may use any information that we get from this study in any way we think is best for publication or education. Any information we use for publication will not identify you individually.

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If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

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Principal researcher  
University of Leeds, UK.  
+855 77 859 179  
+34 679642951  
[mi12mpor@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:mi12mpor@leeds.ac.uk)  
[i.mark85@gmail.com](mailto:i.mark85@gmail.com)

---

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of respondent

Pheakdy.

Signature of respondent



Date 13.08.13



## **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

### **Education and development in Cambodia: the role of non-formal education.**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Marc Piñol, who is a MA student from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Leeds, UK. Mr. Piñol is conducting this study for his final dissertation. Dr. Chheang Vannarith is his faculty supervisor for this project.

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- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

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[ml12mpor@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ml12mpor@leeds.ac.uk)  
[i.mark85@gmail.com](mailto:i.mark85@gmail.com)

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of respondent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of respondent

Date 13.08.13



## APPENDIX III

Child Protection Policy for Visitors, Empowering Cambodia, signed by the researcher.

### BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOLS

- All Empowering Cambodia visitors in direct contact with projects and children must sign the Statements of Commitment, follow and respect the Behavioural Protocols, and understand that action will be taken in cases of inappropriate behaviour.
- All Empowering Cambodia visitors are expected to give dignity and respect to all children, youth and staff associated with the work of Empowering Cambodia and throughout Cambodia.
- Empowering Cambodia visitors shall not act flirtatiously with a child, youth or staff member, or touch a child, youth or staff member in a way that goes against the UNCRC. This includes, but is not limited to, touching children in areas that are normally covered by shorts and a t-shirt, picking children up, lap-holding, hugging, kissing, and tickling inappropriately.
- Empowering Cambodia visitors shall not be alone with children, youth or staff who are not their own offspring in a private place that cannot be readily seen by a staff member of Empowering Cambodia or the project visited. This includes, but is not limited to, taking children out of direct staff supervision (taking children for walks, etc.)
- Local Cambodian children or youth shall not stay overnight in the residences or hotel rooms of Empowering Cambodia visitors unless accompanied by the child's parent or legal guardian.
- Empowering Cambodia visitors shall not discipline a child or youth they visit. Any concerns of improper behaviour by children shall be reported to Empowering Cambodia staff.
- Empowering Cambodia visitors shall not use, abuse, or exploit a child in a way that is against the UNCRC or Cambodian law. This includes physical abuse, mental & emotional abuse, sexual abuse and spiritual abuse (see Terms & Definitions).
- It will not be permissible for visitors to take **photographs or video footage** of children, youth or project locations without prior authorization from the Empowering Cambodia Director, Program Manager or Operations Manager, in which case strict regulations will be implemented on the nature of how photographs are taken and used. *\*This is in accordance with Cambodia Trafficking Law 2007 (Article 49), and MoSVY's Minimum Standards on Residential Care (Article 9).*
- Empowering Cambodia visitors **shall not disclose any information** (names of children, names of staff, locations, etc.) relating to children, youth or staff members that are considered confidential and/or internal to any outside party. This includes verbal disclosure, distributing internal documents, sharing project locations and posting information on the Internet including all social media. *\*This is in accordance with Cambodia Trafficking Law 2007 (Article 49), and MoSVY's Minimum Standards on Residential Care (Article 9).*
- Empowering Cambodia strongly recommends that visitors do not encourage orphanage tourism or visit programs that do not take child protection seriously.
- Visitors over the age of 18 will always be completely responsible for their behaviour and cannot blame a child or youth, even if a child or youth "provokes" or acts in a "seductive" way.

### ALLEGATIONS

Where an allegation has been made that a Empowering Cambodia visitor has abused a child, Empowering Cambodia will take the appropriate legal action to deal with the situation. If a foreigner is involved, the relevant embassy will be informed.



## Child Protection Policy for Visitors



## DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT:

To be signed by all Empowering Cambodia visitors. A copy will be kept on file at the Empowering Cambodia Office.

### I declare that:

- ✓ I have read and understand the Empowering Cambodia Child Protection Policy for Visitors.
- ✓ I will follow the procedures and protocols as laid out in the Empowering Cambodia Child Protection Policy during my time as a visitor.
- ✓ I have not been accused or convicted of any offense involving physical or sexual abuse of children or young people.
- ✓ I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the abuse of children while engaged in Empowering Cambodia activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Name (Please Print): *Harce P. del Rosica*

Nationality: *Spanish*

Passport No.: *AEE893464*

Signature *[Signature]*

Date: *13.08.13*



## EMPOWERING CAMBODIA POLICY FOR VISITORS

### Introduction

The protection of children and youth is one of four themes throughout the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which entered into force as international law on 2 September 1990.

Cambodia has been signatory to the UNCRC since 1992. Therefore, Empowering Cambodia takes its role in upholding the Convention very seriously. In a country where children are the largest demographic group, and where child-sex tourism, rape and child abuse are increasing, Empowering Cambodia acknowledges the fact that all children, both locally and internationally, and youth linked with Empowering Cambodia and its projects are at risk from abusers drawn to visit and work with us.

The Empowering Cambodia Child Protection Visitor Policy is for anyone who Empowers Cambodia organisations. The policy outlines Empowering Cambodia's commitment to the protection of all children, youth and staff from abuse of all kinds. It sets expectations of behaviour and good practice when working with or visiting children and youth.

### TERMS & DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- **Child/Children:** Persons seventeen (17) years of age or younger (UNCRC).
- **Youth:** Persons between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-five (25).
- **Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury, failure to prevent physical injury, or to a child or youth, including deliberate hitting, beating, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or poisoning.
- **Mental/Emotional Abuse:** Conveying to a child or youth that they are worthless, inadequate and cause children to feel frightened, in danger and/or corrupted.
- **Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child or youth, or the failure to protect youth from exposure to any kind of danger, or extreme failure to carry out important care, resulting in significant impairment of the child or youth's development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual violation of a child or youth; such as touching a child's genitals, forcing a child or youth to watch or take part in pornography or coercing a youth to have sex.
- **Spiritual Abuse:** The misuse of power, authority and/or trust by a spiritual someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organisation, institution, family), with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating, or dominating a child or youth.



Piece of news published by the Cambodia Daily.

## OPINION

## Cambodia's Educational System Is a System Utterly in Need

By KENNETH WILSON

Numerous studies by multilateral agencies, academic institutions, businesses and governmental internal reviews have all come to the same basic conclusion: Cambodia's educational system needs immediate and serious attention. There has been great progress in the past years, starting from almost nothing in the early 1980s, but much more attention is needed now.

The Royal Government of Cambodia states in its Rectangular Strategy and in the National Strategic Development Plan that education is a priority area, but statistics show that the words are not backed up by action. Data from studies by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and by the U.N. Development Program, show education expenditures expressed as a percentage of gross national product in 173 countries. For the immediate geographical area, the data shows Cambodia 2.6 percent (2010, #152), Laos 3.3 percent (2010, #136), Thailand 3.8 percent (2010, #119) and Vietnam 6.6 percent (2010, #29).

The most critical area for increased expenditure in education is for salaries of teachers, university lecturers and educational administrators. Virtually all education personnel work two or three jobs in order to survive, leaving little time for research, updating curriculum and student/parent interaction. The low salaries drive quality down. The fact that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has under spent its budget by 33 million dollars in 2011 in the salary budget line makes this question even more critical. The government has the money; for unclear reasons, it is just not used for salaries.

Not only are salary adjustments essential, there is also need for a revision of the education system asking why, how, and what is taught. There is a crucial need for major educational reforms, and for these reforms to be prioritized and funded.

The underlying issue is clear: Many teachers and administrators often seek other sources of income both within education, mostly in the private schools, and in other sectors as well. Insufficient government compensation forces them into multiple outside jobs leading to teacher absenteeism, generating income by requiring students to pay "fees" to enter

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class, selling exam answers and degrees, and charging for outside classes covering materials that should have been covered during regularly scheduled classes.

These non-teaching endeavors severely limit, if not eliminate, the teacher's available time for curriculum development, updating notes, grading exams, meeting with students and parents, learning new material and designing creative ways to teach it. An exceptional teacher working multiple jobs often opts for a better paying position where commitment and success is appropriately compensated.

This would be quite different if salary structures for these professionals were increased, corruption addressed, and their jobs recognized not with promises but action. A better educational system is fundamental to the future of Cambodia, and the government should be driving the reforms needed.

Quality creates quality: If a teacher's qualifications are low, and performance standards aren't established and measured, the knowledge and capabilities of graduates will be impaired. The quality of the teacher directly impacts the quality of the products, an educated pupil; similarly, ability affects end results and the teacher's capability is a direct consequence of her/his own education and experience.

In today's markets, a successful educational system needs to meet the expectations of employers: Right now, they are asking for keen communication skills, ability to work in a team, foreign language and computer talents, positive attitude, initiative, critical thinking and creativity. For high school or university graduates, these expectations are met both by school learning and also by the experiences found in internships, extra-curricular projects, such as debating, drama, sports and computer clubs. The quality of an education is measured by how well graduates fit the current job market, serve their community and society, and contribute to the social and economic growth of the country.

Given the nature of employment

today, positions once available only to local graduates are now open to a greater field of applicants. The ease of travel and the connected world of the internet are largely responsible for graduates from developed countries now seeking employment in Cambodia. Those doing so often possess better educational credentials and have more experience gained through internships and previous employment. Assuming Asean economic integration takes place in 2015, workers from across the region will be able to freely seek employment here, and the competition for jobs will become even more acute.

There are both positive and negative aspects to these changes: The country will continue its economic development but more and more foreigners will compete with locally educated students for the best jobs available, while Cambodia's low-skilled workers will have to emigrate from family and country to seek work abroad.

Recent articles summarizing employer interviews have indicated that numerous graduates of high schools and universities lack many of the above-mentioned employee-desired attributes. There has been a substantial increase in the number of new schools opened for K-12 students, and in the numbers of teachers hired to educate the 3 million students. Similarly, the numbers of higher educational institutions (HEIs) have increased and now 250,000 enrollees are spread out over both public (34) and private (57) universities.

Such significant growth places serious demands on educational systems, both those that teach the teachers, and those that are supposed to serve the large numbers of students.

With such rapid growth in numbers, especially in the higher education sector, it's clear that quality suffers due to the profound lack of qualified teachers and well-prepared university administrators and this applies both to under graduate and graduate schools. In tertiary education, there is an additional issue: the lack of an effective

process of accreditation; the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia was established back in 2003 but as yet, if the website is to be believed, generally non-functional. Given the government's lack of supervision of the ACC, it is still not possible to compare the quality of one university against another, to discover educational information on faculty members and boards of directors, to compare course offerings, or costs for degrees.

Similarly, it's impossible to know if international standards are met, if research articles are being published by faculty, or examine the quality of ongoing research being done by the staff at the university.

Given the annually increasing number of graduates from all schools and universities, and the limited number of appropriate job openings, it is crucial for this information to be offered to all stakeholders in education. Given the absence of such standards it's impossible for students, parents, present and future employers, donors and the government to decide where and how each should invest its limited capital.

In summary, at present the government inputs to education across the board from K-12 through to HEI are insufficient to drive the engine of educational reform and there's little to indicate that the situation is to drastically change anytime soon. If this is true, the result will be a seriously under-qualified workforce in the near future and for years to come.

The country of Cambodia, and especially its young people, deserve better.

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### LETTER TO THE EDITOR!

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Letters for publication should be no longer than 150 words, and must refer to an article published in The Cambodia Daily. Letters must include a phone number for verification purposes.