Local response to school-based management reforms in Cambodia in the Asian context

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Abstract

Many Asian countries have implemented the policy of education decentralisation, which has also been an issue in the academic field of educational management administration. This paper briefly examines the background of school-based management reforms in Asian countries and then explores the local response to the reforms in Cambodia.

The field research for this study was conducted in two public primary schools in Cambodia. The main research findings are as follows. First, few of the educational stakeholders working in individual schools are motivated to play a greater role in school management. Second, mutual collaboration among the different parties remains far from satisfactory at the school level. Third, leadership on the part of school principals is required to achieve such collaboration.

Keywords：school-based management, community participation, local response, Cambodia, field research

1．Introduction

The policy of education decentralisation has been employed in many Asian countries, with the decision-making authority regarding school management delegated to the school level in many cases. For example, school principals, teachers and local authorities working in individual schools have been given some official responsibilities for handling school management. In centralised educational systems, school management, including budgeting, school curricula and evaluations of teachers' performance, were considered the responsibility of the central government. Conversely,

in the era of decentralisation, professionals working in individual schools are expected to play important roles in school management, the so-called *school-based management* (SBM).[1]

This paper examines the background of SBM implementation in Asian countries and explores the local response to the SBM reforms in Cambodia. The next section outlines the reforms and some of their characteristics in Asian countries. The third section focuses on SBM in Cambodia, specifically, on why Cambodia has implemented SBM and how the system is being operated. The findings of the field research in the country are analysed. The final section summarises some implications and challenges related to the reforms in Asian countries.

２．School-based management in Asian countries

Some Asian countries started to implement SBM in the 1990s and early 2000s, as follows: 1991 in Hong Kong, 1997 in Thailand, 1998 in Cambodia, 1999 in Indonesia and 2001 in the Philippines. In some cases, the implementation was related to financial and political motivations, while in others, educational reasons were cited. With respect to financial and political reasons, the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s motivated further implementation of the reform. The crisis was followed by many years of austerity, and many governments were forced to cut their education budgets. Consequently, local governments and professionals at the school level were required to officially assume more responsibilities, in terms of providing educational services.

Regarding the educational reasons for the reform, to counteract the era of globalisation, the local values and culture were given greater emphasis in schools. For example, the government of Thailand was concerned that Thai culture and being a 'Thailander' would be diminished as a consequence of globalisation. In response, the Thai government introduced policy measures mandating that each school providing basic education could develop 30% of the school-based curriculum (Suzuki, Morishita, and Kampeeraparb 2004). Through these means, local control took charge of some characteristics of the curriculum, while 70% of the curriculum remained under centrally determined standards.

The local curriculum was also introduced in Indonesia. For example, schools located in areas where ethnic minority groups resided were allowed to employ their native languages as the medium of instruction. In another measure for respecting diversity, Indonesia abolished the nationally unified graduation examination at the

primary level in 2002. In 2008, the government set the new national standard for the examination, which was not unified and allowed each provincial government to develop 75% of the examination content (Hattori 2013).

The educational motivations for the SBM reforms in Asian countries come from the idea that local governments and professionals working at the school level understand the learning needs of the children they work with daily and can therefore better provide the educational experience that suits their students' requirements. This type of educational reforms is to get schools and school principals to take new and greater responsibilities for decision-making, any advocates for the reform do not consider whether schools and principals can take on these responsibilities and use human and financial resources wisely (Chapman et al. 2002).

Management 'is a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilization of organizational resources in order to achieve organizational goals,' and it has interpersonal relationships based on expertise and autonomy (Sapre 2002). When it comes to SBM in the context of decentralisation, organisational goals imply goals shared at the school level. Yet, Hallinger and Kantamara (2000) argue that the reforms, the implementation of which has been difficult, long and uncertain, even in their countries of origin, i.e. the West, did and will find an even more tentative welcome in countries where hierarchical social and organisational cultures are embedded. According to Hallinger and Kantamara (2000), the underlying values and assumptions of the global and modern reforms referred to above run counter to the traditional cultural norms of these countries. Similarly, SBM is, without doubt, a radical challenge for both stakeholders at the school level and government administrators.

It may be too early to examine if SBM has achieved the respective reform objectives of the cited Asian countries. A number of measures were successfully carried out, but others failed. The third section of this paper, focusing on SBM in Cambodia, provides an overview of its reforms and analyses the local responses to the implementation of these reforms.

3. School-based management in Cambodia

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia guarantees nine years of free basic education. However, compared to other Asian countries, the formal education in Cambodia is faced with more impediments to consistent success.[2] School enrolment is still low, especially at the lower secondary level (Table 1). This means that while

primary school intake is currently not a challenging situation, a considerable number of pupils drop out before the completion of their primary education.

Table 1. Net enrolment rate at primary and lower secondary levels, both sexes（%）

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Primary	86.4	92.0	‥	‥	97.4	‥	‥	98.3	98.3	98.2	‥	98.2	98.3	98.4	‥
Lower secondary	12.9	13.5	16.2	19.5	‥	24.2	28.4	30.4	32.4	33.2	‥	34.7	‥	40.1	‥

Source: Data Centre, UNESCO Institute for Statistics（2015）.

Table 2 shows the current situation regarding the primary school enrolment and completion in Cambodia. Compared to some neighbouring countries in East Asia and the Pacific region, the country's survival rate up to the last grade of primary education is low and far behind the regional average.

Table 2. Survival rate up to the last grade of primary education, both sexes（%）

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cambodia	‥	54.7	63.6	55.0	53.5	56.9	55.1	54.5	54.5	‥	‥	61.3	65.9	‥	‥
East Asia and the Pacific	85.2	87.8	90.4	90.2	89.9	89.5	88.8	89.4	90.0	91.7	92.6	92.0	92.2	‥	‥

Source: Data Centre, UNESCO Institute for Statistics（2015）.

The decentralisation of education in Cambodia is one of the three policy objectives for achieving education for all（EFA）by 2015, following the UNESCO guidelines.[3] The operational autonomy of schools is included in this objective.[4] To promote autonomous school management, the government started the provision of school operational budgets in 2000.[5] Each school has been given autonomy over how to use its budget for its own expenses, such as the maintenance of its buildings and the purchase of educational equipment. The school receives funding in exchange for its annual school development and monthly expenditure plans, which have to be submitted to the district and provincial education offices.

To guarantee school autonomy and establish close links among all the educational actors at the school level, every primary and secondary school is required to create a School Support Committee（SSC）. Despite the SSC's wide-ranging responsibilities,

'collaboration' is one of its key areas of focus. Some specifics include the following SSC-determined priorities for in-school personnel (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport [MoEYS] 2012, 1-2, brackets added):

- collaborate and be responsible for school governance, arrangement, management, and budget utilisation, including revenues from the school's resource center in cases where the school has a resource center;
- participate in school strategic planning, school action plan preparation, project implementation and implementation of the action plan;
- collaborate in leading an information campaign on the advantages and necessity of a quality education and educational opportunities for children in their respective communities;
- collaborate in motivating students who finish an education level to continue to the next level and encourage those who drop out to return to school;
- collaborate in leading orientations with parents to avoid child labour;
- collaborate in [the] movement of [the] follow-up work of children's learning and school attendance by parents and encourage students to have self-learning activities;
- mobilise non-state providers and community members to support the overall development, protection and operation of the school building and other facilities and equipment;
- facilitate learning and teaching approaches of students and teachers;
- collaborate in strengthening school discipline, students' morals and ethics; consider measures for school safety;
- collaborate in leading, arranging, and managing basic skills training activities and elective vocational education;
- collaborate in student data management regarding the relative affluence or poverty of students' families and students' vulnerability to discontinuing school, given their socio-economic status; [and]
- interact with local authorities and specialised institutions in the neighbourhood or community.

Concerning its membership, a typical SSC includes villagers, the village head, the commune chief, the school principal, elders, the pagoda committee leader, monks, teachers, the Village Development Committee representative, the women's group leader

and students (Nguon 2011). Students are only included in the committees for lower secondary schools. All members should be elected, with their participation mandated for one school year.

A standard SSC has five members for a small-sized school, seven for a medium-sized school and nine for a large-sized school (MoEYS 2012). The SSC members are usually elected to fill the following positions: chairperson, vice chairperson, accountant, cashier and secretary; for the medium-sized and large-sized schools, the other two and four individuals, respectively. The SSC members must be qualified individuals with leadership qualities, a deep sense of responsibility and skills in solving problems and making decisions. Additionally, it would be ideal for them to be competent managers who have excellent communication skills and a strong commitment to education (MoEYS 2012).

Having an SSC per school is not mandatory. However, 88% of the schools in Cambodia have either an SSC or an alternative association (Nguon 2011). The schools located in rural and remote areas tend to have SSCs, which means that the need for and also the spirit of local support in rural schools are greater than they are in urban schools.

At the inception of the SSCs in the early 2000s, they were mostly mere financial contributors to schools. Today, SSCs are increasingly becoming key stakeholders in the planning and support of school development activities (MoEYS and UNICEF 2005). However, a series of studies by Shoraku (2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) revealed that the people's support for their local schools through SSCs had not achieved much success. The studies indicate that the Cambodians understand their participation in the form of contributing money to the schools and attending the school ceremonies, but they are not involved in educational matters related to school governance. Furthermore, the studies suggest that collaboration among the communities, teachers and local governments has not been achieved, undermining the main rationale for SBM reforms in Cambodia.

The reasons for this failure of the local participation (via the SSC system) to improve student retention and attain success have not yet been explored in detail. Unless a thorough understanding of any reason for this failure is developed, the school autonomy and close links among the educational actors at the school level via the SSC system will remain unrealised. In this regard, the findings of the earlier studies suggest that further research is required from the perspectives of the educational actors at the school level. Therefore, to examine the behaviours and opinions of the people involved

in SSCs, the field research on the local response to the SBM reforms in Cambodia was conducted in September 2013.

4. Research in primary schools in Cambodia

As stated in the second section of this paper, management has interpersonal relationships and requires effective utilisation of limited resources so as to achieve organisational goals. Therefore, the research questions were set to be as follows. 1) How do the key stakeholders at the school level relate their roles to the solutions to the challenges in their schools? 2) How do the key stakeholders at the school level understand their roles in school-based management? 3) How do the key stakeholders at the school level recognise the need for mutual cooperation to solve the challenges in their schools?

Table 3. List of the informants

Informant No.	Category	School initials	Years in charge*	Educational Level	Sex	Age (Year of birth)
1	School principal	PM	3	Grade 12	Male	44 (1969)
2	School principal	PT	1	Grade 7	Female	34 (1979)
3	Educational officer (regional)	PT	27	Grade 12	Female	45 (1968)
4	Educational officer (regional)	−	4	M.A.	Male	−
5	Village head & school commitee member (grandparent)**	PT	10	Grade 5	Male	62 (1952)
6	School commitee & pagoda commitee member (grandparent)**	PT	10	Grade 6	Male	69 (1948)
7	Teacher, vice principal & school commitee member	PT	33	Grade 12	Female	55 (1958)
8	Non-commitee member (parent)	−	−	Grade 12	Male	41 (1972)
9	School commitee member (parent)	PM	3	Grade 7	Male	60 (1953)
10	Teacher & school commitee member	PM	28	Grade 7	Male	44 (1969)
11	Educational officer (central)	−	13	M.A.	Male	46 (1967)
12	Educational officer (central)	−	−	M.A.	Male	32 (1981)

*This means the number of years that the informants have held their respective positions.

**Many of the families in Cambodia, especially in rural areas, are more than two-generation families, which means children live also with their grandparents, and the grandparents play much the same roles as children's parents.

This field research was conducted by the authors. Individual and semi-structured interviews were used as the main research method, along with some data collection. Two public primary schools were chosen as the research sites. Both schools are located in the Koh Thom District of Kandal Province. Kandal Province is in the southeast side of Cambodia and surrounds the country's capital, Phnom Penh Municipality.

Table 3 gives the list of the informants for this field research; some are the regional and central government officers, while the others are the educational stakeholders in the primary schools (i.e., SSC members, teachers and school principals, local leaders). The SSC members were chosen for the interview by the school principals after discussing potential selections with the researchers. After obtaining permission from the interviewees, all the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

5. Collaboration in local primary schools in Cambodia

5.1. Stakeholders' roles in addressing school-related challenges

5.1.1. Expected roles in the community

Each stakeholder at the school level has a different perspective on his or her involvement in the challenges and issues encountered by the local school (Shoraku 2008b). Community members, especially parents, recognise their lesser role than that of teachers with respect to how a school is managed; they understand that teachers should serve an important function in determining a school's direction.

To analyse whether the interviewees share any ideas about the problems faced by their schools, one of the questions is 'What is the most serious problem that you are concerned about in this school?' Below is the answer of Teacher No. 7:

> I am concerned about the buildings. The buildings are too old. They are almost falling down when rain and strong storms come. [...] I want to ask for some help from an organisation [i.e., a non-government organisation] to rebuild or maintain the buildings. [...] I asked for some help from the community. However, I don't know whether I can get any help from the community.

Teacher No. 7 is a 33-year-old female who teaches at PT Primary School. She is also the vice principal and an SSC member. Worried about the school buildings' dilapidated state, she is thinking of requesting for any support from a non-government

organisation（NGO）. Many of the school buildings in Cambodia, especially those in rural and remote areas, were built of wood with corrugated iron roofs in the late 1970s and 1980s. In many cases, international organisations and NGOs support the construction of schools, but they let the local communities decide on whether and when to repair their buildings. In turn, the school principals, vice principals and local leaders ask for financial contributions from the communities that use the schools. The following quote indicates that communities are expected to make both financial and labour contributions for the building maintenance:

> Interviewer: The school does not expect much from the community?
> Parent No. 8: From the community, the school needs money for the building and something else. Money that is like charity. And manual labour to help with the building. And helping together for the building.

However, the following comments address the lack of financial resources faced by many communities:

> Teacher No. 7: Teachers ask students to talk with their parents about the buildings. But I already know that [the] people are also poor. This kind of solicitation is not working.

> SSC Member No. 6: People in this area are poor. I really want the community to help me for the school. But there are social problems. They still have other issues to worry about.

The preceding quotes are excerpts from interviews with Teacher No. 7 and with an SSC Member No. 6 at the PT Primary School, who is also in charge of the pagoda committee. Pagoda committees in Cambodia are traditional grassroots organisations that practise the Buddha's teachings and promote the people's mutual self-help activities. This SSC member understands （as does Teacher No. 7） that the school needs support from the community, but the local people are poor. He reluctantly realises that these people are coping with other issues that are more serious than the maintenance of the school building.

5.1.2. Expected roles of the principal

Teacher No. 10: I want the principal to have good relationships with [the] community. [...] If so, whenever I tell the principal about a problem, the community helps.

Teacher No. 10 is a 28-year-old male who teaches at PM Primary School. He is concerned about the security of the school. On weekends or holidays when few teachers are present, as well as after school hours, juveniles enter the schoolyard and the school itself, breaking things and other school equipment. Teacher No. 10 usually asks the community for help in preventing damage to the school. This teacher understands that the principal needs to maintain effective contact with the community in order for the school to obtain the community's cooperation in this endeavour. If the principal establishes good relations with the community, Teacher No. 10 and his co-teachers can trust the principal to enlist the community's help when it is needed.

The following excerpt from the interview with an SSC member also suggests that principals have the primary leadership role in the operation of their schools:

SSC Member No. 5: Before, I had full support from the previous principal. The previous principal gave me every plan and the information to implement it. [...] The previous principal liked me and supported me very much. [...] I need cooperation from the current principal. I cannot do anything without the current principal.

The interviewee quoted above has 10 years of experience as an SSC member at PT Primary School. During this period, he has also been a village head. The SSC head at PT Primary School is also the District Education Office head, whose assistant is the school principal. The village head (SSC Member No. 5) occupies the third most influential position. While the previous school principal was very supportive and provided a lot of information that he could pass along to the community, he now requires the current school principal to do the same:

SSC Member No. 5: I really need discussions with and permission from the principal concerning whether or not he accepts [my suggestion to fill the pond]. [...] I don't have discussions about these kinds of things with the principal.

The phrase 'these kinds of things' specifically refers to the pond near the school. SSC Member No. 5 wants an organisation to help the school fill the pond since it poses a hazard for students（who could sink into what's left of the pond）. He is aware that he needs to ask the school principal to bring up this topic in a committee meeting. He says, 'As an SSC member, I don't have the right to do anything without the permission of the school principal and other SSC members'. Although he holds the third highest position in the SSC at PT Primary School, he cannot assume the primary role; he understands that the school principal's leadership is what is needed most.

5.1.3. Expected roles of teachers

Teachers are expected to educate their students first and also talk with them to solve school-related problems. For instance, SSC Member No. 5, who is concerned about the children's safety because they might fall into the leftover mud in the unfilled pond in the school compound, expects teachers to warn their students to avoid hurting themselves. The following excerpt cites the expectation of Parent No. 8 that teachers can talk with students and encourage their parents to make financial contributions for the school's improvement.

> Parent No. 8: I want teachers to motivate students to ask their parents whether they have money or something else for the school. [...] I want teachers to encourage students to tell their parents that the building is old so that parents can donate money to maintain the buildings.

An SSC member at PM Primary School subtly expresses his disappointment that school teachers are not quite helpful:

> SSC Member No. 9: I do not expect much from the teachers. They help with charity when we have fundraising events. They also join other ceremonies for the school.

SSC Member No. 9 recognises that the SSC's roles cover a wide range of activities related to educating children, such as supporting their admission to the school. These activities require closer cooperation between the SSC and the teachers. However, the preceding interview excerpts suggest that the teachers at PM Primary School cannot be relied on to facilitate such collaboration.

It will be pointed out that there is a lack of communication among the key stakeholders at the school level, with regard to their respective roles to the solutions to the challenges in their schools. They seem to be conscious about similar challenges in their schools, but do not share awareness of these issues. On one hand, the school principals and classroom teachers raise the issues such as school building maintenance, and they consider that help from the communities is required. On the other hand, the communities assume that the school side, especially the principals take an initial action, but knowing communication among the key stakeholders not coming about, the communities do not expect much from the school side.

5.2. People's mutual collaboration

As the SSC's responsibilities show, 'collaboration' is one of its main components. The following quote from the interview with SSC Member No. 5 indicates the necessity for mutual cooperation among the stakeholders at PM Primary School. As previously mentioned, as the village head and also an SSC member for 10 years, he is acutely aware of the importance of collaboration for the school's improvement.

SSC Member No. 5: What I really need is the cooperation [among] the principal, teachers and [the] SSC. This is because without [their] permission, we can't do anything.

The following interview with SSC Member No.9 addresses that the SSC can play a key role for collaboration between the community and the school side including teachers and the principal for the school's improvement.

SSC Member No. 9: The SSC is very important for the school. Whenever the SSC is not performing well, nobody trusts the school, and the school also does not perform well. The SSC members are elected by the local authorities and the school [for example, the village heads and the school principal]. That is why when the school is improved, a good relationship exists between the SSC and the school.

School Principal No. 1: Currently, the community has little to do with the school problems. [...] I need full support from the community because the school needs to be closely connected to the community. [...] The school should be open to the community.

The preceding quotes suggest that SSC Member No. 9 and School Principal No. 1 understand that mutual cooperation between schools (including the principals and the teachers) and communities is quite important. Both sides recognise that schools face many challenges for improvement. However, as inferred from the quotes, the relationship between the SSC and the school teachers at PM Primary School is not working well. It is assumed that the SSC and the school principal, as well as the teachers, do not consider each other partners; they do not regard each other as having the necessary resources or knowledge to resolve the school issues.

Similarly, SSC Member No. 6 and School Principal No. 2 at PT Primary School do not express mutually favourable thoughts. The following excerpts from their interviews imply that the SSC at this school only plays a peripheral role in the school's leadership:

SSC Member No. 6: The school principal is not really committed to the activities of the SSC. The school principal needs the SSC just for the opening ceremonies and other kinds of events, like fundraising events. That is why the SSC is not really important for the school and its principal.

School Principal No. 2: The problems are not solved much by the SSC. But they help the school by providing books and pens.

Moreover, the quote below suggests that the government should be one of the important stakeholders in the process of collaboration.

School Principal No. 2: The community just helps the school based on doing what they can. The government helps the school more. [...] [However,] I have to promote the charity events to collect more money because the money that the government provides us is not enough – it is just a small amount.

It seems that the stakeholders at the school level recognise the need for mutual cooperation in ideal, but in reality, they are aware that a lack of their communication prevents it from working.

６．Conclusions and some implications

The findings in the previous section suggest that SBM in a country such as

Cambodia faces many challenges in encouraging a diverse group of stakeholders, such as SSC members, the village heads and the pagoda committee members, to participate in supporting ideal schools. This section analyses some of the reasons behind these results.

One of the clear findings of the field research is that most of the educational stakeholders at the school level are not motivated enough to participate in school management. Among these stakeholders, only a few are aware of the SSC's responsibilities as set by the central ministry. The harmonisation required for collaboration and involvement in school governance does not yet exist.

Engel and Rose (2011) analyse some of the reasons for this and conclude that the lack of concordance on this matter is partly because of certain social and traditional customs in Cambodia. A typical characteristic of the local communities, especially in rural and remote areas, is their heavily hierarchical and bureaucratic system. The community members are socialised to accept any order given by their leaders without any question or criticism (Engel and Rose 2011). This rationale is understandable.

On the other hand, the present study finds that both the SSC members and the teachers concede that the 'other side' does not or is unable to play its expected role in school management. From the perspective of the educational stakeholders at the school level, the people in the community often have difficulty managing their individual economic situations (that is, they endure poverty and have few leftover resources); therefore, they are less engaged with school-related concerns. On another level, the SSC members interviewed are often waiting for someone else's leadership to establish mutual agreement among the diverse stakeholders in a given school, and they understand that this consensus should be primarily conceived and supported by the school principals.

A rationale for the SBM in many Asian countries is that the educational stakeholders at the school level understand the students' learning needs more than the central governments do and can therefore provide more appropriate educational services for the children under their watch. Nevertheless, the present research findings suggest that whether or not this rationale is applicable to Cambodia's case is not the issue. The question is whether the stakeholders at the school and community levels have the capacity to develop mutual cooperation.

The village heads, pagoda committee members and parents elected as SSC members have their thoughts about how the schools should be improved. They need avenues to be made available for them where they can comfortably discuss their ideas.

The key persons in this endeavour will be the school principals, given that the research findings point out the importance of their leadership.

The Cambodian government is accelerating the delegation of decision making in school management. It does attempt to strengthen the financial autonomy of schools as a matter of course but does not pay close attention to the development of their capacity to provide education. The demand-side factors need to be taken into greater account, and any available incentives should be implemented for school principals to become more responsive and accountable to the community's expectations about school improvements. In Cambodia, as well as in other Asian countries, school principals need to acquire administration and management skills on the job; they currently lack suitable training opportunities. Many Asian nations have been recruiting young teachers and providing incentives for them to teach in underserved and isolated areas.[6] In addition to the expansion of the supply of teachers, skills development (especially managerial and leadership skills) is required for school principals.

The field research for this study was conducted only at the public primary schools located in once district. Cambodia's education and school administrative system is that public primary schools come under the jurisdiction of district governments, and therefore, it cannot be denied the existence possibility of a limitation of this study that the research findings may be valid only for the cases of the schools and communities under research. In order to make the findings of this study more valid, a further research is required by expanding the sample size both in the number of informants and geographical locations. Furthermore, more detailed research on the government side factors should be conducted. This study pointed out the implications that the leadership of school principals and some incentives for them are necessary, and in order to investigate any guidelines, any measures by the government with regard to school principals should be explored.

Notes

[1] School-based management is sometimes called *site-based management, site-based decision making and self-managing school.* This paper collectively uses the term *school-based management* for all of these concepts.

[2] This constitution was enacted in 1993 and revised in 1999.

[3] The other two are ensuring equitable access to basic education and enabling quality and efficiency improvement (UNESCO 2003).

[4] In Cambodia, the idea of SBM is often expressed as 'school autonomy'.

[5]   Prior to the start of the school budget provisions, schools did not receive funds for operational expenses from the government. Instead, households and communities provided the greatest share of funding to schools, and each household was required to spend a considerable amount of money on education. For example, in 1997, households and communities shared nearly 60% of the financial and other resources devoted to a school (Bray 1999). According to the World Bank's (2005) estimation, in Cambodia, the average household expenditure per primary school child accounted for 26% of non-food spending among the poorest households and around 12% among the richest.

The removal of the school fees aims to reduce the household costs for education and to increase enrolment, especially among the poorest families (World Bank 2005). For example, out of the combined financial resources of households and the government at the primary level, households paid for 55.6% of the educational costs in 2004 compared to 76.9% in 1997 (Bray and Bunly 2005).

[6]   For example, the Cambodian government now allows lower secondary graduates, instead of upper secondary graduates, to be trained as new teachers and assigned to remote areas (Engel and Rose 2011).

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