

Basic Education for Rural Children: Current Facts, Situation and Challenges in Post-Conflict Cambodia

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The research explores a 9-year basic education in Cambodia which responds to the national educational policy of the country. The study was focused on the current situation of the basic education including school enrollment, support, affordability, work contribution of the children for households and perception of parents and children on various aspects of study schools related to the basic education.

It was a comparative study conducted between the two schools namely Kdie Tatam (KT) supported by the State and NGOs and Kbal Samraong (KS) supported by the State only. A field work was conducted in Samraong district of Takeo province, Cambodia where data gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was fundamentally obtained from a household survey with sampled households stratified by poor (PHHs) and non-poor households (NPHHs). The primary data collection methods applied including field observation, key informants interview and focus group discussion of relevant key stakeholders involved.

The research came up with similar key findings of both study schools related to high rate of missing-out, repetition, dropouts and school quit. In both schools, the number of drop-out girls was higher than that of drop-out boys as they had to work out to support their family even at their young age primarily due to their poverty. The children from the NPHHs had more opportunities to attend regular classes due to the financial support of their family. The children from both schools were suffered by the lack of scholarships provided by the State particularly among the PHHs. Furthermore, prolonged civil war and conflicts seriously affect the education development in terms of human resources and physical infrastructure where education is essential for human security. In comparison between the KS and the KT, it was found out that the KS had a better performance in school enrollment; however, it faced lack of support resulting in lack of children support, old buildings, and facilities. The KS' success was due to the availability of experienced teachers who held high commitment in their career. The KT had a better condition in school buildings, facilities and equipment due to extra support from the NGOs. Meanwhile, the KT did not perform well because the external support was very meager for the children who had very huge needs. In addition, the unfavorable school environment including gambling and drinking surrounding the school compound and inappropriate behaviour of the teachers was social problems affecting the children's behavior and quality of education.

A set of recommendations were given to both study schools to improve the performance of the compulsory education by improving the assistance provided to pupils from the PHHs, school structure and facilities, quality of school teachers and planning implications on future school curriculum. This responds to the implementation of the national policy of the basic education for all (EFA) in Cambodia.

Keywords: Basic Education, Education for All (EFA), Rural Education, Education in Post Conflict

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ABBREVIATION

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CMDGs	Cambodian Millennium Development Goals
EFA	Education For All
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoP	Ministry of Planning
NGOs	Non-government Organizations
PAP	Priority Action Program
RoC	Royal Government of Cambodia
UNC	United Nations Charter
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Education Forum

Section 1

1.0 Introduction

Traditional education in Cambodia was handled by local Buddhist pagodas called *Wat* and the monks were the instructors. The students were almost entirely young boys, and the education was limited to memorizing Buddhist chants in Pali (UNESCO-Cambodia, 1998). Political and socio-economic changes have brought to successive reforms of the country's education system. During the period of the French protectorate (1863-1953); an education system based on the French model was inaugurated alongside the traditional system. From the early twentieth century until 1975, the system of mass education operated on the French model which required 13 years (6+4+2+1) of education with 4 or 5 major examinations (MoEYS, 2004).

Notorious Pol Pot genocidal regime (1975-1979) closed all the schools and education was fully terminated to all Cambodians. Until the early 1990s, there were few textbooks, educational materials and facilities. The Vietnamese occupation made teachers into propagandists and propagandists into teachers. Many teachers in the Ministry of Education are rugged survivors who have had minimal, some no, pedagogical training (UNESCO-Cambodia, 1998). In consideration of the country's urgent needs, the Ministry of Education executed a 10-year education system (4+3+3). The structure was then expanded to an 11-year education system (5+3+3) from 1986 to 1996. The Ministry has continued to improve the education system. The curriculum was reformed, new textbooks were developed and new teaching skills were provided to teachers to prepare ground for the introduction of a new 12-year education system (6+3+3) in the 1996-97 school year (MoEYS, 2004).

1.1 Basic Education in Cambodia

The Cambodian education system aims to fully develop children in all aspects of qualities, mentally and physically. To reach the achievement, schools need to accomplish many tasks. Schools are obliged to build in the students the spirit of self-confidence, self-reliance, responsibility, solidarity, national unity and patriotism. Schools must also instill in their students positive attitudes of respecting the law and human rights. Furthermore, schools have responsibilities to nurture children to be good citizens, to live together peacefully, to be able to live up to their responsibilities towards their families' happiness and to contribute to promoting social welfare (MoEYS, 2003-2015).

According to the Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey (2004), the literacy rate at the national level was about 74 percent. The general literacy rate of population in urban areas was about 84 percent. It was higher than that in rural area, (73 percent). The number of children not complete any grade were still high at 11.4 percent in Phnom Penh, 25.6 percent in other urban and 36.1 in the rural (Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, 2004). Only 24 out of 1,000 children who started grade 1 were able to complete upper secondary school of grade 12 (UNDP,1997). In 1996-97, out of the total, 43 percent of children in grade 1 repeated their year and more than 1 million children aged 6-14 years had dropped out or never gone to school (MoEYS, 1996-97).

Responding to the World Declaration of Education For All (EFA), basic education encompasses early childhood development, primary (Grades 1-6) and lower education (Grades 7-9), basic literacy and non- formal education. It aims at making sure that all children are able to complete a full course of basic schooling at least Grade 9. A key objective is to effectively coordinate and integrate schooling (pre-school to lower secondary schooling), literacy, skills training and non-formal education, often very isolated spheres in Cambodia, into a cohesive force for development of the individual and the country (UNESCO-Cambodia, 1998). With its importance of basic education for poverty alleviation, Goal 2 of the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) issued by the United Nations (UN) aims to *achieve universal primary education by 2015* in order to respond to the world's main development challenges (Trocaire, 2000).

Moreover, one of the 9 Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDG)¹: *Achieve universal nine-year basic education* is stated to bring all the children of Cambodians especially the most disadvantaged children, focusing on helping girls, ethnics minority in ethnic areas and communes with high incidence to school and complete at least grade 9 of lower secondary education (World Bank, 2005). Meanwhile, the commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to human development is reflected in the Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2001-2005 (SEDP II), the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS), and the Government's commitment to the localized Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in relation to education and health. The Government's education sector program, led by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), manifests two salient objectives (World Bank, 2006):

- *to achieve universal enrollment and completion of primary education, and increase access to and completion of lower secondary school to move towards universal completion of nine years of basic education; and*
- *to improve the quality of all nine years of basic education.*

In the 1996-97 educational reform, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) has continued to improve the education system by developing new curriculum, textbooks and teaching skills provided to teachers to prepare ground for the introduction of a new 12-year education system. With this system, children have to attend 6 years for primary, 3 years for lower secondary and 3 years for upper secondary levels. The new system has increased the number of learning hours for every grade in the cycle of primary education. One school year lasts 38 learning weeks, with 5 learning days per week, 6 periods of learning per day, and each period of learning lasting 45 minutes. Under the old curriculum, one school year lasted only 32-33 weeks, and pupils attended only 4 hours of learning per day. In consideration of the shortage of classrooms, the Ministry allowed school to teach only 5 periods per day and each period of learning lasted only 40 minutes (MoEYS, 2004).

On the other way, such important scheme, the Priority Action Program (PAP) which was initially established in 2000 plays as a key prioritized policy to reduce both direct and indirect households' expenditures on their children's basic education from 50 percent to sharply 18 percent within the upcoming 5-year period. With this support, children from even the poorest

¹ Cambodia has added one more. Recognizing that one major constraint to development is the continued mine and unexploded ordinance (UXO) contamination in 12 per cent of Cambodian villages, [de-mining](#) was added as the ninth major development goal.

households are also able to get enrolled at school. The key strategy is to increase an average salary of teachers up to 50 percent within the upcoming 5-year period paralleling with the increase of implementation budget for school operations. The strategy is developed to eliminate the extra informal payment of households required by teachers during instruction which is an obstacle for the rural households to send children to school (MoRYS, 2002).

1.2 Basic Education in a Post-Conflict Cambodia

The protracted years of war which disproportionately affected the well-educated citizens of the country, has left Cambodia one of the poorest nations in Asia and left the country with weak institutions and low capacity. The three decades of armed conflict had reserved its most devastating consequences for humans (World Bank, 2002). To a significant degree, this reflects the legacy of a lost decade in the 1970s, in which all formal education ceased and those adults with education (including many teachers) suffered particularly severely from revolutionary violence under the Khmer Rouge (World Bank, 2006). However, the collapse of the Democratic Kampuchea regime was followed by only slow recovery as the education system was rebuilt from scratch under extreme resource constraints from the 1980s onwards.

Cambodia, with the help of the international donor community, has made great strides in revitalizing the education sector. Since 1991, Cambodia has made considerable progress in providing primary schooling opportunities. Enrollment has increased, but quality remains low. With help from the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Credit (SAC) Cambodia has greatly increased spending on education, with a clear priority towards primary education. A full two-thirds of its education budget is directed towards primary education. Great strides have been made at donor coordination and NGO financing makes up a very significant portion of the total.

The main strategies to strengthen quality and management in the Education For All (EFA) context center around the cluster schools, which have proven an effective model because they provide training and capacity building, sustained pedagogical support and facilitate access to funds that go towards recurrent non-salary inputs that improve the quality of schools (World Bank, 2002). The quality improvement grants are the main vehicle in this context for improving quality. They are working well because the schools in this program have experienced unprecedented levels of responsibility and resources, their management has been empowered, and accountability and transparency in financial administration with community participation has become the norm. Schools have become drivers of change within the system, reversing traditional information flows.

Section 2

2.0 Data Source and Survey Design

2.1 Selection of Schools and Respondents

The study schools were selected based on three criteria: (1) the availability of schools for basic education (both primary and lower secondary levels), (2) the schools accessible by rural children (not located in remote or isolated areas) and (3) the two schools with different kinds of financial support. One was from the State only and other one was from both the State and NGOs. Based on the selection criteria of study area, Samroang District of Takeo province², one of the 10 districts, which was purposively selected as the study area, consists of 11 communes including 147 villages.

The two different communes (Trear and Chueng Kourn) within one village for each commune were selected for primary data collection in the study. In this case, two schools were selected: one was Kbal Samroang (KS) primary and lower secondary school supported by the State only located in Trear commune and another was Kdie Tatem (KT) primary and lower secondary school supported by both the State and NGOs situated in Chueng Kourn commune.

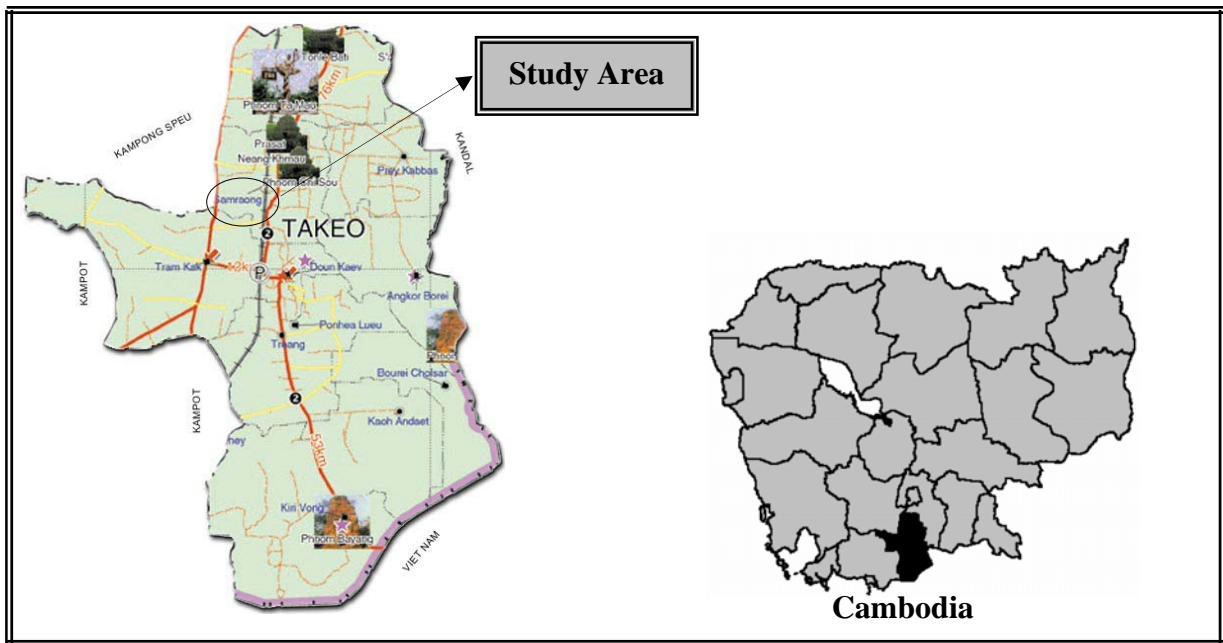
In each school under the study, rural households having their children attending those two schools were included in the population and were further classified into poor and non-poor households. In this respect, a stratified random sampling was applied. After that sampled households for each category of each poor and non-poor households was drawn accordingly using a simple random sampling method. In sum, the sampled households consisted of those both from the poor and the non-poor households which had their children attending of those two schools.

The classification of these two types of households was primarily based on the lists of children from the two schools which were used to prioritize for the government scholarship grants. In addition, the poverty criteria identified by the income level applied through the State and/or NGOs in the area was used. In some cases of no income data was available; a wealth ranking approach to be undertaken by local leaders and people was applied to categorize them into poor and non-poor households. The location study area of this research is shown on Map 2.1.

2.2 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Primary data formed the major source of information for this study including results from reconnaissance survey, observation, questionnaire survey, interview of key informants and group discussions. Secondary data were collected from statistics, government documents, ADB and World Bank collections, annual reports of the schools and district educational office, published materials and from website sources.

² The first-born island in Cambodia lying in the plain region which approximately 3,562.70 sq. km with a total population of 13,413,892 inhabitants. It shares borders with Kandal, Kampot, Kompong Speu provinces and Vietnam. It has a growth rate of 1.2 percent consisting of 400,910 people (47.71%) are male and 439,384 person (52.29%) of female.



Map 2.1: Map of Takeo Province Showing the Study Area

Descriptive analysis was employed for the quantitative data particularly the socio-economic characteristics of respondents, school enrollment rates of the children, late enrollment of the children, competition of the children, educational support for the children, affordability to basic education, expectation of educational attainment level, children' assistance in household work by gender and follow-up of the children by parents.

Weighted average index (WAI) based on five-social scaling technique was applied to establish the perceptions of the respondents on textbooks and schedule, exit examinations, performance of teachers, school facilities and equipments, school management, quality of teachers and educational support. The WAI ranges established for this study are: Very Poor (VL): 0.01-0.20, Poor (L): 0.21-0.40, Moderate (M): 0.41-0.60, Good (H): 0.61-0.80, and Very Good (VH): 0.81-1.00.

Connecting to WAI, T-test was also applied to examine the different or similarity of means of numeric variables among two schools in the two communes. The different or similar means were of the above-mentioned perceptions. In addition, the Rank methodology was used to prioritize the educational support needed by the parents for their children and support needed by the children.

A qualitative analysis was used to sustentative data particularly on school enrollment, support, affordability, assistance of the children for households and the problems identification related to the basic education. It was very helpful to get more understanding on existing situation, performances of the children and their parents, problems and needs of each school, the demands of basic education services, and the effects of basic education to the life of rural people. Techniques to be used included statement analysis from the document to analyze the interrelationship of several factors related to the schools.

Section 3

3.0 Results of the Study

3.1 Profile of Respondents

A total of 80 respondents were involved in this study broken down into 2 schools namely the KT and the KS. The sampled households included 60 percent of male-headed and 40 percent of female-headed households. The average ages of household heads were 44.7 years old while 43.9 years old for those in the KT and 45.0 years old in the KS respectively. Majority of the household heads were illiterate and primary graduates with an average 6 members where 7 members in the KT and 6 members in the KS.

3.2 Annual Income and Expenditures of Households

3.2.1 Annual Household Incomes of Households

As shown in Table 3.1 below, the highest amount of income for both the PHHs and NPHHs within the two study areas was from farming activities and followed by non-farming activities and remittance from their children working in the urban areas. The NPHHs earned higher income than the PHHs by all three main sources. In total, the NPHHs earned annual income of 3,745,250 and the PHHs of 1,358,325 Riels respectively. In this regard, the NPHHs could earn nearly twice higher than the PHHs. The NPHHs in the KT had higher income (3,817,500) than in the KS. In contrast, the PHHs in the KS (1,537,150) earned higher income than in the KT (1,179,500).

Table 3.1: Annual Household Income by Sources

Unit: Million Riels

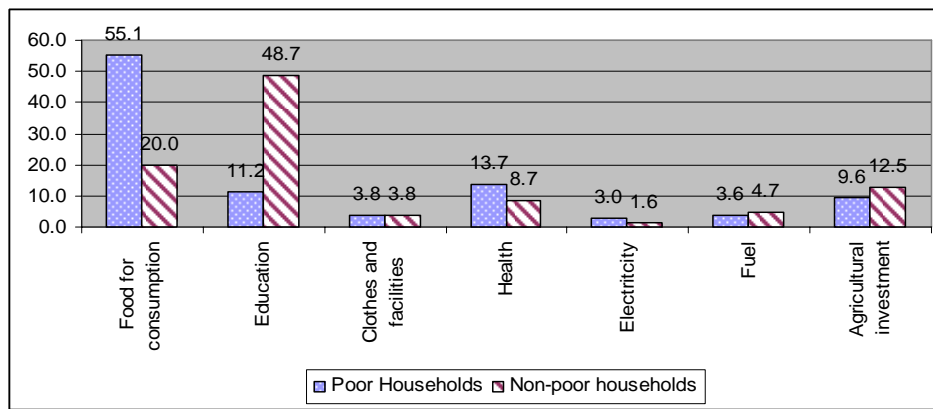
Sources	KT		KS		Total	
	Average		Average		Average	
	PHHs	NPHHs	PHHs	NPHHs	PHHs	NPHHs
Farm	942,000	1,892,500	1,117,500	2,975,000	1,029,750	2,433,750
Non-farm	122,500	1,320,000	394,650	518,000	258,575	919,000
Remittance	115,000	605,000	25,000	180,000	70,000	392,500
Total	1,179,500	3,817,500	1,537,150	3,673,000	1,358,325	3,745,250

Source: Field Survey 2006 PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-Poor Households

3.2.2 Annual Expenditures of Households

a) Annual Expenditures of Households in the KT

Figure 3.1 shows that the expenditure of the PHHs on the food consumption in the KT accounted for 55.1 percent which was twice greater than the NPHHs (20%). In contrast, the NPHHs (48.7%) wished to spend much higher on their children education than the PHHs (11.2%). In addition, agricultural investment and health care services were among the main household expenditures in the two study areas. Clothes and facilities were considered as substantial expenditures.

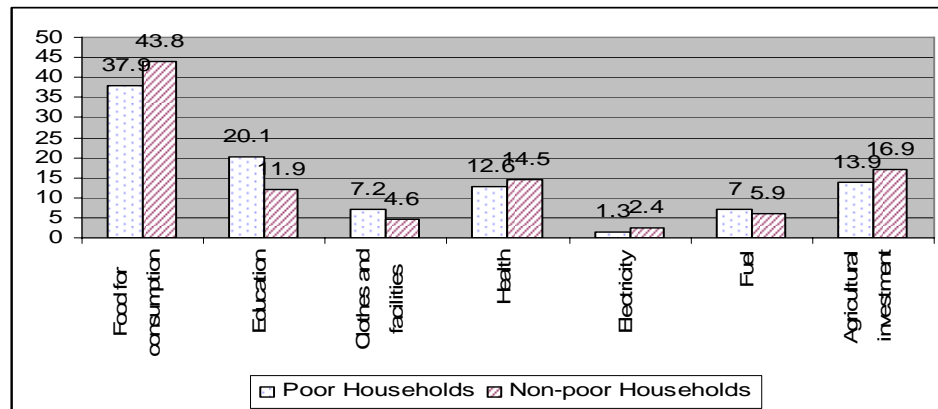


Source: Field Survey 2006

Figure 3.1: Annual Household Expenditures by Family Status

b) Annual Expenditures of Households in the KS

Both the PHHs (37.9%) and NPHHs (43.8) spent much on the food consumption. The PHHs (20.1) tended to spend on their children education almost twice higher than the NPHHs (11.9%). Since the agriculture was an important substantial business in the study areas the PHHs and NPHHs’ investment on agriculture were 16.9 percent and 13.9 percent respectively. Still, the NPHHs (14.5%) paid on health care service higher than the PHHs (12.6%) and the additional expenses were on electricity and fuel. The expenditures on those items of both PHHs and NPHHs were not so different (Figure 3.2).



Source: Field Survey 2006

Figure 3.2: Annual Household Expenditures by Family Status

3.2.3 Household Annual Expenditures on Children’s Education

Education is expensive and it is a long-term investment. Households in the rural areas work very hard to afford to send their children to the school if they have a large number of children. Households have to spend on educational materials, uniforms and equipment, contribution for events, informal payment for teachers, transportation cost and tutorial classes with payment. Due to support of the government under the Priority Action Program (PAP) households do not have to pay for tuition fee.

Table 3.2: Household Yearly Expenditures on Children's Education**Unit: hundred thousands Khmer Riels**

Expenditure	KT		KS		Total	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Educational materials	5,595,000	37.9	2,670,000	28.5	8,265,000	34.2
Uniform and equipment	4,920,000	33.3	3,002,000	32.0	7,922,000	32.8
Contribution for events	833,000	5.6	295,100	3.1	1,128,100	4.7
Extra payment	2,700	0.0	1,500	0.0	4,200	0.0
Transportation	2,790,000	18.9	2,847,000	30.4	5,637,000	23.3
Extra class	6,25,000	4.3	5,64,000	6.0	1,189,000	4.9
Total	14,765,700	100.0	9,379,600	100.0	2,4145,300	100.0
Average	370,931		234,679		302,805	

Source: Field Survey 2006

Table 3.2 shows the annual expenditures for children education of the two study schools. In general, households were responsible for three main annual expenditures: educational materials, uniforms and equipment, and transportation costs. The expenditure on educational materials accounted for 34.2 percent, followed by uniforms and equipment (32.8%) and transportation costs (23.4%). There were some other minor payment for tutorial classes (4.9%) and contribution for events (4.7%). The informal payment required by teachers was so small that it could be counted as zero percentage.

Similarly, the annual expenditures of the children from the KT came first by educational materials (37.9%), uniforms and equipment (33.3%) and transportation costs (18.9%). The proportion of expenditures on contribution for events and tutorial classes were 5.6 percent and 4.3 percent respectively. In contrast, the households of the children from the KS paid a higher rate on uniforms and equipment (32%), followed by transportation costs (30.4%) and educational materials (28.8%). Meanwhile, expenditures on transportation costs and contribution for events were small amount of 6 percent and 3.1 percent respectively. On average, a household spent 302,805 Riels for a child education per year where 370,931 Riels³ in KT and 234,679 Riels in KS. The case of informal payment for teachers was rarely seen since there was a strict measure after the presence of the Priority Action Programs (PAP).

3.3 School Enrollment

3.3.1 School Enrollment of the Children

Efforts to enhance opportunities for basic education have been on the increasing within many developing nations following the 1990 World Conference on Education For All (WCEFA) in Jomtien, Thailand. In the face of political turmoil, financial constraint and social insecurity, Cambodian education faced low enrollment and high level of repetition, drop-out and school quit (MoEYS, 2004). Born in impoverished households, children are not fully provided with education; however, it is the basic needs and rights for all children. In fact, the basic education has been announced as free services for all Cambodians but the distribution between rural and

³ Cambodian Currency which approximately 4,000 Riels equal to one US dollar

urban children are not equally shared. The rural children might face missing-out, repetition, and drop-out and eventually school quit to start work early as their education is a long-term and expensive investment which is beyond affordability of rural households

Table 3.3 indicates that in the two schools under the study areas still faced a high number of missing-out children. The children from the KS were missed out by 7.5 percent whereas 15.5 percent of children from the KT. Those children (missing-out)⁴ who did not enroll even at a primary school might challenge with a serious problem in their future career. They might not be able to find a non-agricultural job and thus they devoted their whole life to getting engaged in agricultural activities to support their family. Also, the missing-out would be very difficult to familiarize with a society and community they were living in.

Table 3.3: Missing-out, Repetition, Drop-out and School Quit of the Children

School	Missing-out		Repetition		Drop-out		School quit	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
KT	6	15.5	22	55.0	23	57.5	23	57.5
KS	3	7.5	19	47.5	20	50.0	24	60.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006

On the other hand, more than half of the households' children at both schools had experienced in class repetition. The repetition seemed to be a common barrier for the children in completing their basic education within 9-year period. Out of total, half (55.0%) of the household respondents' children from the KT and 47.5 percent from the KS repeated their class during their basic education. The most children repeated at the Grade 1 of the primary education or during their exit examinations. The most serious case was drop-out and school quit because those children might not be able to stand for a good career if they could not complete their basic education. More than half of the children (57.5%) dropped out and eventually quit schooling in the KT. In contrast, the number of school quit (60%) in the KS were 3.5 percent more than in the KS.

The missing-out was the worst form, which brings children into a complete illiteracy, as they cannot read and write at all. The main reason caused the children unable to attend any level of the schooling was hunger due to insufficient food. Lack of food was a worry and the hesitation of households to send their children to school. In addition, the malnutrition makes children become smaller than their age and lack of interest in the schooling was also the case. With both factors of the households' poverty and unintelligence of the children due to malnutrition, households prolonged to send their children to school; as a result, they could not get schooling. Also, the need of households for labour was categorized into the second factor. Those children might be served firstly as a non-income labourer by working for housework and after that as child domestic workers for households' supplementary income. The two cases were more severely suffered by children from the KS.

The repetition was an emerging factor, leading to the children's drop-out. The households' respondents revealed that the drop-out of the children was caused by their inability to catch up

⁴ Children who have never gone to school for their whole lives. As the result, they are totally illiterate which can not read and write Khmer at all.

with the lessons. Meanwhile, almost all of them shared the households' work after/during schooling. The unhealthy condition of children also accounted for repetition since they could not attend the class properly. As the nature of the young children, they preferred to play rather than study especially among the NPHHs. In this regard, children from the KS were higher in number of the repetition resulting from no interest in their schooling.

Still, no motivation from both society and community disappoints children from their concentration on their study. The children of respondents did not pay attention to their study because there was no motivation. Surprisingly, the children also might repeat class because they were too physically small to be promoted especially during their first class. Parents also suggested that their children repeat the class because they wanted them to get more strength at the foundation level. Moreover, far-distance from the school made the children spend hours to walk; therefore, they might be late or miss the class, which leads them to repeat the class. The drop-out was the only root cause for a school quit. Almost all the drop-out children have never come back to the school. The study showed that the drop-out and school quit were the similar reasons as all of them did not come back when they dropped out of the school. The respondents' children who dropped out and then quit school caused by the need of labour for working where was higher in the KS.

3.3.2 Late Enrollment of the Children

In Cambodia, children are entitled to attend the first class of primary school at the age of 6 years old; however, it is a big struggle for rural children to do so. Out of the total respondents, 66.3 percent of the children from the two study schools were late in enrollment where 70 percent in the KT and 62.5 percent in the KS. Late enrolment seems to be a common issue for the rural children. In general, the children under the study enrolled late for 1.4 years where 1.5 years in the KT and 1.3 years in the KS (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Enrollment of the Children

Age (years)	KT		KS		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
6-7	25	62.5	21	52.5	46	57.5
8-9	11	27.5	19	47.5	30	37.5
10-11	4	10.0	0	0.0	4	5.0
Total	40	100.0	40	100.0	80	100.0
Average	7.5		7.3		7.4	

Source: Field Survey, 2006

There were several main reasons for late enrollment of children leading to the consequences for children' future study and life. Those who enrolled late would face timidity among their fellow, too old to attend with other younger children or physically strong enough for households' work. They easily dropped out of school if they encountered repetition or poor performance in school. Most of the children living in the rural have been malnourished due to lack of enriched-protein food. Those looked smaller than their age and householders felt insecure to send them to the school. In addition, rural children were not able to be sufficiently provided for breakfast or snack by households causing hunger during the study time. This is the most affected factor leading to the rural children who were sent late by households to school.

3.3.3 Completion of Basic Education

The completion of basic education is required to all the children because the children are able to read and write — or literacy — is a basic skill for people to live and work (MoEYS, 2004). However, almost all children attended the primary school but the number of children completing the basic education was limited. On average, a household had two boys and one girl who could graduate from a lower secondary education. The gender distribution in completing basic education between boy and girl was 1. The difference was caused by the households' perception on the children investment or households' requirement for work to supplement their household income (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Number of the Children Completed Basic Education Level

Number	KT				KS				Total			
	M		F		M		F		M		F	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1-2	18	94.7	4	80.0	11	91.7	6	75.0	29	93.5	10	76.9
3-4	1	5.3	1	20.0	1	8.3	2	25.0	2	6.5	3	23.1
Total	19	100	5	100.0	12	100.0	8	100.0	31	100.0	13	100.0
Average	2		1.1		1.9		0.9		1.9		1.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Poverty of rural households causes the children to have lots of workloads and responsibilities while they are required to attend a school. Almost all the rural children are involved in extra work for both income and non-income activities. In some cases, children have to quit the schooling earlier to earn supplementary income for their family support. The survey provides a comprehensive figure on the completed duration of basic education for the children. Out of the total, less than half of children respondents (48.8%) were definitely or hopefully expected to fulfill within a provided 9-year basic education where 52.5 percent in the KS and 45 percent in the KT.

3.4 Educational Support for the Children

3.4.1 Types of Educational Support Received by the Children

Since rural households were mostly unable to fully afford for their children' education, thus, the external support from various institutions were needed. Without the support most rural children would find their difficulties to strive for the completion of the basic education. In 2003, the government of Cambodia launched the government scholarship program for lower secondary schools to increase the enrollment for the poor. This scheme has been financially and technically supported by various international agencies and organizations with partial contribution from the government of Cambodia. The 30 scholarships are available per year for each school through out the country shared by 18 for girls and 12 for boys. The poor children are able to apply at the end of their Grade 6. The applications have to be completed by both the children and their parents. The committee will enroll them based on their poverty through a direct visit at their home and examine the household background. Children might be provided around 180,000 or 240,000 Riels per year due to the rank of family status.

Table 3.6: Educational Support Received by the Children

(Multiple Answers)

Support	KT				KS				Total			
	PHHs (N=20)		NPHHs (N=20)		PHHs (N=20)		NPHH (N=20)		PHHs (N=40)		NPHHs (N=40)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Scholarship	4	20.0	0	0.0	4	20.0	0	0.0	8	20.0	0	0.0
No Support	16	80.0	20	100.0	16	80.0	20	100.0	32	80.0	40	100.0
Materials	14	70.0	13	65.0	2	10.0	2	10.0	16	40.0	15	37.5
No Support	6	30.0	7	35.0	18	90.0	18	90.0	24	60.0	25	62.5
Transportation	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	5.0	0	0.0
No Support	18	90.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	38	95.0	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

Table 3.6 shows that 4 children (20%) from each school under the study area received the government scholarship. It can be seen that scholarships were exactly given to the children of the PHHs only. The educational materials were provided in a very small scale-just few pens and books once year or any at special occasion with equal provision for both the PHHs and NPHHs children. The children both from the PHHs and NPHHs in the KS had less opportunity to receive the support than another school. The donation of transportation means (bicycles) was too little and only 2 children (10%) from the KT received it; however, children badly needed it as their home was very far from the school.

3.4.2 Sources of Educational Support Received by the Children

In the study area, there were three different sources of supporting agencies: the government, NGOs and individuals. In total, poor children received support from the non-governmental organizations (44%) more than the government (40%) and individuals (16%). In contrast, out of the total, 80 percent of the children from the NPHHs received support from the NGOs and only 13.3 percent from the government and 6.7 percent from the individuals. The educational support from the NGOs and the individuals found in a small scale including books and pens once a year or on some special occasions. The children from the KT were supported from three different sources: the government, the NGOs and the individuals. However, the children from NPHHs were supported only by the NGOs and the individuals, but in the case of scholarship, only children from PHHs were entitled to get it.(Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Sources of Educational Support Received by the Children

(Multiple Answers)

Support	KT (N=19,13)				KS (6,2)				Total (N=25,15)			
	PHH		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Government	4	21.1	0	0	6	100.0	2	100.0	10	40.0	2	13.3
NGOs	11	57.9	12	92.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	44.0	12	80.0
Individuals	4	21.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	16.0	1	6.7
Total	19	100.0	13	100.0	6	100.0	2	100.0	25	100.0	15	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

3.5 Affordability and Working Contribution of the Children

3.5.1 Affordability to Basic Education of Households

Sending children to a school is generally based on the households' affordability in terms of economic status of the households. Parents wish to provide their children with a high education but it would be very heavy responsibility. The PHHs were much constrained in sending their children because their income was very low covering their family subsistence only. Table 3.8 shows that not all children were sent to school from the PHHs and NPHHs and still some of them missed the school. Almost all the children from the NPHHs (95%) and 80 percent from PHHs attended the basic education level. Remarkably, all the NPHHs children (100%) were sent to the basic education in the KT, but it was the lowest among the PHHs (75%). Comparatively, the children from both the PHHs (85%) and NPHHs (90%) in the KS were at similar percentage.

Table 3.8: Affordability to Basic Education of Households

Sending	KT				KS				Total			
	PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
All	15	75.0	20	100.0	17	85.0	18	90.0	32	80.0	38	95.0
Partial	5	25.0	0	0.0	3	15.0	2	10.0	8	20.0	2	5.0
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006 Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

According to discussion among concerning stakeholders, in the community there were some activities, campaigns in raising households' awareness on the education conducted by youth volunteers, local authorities and community development leaders. In addition, Buddhist clergymen played very important roles to remind the parents about the enrollment in the academic year. However, there were still some challenges in sending all the children to schools due to the households' poverty and labour need.

3.5.2 Expectation of Educational Attainment Level of the Children

Table 3.9 shows that there was almost none (2.5%) of children from the NPHHs but 12.5 percent from the PHHs expecting to complete lower than the basic education. The children from NPHHs were much interested in completing the degrees of university (47.5%), upper secondary (40%), vocational training (7.5%) and basic (7.5%). However, those who were from the PHHs wished to completed upper secondary (30%), university (27.5%), vocational training (22.5%) and basic education (7.5%). The completion of basic education by the PHHs children shared the same percentage within the two study schools. The highest percentage of expectation for educational attainment level was university degree (55%) for the NPHHs children in the KS and upper secondary (45%) for the NPHHs in the KT. It was due to their parents who required them to assist their business or start to work early when they were in schooling age.

Table 3.9: Expectation of Educational Attainment Level of the Children

Support	KT				KS				Total			
	PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Lower than compulsory	3	15.0	1	5.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	5	12.5	1	2.5
Basic	1	5.0	1	5.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	3	7.5	1	2.5
Upper Secondary	6	30.0	9	45.0	6	30.0	7	35.0	12	30	16	40.0
University	5	25.0	8	40.0	6	30.0	11	55.0	11	27.5	19	47.5
Vocational training	5	25.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	2	10.0	9	22.5	3	7.5
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006 Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

The PHHs children shared the same percentage in expectation for upper secondary (30%) within the two schools. In the KT the university degree and vocational training shared the same rate of 25 percent. On the other hand, in the KS the PHHs children wished to complete university (30%) higher than vocational training (20%). In fact, both the PHHs and NPHHs children expected to have the high education until university; however, the pupils from the PHHs could not achieve as their wish. Interestingly, the children from the PHHs were much more interested in the non-degree education such as vocational training because they would be able to earn more income as soon as they completed the course once they had specific skill.

3.5.3 Children' Assistance in Household Work by Gender

The rural children have been very actively involved in a daily work of their parents in either paid or unpaid work. The differences were concentrated in terms of family status and gender aspects. Generally, the girls were much more actively engaged in income generation (silk production and dress knitting) and housework whereas the boys engaged in agricultural work due to their physical strength. According to Table 3.10, out of the total, girls from the PHHs (77.5%) paid a higher assistance than those from the NPHHs (62.5%). In contrast, boys from the NPHHs (37.5%) were more active than those from the PHHs (22.5%). In comparison, girls from the PHHs were more helpful than those from the NPHHs for all the two study schools. The highest percentage of assistance contributed by girls was those from the PHHs in the KS (85%). However, the NPHHs girls could contribute higher income for this family since they had capital for investment especially for silk making. The boys could assist mainly in agricultural work because they were physically strong as well as less opportunity for them in unskilled work. In general, the PHHs boys could assist their parents more than those from the NPHHs in all the two study schools.

Table 3.10: Contribution for Households' Work of the Children by Gender

Contribution	KT				KS				Total			
	PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Girl	14	70.0	12	60.0	17	85.0	13	65.0	31	77.5	25	62.5
Boy	6	30.0	8	40.0	3	15.0	7	35.0	9	22.5	15	37.5
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006 Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

3.5.4 Number of Hours of the Children Assistance during School Hours

Since households need children's labour to earn their daily income from agriculture children could not concentrate on their schooling. They sometimes have to quit their class to assist their parents. During the harvesting, the children are very actively involved not only for their household but also for their classes. Table 3.11 reveals that more than half of the children (61.9%) from the PHHs and 62.5 percent for those from the NPHHs were absent from the schools for several days per week to help their households', teachers' and acquaintances' harvests. The percentage of the NPHHs accounted greater and it was due to that fact that their parents had a higher number of paddy fields. The children from the NPHHs (66.7%) in the KS were more involved in agriculture than those from the PHHs (60%) whereas the children from the PHHs in the KT (63.6%) were more active than those from the KS (50%).

Table 3.11: Number of Hours of the Children Assisting without Schooling

(Unit: Day/week)

Day/week	SNSS				SS				Total			
	PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs		PHHs		NPHHs	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1-2	4	36.4	2	50.0	3	30.0	1	33.3	7	33.3	3	37.5
3-4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
More than 4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	10.0	0	0.0	1	4.8	0	0.0
Harvest period	7	63.6	3	50.0	6	60.0	2	66.7	13	61.9	5	62.5

Source: Field Survey, 2006 Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

3.6 Feedback of the Children and Parents on Basic Education

Regarding the assessment of the children and their parents on various aspects of basic education in the study schools, Table 3.12 shows their feedbacks on textbooks and schedule, exit examinations, performance of teachers and school facilities and equipments, school management, quality of teachers and educational support based on the WAI values.

Based on the T-test in Table 3.12, the perception of the parents in the assessment of various aspects of the two study schools are statistically different at 95% confident level except only the view on the availability of textbooks, study period per year, exit exam (at Grade 6) and teachers' attention to the pupils, teacher training, material and transportation support. Their perception on the assessments on other aspects of the two schools is quite similar statistically.

The new textbooks were firstly standardized in 1996/1997 for free distribution to inspire students to better understand their surrounding environment, applied methods of problem-solving and enrichment of their spirit of innovation. The availability of textbooks in the KT was higher than in the KS since the KT had extra support from the local NGOs. However the two schools faced a huge lack of textbooks concerning on mathematics, Khmer literature and English language. Since there are so many public holidays in Cambodia, some households in the KS were dissatisfied due to the interruptions of their children study where some households in the KT thought it was a common problem due to the national and traditional ceremonies of the state. The perception on no exit exam (Grade 6) varied owing to that fact that the parents from the KT were more concerned more on their children promotion than on

the quality as the parents from the KS did. The teachers in the KT received a better pedagogical training and qualification but they paid less attention to their children since they were young and inexperienced. Since the KT had external support, the number of children who received educational materials and transportation were higher than that in the KS.

Table 3.12: Assessment of Parents on Various Aspects of Study Schools

Opinions	KT		KS		T-test
	WAI	OA	WAI	OA	
1.Textbooks and Schedule					
Textbooks' contents	0.62	G	0.63	G	0.543
Availably of textbooks	0.68	G	0.61	G	0.004**
Subjects of learning at school	0.56	M	0.60	M	0.943
Study period (year)	0.47	M	0.28	P	0.000**
2.Exit Examinations					
No exit exam (Grade 6)	0.32	P	0.37	P	0.000**
Exit exam (Grade 9)	0.57	M	0.66	G	0.100
3.Performance of Teachers					
Teachers' attention	0.50	M	0.60	M	0.001**
Daily exercises	0.52	M	0.63	G	0.053
Contact with households	0.37	P	0.46	P	0.151
4.School Facilities and Equipments					
School building	0.58	M	0.43	M	0.820
Library	0.35	P	0.32	P	0.783
Sport and recreation	0.60	M	0.55	M	0.194
Canteen	0.36	P	0.35	P	0.196
School furniture	0.69	G	0.68	G	0.058
Visual Aids	0.52	M	0.49	M	0.914
5.School Management					
School service	0.70	G	0.77	G	0.135
School Administration	0.69	G	0.74	G	0.501
6. Quality of Teachers					
Teacher quality	0.59	M	0.62	G	0.880
Teacher training	0.52	M	0.32	P	0.011*
7. Educational Support					
Scholarship	0.58	M	0.59	M	0.429
Materials	0.64	G	0.27	P	0.035*
Transportation	0.46	M	0.28	P	0.003**

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Notes: VG= Very Good, G= Good, M= Moderate, P= Poor, VP= Very Poor, WAI= Weight Average Index, OA= Overall Assessment

(*) Significant at 95% level of confidence, (**) Significant at 99% level of confidence

3.7 Follow-up the Children by their Parents

Parents in the rural areas do not pay much attention on their children's education by following up their education because they are very busy with their agricultural work. Table 3.13 shows the respondents from both the PHHs and NPHHs were not worried too much about their

children's schooling. Out of the total, 81.2 percent from the PHHs and 62.5 percent from the NPHHs were not worried about their children's education because they were apparently illiterate and poor. However, there were fewer households who paid more attention on their children's education by study records, homework/exercise, communication with school and asking their classmates. The NPHHs had a better performance than those of the poor households in all cases. The study records were used to follow up their children by the NPHHs (15%) and only 5 percent by the PHHs. Still, the PHHs (1.3%) had a lower rate in checking their children homework. The direct communication to the school similarly conducted by both types of households. In addition, the NPHHs (12.5%) got more information from their children than those from the poor household (10%).

Table 3.13: Follow-up of Pupils by Parents

Follow-up	(Multiple Answers)											
	KT				KS				Total			
	PHHs (N=40)		NPHHs (N=40)		PHHs (N=40)		NPHHs (N=40)		PHHs (N=80)		NPHHs (N=80)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Study record	1	2.5	5	12.5	3	7.5	7	17.5	4	5.0	12	15.0
Homework/exercise	0	0.0	2	5.0	1	2.5	4	10.0	1	1.3	6	7.5
Communication with school	0	0.0	1	2.5	2	5.0	1	2.5	2	2.5	2	2.5
Asking classmates	3	7.5	4	10.0	5	12.5	6	15.0	8	10.0	10	12.5
No worry	36	90.0	28	70.0	29	72.5	22	55.0	65	81.2	50	62.5
Total	40	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	80	100.0	80	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Note: PHHs = Poor Households NPHHs = Non-poor Households

3. 8 Assessment on the Ability to Work after Basic Education

The children from the two schools were similarly assessed that few of them could find work after their basic education completion (KT = 35% and KS = 37.5). Working seemed to be one of the most important responsibilities but they are entitled to go to school during their ages. Majority of the rural children, especially girls, sought employment before/after their basic education graduation. The knowledge they had earned from school might not be able to get a skilled work since basic education enables them just to read and write Khmer language. Even if 36.3% in total, children expected to be able to seek work after basic education completion but most of the employment was unskilled work such as construction work for boys and garment work, home servant and self business at home for girls (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14: Assessment on the Ability to Work after Basic Education Completion

Work	KT		KS		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Yes	14	35.0	15	37.5	29	36.3
No	26	65.0	25	62.5	51	63.7
Total	40	100.0	40	100.0	80	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006

3.9 Problems and Needs of the Basic Education

The problems were identified based on key findings and the interviews with the educational district officer, school principals and teachers of the two study schools. Apart from those, two group discussions within the study schools were conducted with participation from teachers, commune heads, community leaders, parents and children to gain insight of other problems based on their views. The major problems of these two schools under the study classified from the key findings in this research and from the stockholder's point of view are presented hereunder.

3.9.1 Problems faced by Key Stakeholders to Basic Education

- **Two study schools**

The two schools shared the similar problems on late enrolment, high rates of repetition and dropout, no exit examination (Grade 6), and low rate of basic education completion of the children. In terms of support, the two schools had a very limited number of the government scholarships for the children and insufficient distribution of free textbooks. For instance, support of the educational materials and transportation were insufficiently available and very limited in the KS. The two schools also faced lack of facilities such as no computer and experimental laboratory, poor library conditions, lack of visual aid, and lack of hygienic canteen and toilets. The KS owned old buildings and insufficient library textbooks whereas the KT had inadequate classrooms. In addition, parents from both the PHHs and the NPHHs ignored to follow up their children's education in the two schools.

While the children faced high responsibilities for households' work and income generation, nearly all of them worked after classes or even during study hours, especially in the harvest season. In this concern, the girls engaged in the greater responsibilities to additionally generate income for their family. Meanwhile, the two schools insufficiently received financial support for the school operation and PAP budget as well as lack of the external support. The KS was only supported by the State but the KT received a very limited extra support from the external source. At the same time, the two schools did not have sufficient sport and recreation facilities and activities for the children. Seriously, the KT experienced unfavourable environment around the school including fighting and gambling. This may lead to misconduct by the children.

- **Teachers**

The KT was employed by young and inexperienced teachers whereas the KS was available for old teachers who survived from Pol Pot Regime. The teachers from the two schools had limited educational qualifications, poor quality, lack of professional training and low salary. The teachers in the KS had low communication with the parents of the children whereas the teachers in the KT paid less attention to the children. Moreover, the KT was characterized to have unfavorable settings both physically and morally, with many teachers' habits of gambling and alcoholism which set a favourable role model to the children.

- **Poor (PHHs) and non-poor households (NPHHs)**

The children from the PHHs of the two schools shared the same problems with low financial capacity of their parents to support them to complete basic education, high educational expenditures, low income of their parents and work contribution required by their parents after the class or during their study hours. Separately, the children from the NPHHs in the two schools had the same problems of involvement with their parents' work, business and income generation, a limited/no affordability of their parents in supporting them for higher education and lack of concentration of the children in the class.

3.9.2 Educational Support Needed by the Children and their Parents

- **Educational Supports Needed by the Parents for their Children**

The needs of the rural parents varied due to the living conditions and family status. Table 3.14 shows educational support needs identified by parents for their children. The scholarships were ranked by the parents for children as their most need to keep their children at school. The second rank was the tuition fee because the parents would not be worried about their children payment for the enrolment. The educational materials were not ranked in a high order because the amount for the educational materials so far was too small-just one or two books and pens per year. Meanwhile, an educational loan for a long term with no interest was ranked the last among the four. The parents in both schools under the study preferred to receive the scholarships for their children and did not need to pay for the tuition fee. However, educational materials and educational loans were not much attractive to them because they would like to receive a direct support. In addition, educational support was so far available in a very small scale.

Table 3.15: Educational Supports Needed by the Parents for their Children

Support	KT		KS		Total	
	WAI	Priority	WAI	Priority	WAI	Priority
Tuition fee	0.55	2	0.53	2	0.54	2
Scholarship	0.69	1	0.66	1	0.67	1
Educational loans	0.33	4	0.46	3	0.39	4
Educational materials	0.48	3	0.43	4	0.46	3

Source: Field Survey, 2006

- **Educational Supports Needed by the Children**

Slightly different, children ranked educational materials as the second priority; however, both the children and the parents would prefer the scholarships as their first priority. Also, the children were interested in the educational loans (the third rank) because it would be easier and helpful for them to retain longer at school. The tuition fee, children ranked their fourth priority because it was not too much expensive and not beyond their parents' affordability. Differently, the children from the KT ranked the educational materials as their first priority because this school received the support from the State, NGOs and the individuals. Secondly, it was the scholarship because it would help them a lot if they were supported financially. In

contrast, the children from the KS stated the scholarship as their first and tuition fee was the second priorities, respectively (Table 3.15).

Table 3.16: Educational Supports Needed by the Children

Support	KT		KS		Total	
	WAI	Priority	WAI	Priority	WAI	Priority
Tuition fee	0.48	3	0.50	2	0.36	4
Scholarship	0.60	2	0.66	1	0.63	1
Educational loans	0.40	4	0.48	4	0.44	3
Educational materials	0.70	1	0.49	3	0.50	2

Source: Field Survey, 2006

4. Discussion

4.0 Discussion

Nations recovering from conflict face special challenges. Education, health care, and income-earning needs are enormous, but government institutions responsible for delivering social services and setting economic policy are often weak. In many cases, years of political and economic instability follow major conflict, adding to the initial loss. Recovery in Cambodia has been particularly difficult (World Bank, 2002). The Khmer Rouge regime, in power from 1975-1979, devastated Cambodia's education system. It destroyed much of the education infrastructure and eliminated its key personnel. The successor Government began rebuilding the education system but faced a decade of international isolation, continuing resistance within Cambodia, and hostility from large sections of the population (MoEYS, 2005).

In the present time, Cambodia has made good progress in rebuilding its education system after three decades of conflict and isolation. Enrollments are growing, services and administrations are improving, and large numbers of schools have been rehabilitated (World Bank, 2002). These are, however, not sufficient conditions for improving education outcomes, and significant challenges remain in the financing and management of education in order to realize Cambodia's goal of providing free, universal access to basic education. Education is very important for human being and in 1998 when the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved the education policy paper, it officially recognized as a basic human rights (ADB, 2003).

Based on the findings in Section 3, children from the study schools faced high percentage of missing-out, repetition, drop-out and school quit, late enrollment, low number of the children completed basic education and number of children expecting to complete within 9 years. Without proper education, children would be grown in illiteracy, poverty and eventually they might be living and working out of the society. Moreover, those may find themselves in unsafe and disease-ridden conditions. Due to Asian Development Bank (2001), education helps people build productive lives and cohesive societies. This means getting all children to school and delivering a high quality education. Education and schooling improve the capacities of individuals and the capacity of institutions, and become a catalyst for all the closely interrelated economics, social, cultural, and demographic changes that are defined as national development. Also, basic education can help prevent poverty, sickness and conflict. Learning how to read and write opens the door to so many possibilities: keeping track of sales and purchases in small businesses, increasing knowledge about how to stay healthy and prevent HIV/AIDS, and reducing violence by encouraging understanding and tolerance. Basic education helps individuals reach their full potential as productive members of society (CIDA, 2004).

According to the World Bank (2006), the poverty headcount for 2004 is estimated at 35 percent; that is, 35 percent of the Cambodian population is estimated to have been living under the national poverty line. One in five Cambodians lived under the food poverty line. Poverty was considerably higher in rural areas (39 percent) than urban areas (5 percent in Phnom Penh and 25 percent in other urban areas). It seems to be overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon where approximately 91 percent of the poor lived in the rural areas in 2004. Prescott et al (1997) pointed out that literacy and schooling are important indicators of the

quality of life in its own right, as well as being the key determinant of the poor's ability to take advantage of income-earning opportunities.

Once born in the impoverished rural households, children are not able to attend schooling properly or some of them are not able to attend schooling at all. Without education children will face big challenges and problems in finding work and adapting to the society where they are living in. In addition, the children might be unsecured in their lives since they do not have chance to get knowledge and experience from school. CARE (1999-2006) found out that educated mothers/father are more likely to have healthier children and higher incomes, and studies show that education contributes to the prevention of disease even HIV/AIDS epidemics.

Another serious form of rural children is heavy load and big responsibilities imposed by their poor parents. For the poorest households, basic survival may be a larger priority than education. In the case of severe poverty, children may need to work to earn income for the family by starting to work early. Under the hard condition of households, poor children might be late for the starting points or even not able to get enrolled for their schooling (EFA, 2006). Also, heavy workloads have resulted in repetition, drop-out, and few opportunities to complete schooling. In strong efforts to help those poor children, the Royal Government of Cambodia is committed to achieving the goal of "Education for All" by ensuring equality in the attainment of 9-year basic education for all the children and ensuring access by the children of the poor households to education, especially by improving the quality and number of public education institutions and providing more scholarships to the poor children (Rectangular Strategy, 2004).

The educational support for children especially scholarship is important to keep the children to complete at least Grade 9 which is the minimum requirement for all the children. The Education For Food (EFE) in Bangladesh is an obvious instance known as a unique program to bring all the children even from the poor family for schooling. The program provides a free monthly ration of foodgrains to poor families if the children attend primary school (Ahmed, 2002). Moreover, initiatives of OPTIONS scholarship by World Education with financial support from UNICEF and the United States Department of Labour enable girls at risk of dropping out to remain in primary and lower secondary school.

In poor provinces like Prey Veng, where many families are forced to migrate to escape the impact of persistent floods and drought, the scholarships also help protect girls from being trafficked or sexually exploited (Stark-Merklein, 2005). Still, the children under the study schools had very limited support from both the government and NGOs and the individuals which could not give much help children from the PHHs. Each year, only 30 scholarships (18 girls and 12 boys) are available for the children from the poorest households. Meanwhile, the children from the KS had very limited accessibility to material support and transportation means since the school did not get external support. The support from the State and external agencies under the study schools were meager where the needs of the children were much more than their supporting capacity.

In reality, 70% of teachers were young, fresh and inexperienced graduates who were 39 years or younger (UNESCO-Cambodia, 1998). Most of qualified professionals are not willing to teach in the rural areas where they are little paid and stay in unsafe place. Moreover,

inefficiency and poor quality in education service delivery have incurred at both primary and lower secondary school levels; and weak local management capacity (World Bank, 2005). The teachers of the two study areas were a bit different in their qualification and work commitment. All the teachers in the KT graduated from pedagogical education but majority of them were young and inexperienced in teaching. Obviously, the teachers in the KS were survivors from Pol Pot regime without pedagogical education but they had long year experience in teaching.

In addition, the teachers from the KS had very strong commitment in their careers, resulting in high outcomes for the children' study. However, the KT had a better condition for school buildings, textbooks, library, and visual aids, external support for both the children and school and higher qualification of teachers but the teachers in the KS paid more attention to their teaching, daily exercises for the children. Furthermore, the KS provided a good service especially during the enrollment for new pupils. The children could go on their own to register because they understand that their parents might be very busy with their work. Meanwhile, the KT was characterized to have unfavorable settings both physically and morally, with many teachers' habits of gambling and alcoholism that set bad role models to the pupils.

The public benefits of education areas are also well known. For society, they include greater ability to adopt new technologies, better functioning processes, low fertilities and low crime rates (Carnoy, 1992, Rutter, and Hagell 1998). The environment surrounding the children is very essential to the children' education. There have been so many children suffering by terrible environments (gambling and fighting) where they are living in. Those factors attract the children to participate and not properly attend school leading to repetition, drop-out and eventually school quit. On the other hand, the importance of childcare staff as supports for achieving quality outcomes. Those include formal education (Howes, Smith, and Galinsky, 1995, Ruopp et al 1979), experience in childcare (Kontos 1994, Ruopp et al, 1979) and experience in teaching (Phillips, McCartney, and Scarr 1987). The combinations of those criteria are very significant for teachers to provide children with certified education. The children from KT were suffering from unfavorable environment around the school (fighting and gambling leading to low enrollment, repetition, drop-out and school quit.

Stricken by poverty and limited availability of education support, the attitudes and perception of rural household towards education value is also one of the key problems which cause educational disparity between rural and urban area or boys and girls. Generally, boys have more opportunity for schooling than girls in the rural areas; therefore, boys have more mobility and can travel further than girls. In the terms of budget constraints in the households where money is limited for children's education investment, rural parents prefer to send boys to school and keep girls to help doing housework and other agricultural works. The education is a long-term investment of households where boys are expected to get higher benefits after their graduation in terms of job opportunity.

Section 5

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings from this research, it can be concluded that the school enrollment of the two study schools did not have good performances in the basic education since they had low and late enrolment, high rates of repetition, drop-out and school quit, and a limited number of the basic completion level. This was due to a combined fact that the affordability of the parents was low. At the same time, the availability of support from both the State and the NGOs were meager which could not give much help for the PHHs children. The children from the KS received a very limited support of educational materials and none of them received transportation support (bicycles) due to the absence of external support from NGOs and the individuals. The children from the PHHs especially girls had less chance to have higher education due to the affordability and labour needs for households' supplementary income.

The assistance of the PHHs children was mainly for households and agricultural work whereas the NPHHs were engaged in income generation activities and parents' business. In addition, the children were also interrupted by their parents' need for their labour, poor school services and performance in terms of quality of teachers and teaching facilities. Moreover, the children were not much taken care by their parents to follow up their study. Furthermore, the three - decade civil war and internal conflicts were still a major factor to slow down the educational development since it destroyed both schooling infrastructures and human resource almost completely. Education is the heart of human security and a mechanism to reduce the people poverty since it gives people with comprehensive knowledge and skills.

In comparison, the KS proves a better performance than the KT in terms of late enrollment, repetition and drop-out and completion of the children within 9 years but the children from the KS had a higher percentage in school quit due to the households' poverty. The external support from the NGOs and individuals did not contribute much on the educational development and progress in the study area since the children needs were very huge beyond the capacity of those NGOs could provide them. The better conditions performed by the KS were due to the fact that it was available by old but very long-year experienced teachers. However, they did not have as high qualification as the young teachers in the KT but they had very strong commitment in their career. The most serious form happening in the KT was the inappropriate behaviour of the teachers at school and unfavorable environment around the school for the children. The failure of the KT also might come from the environment surrounding the children. In addition, the higher qualifications of the teachers from the KT might lead to low quality of teaching. They were discouraged by low salary paid by the State therefore the teacher preferred to involve extra work which reduces their teaching quality.

5.2 Recommendations to the Two Study Schools

- **Assistance provided to pupils from the PHHs**

The poverty of the households was one of the main barriers for the PHHs children to complete basic education in the two study schools. Additionally, the support was not sufficiently

available in terms of scholarships and fellowships for children from the PHHs. Regarding the insufficient government scholarship, the two schools should enhance fund-raising and external support for additional scholarships and other support on textbooks, uniform and stationeries for the PHHs in specific. Those could tap from the PAP budget provided by the MoEYS.

- **Improvement of school structure and facilities**

The two schools should improve the canteen to be hygienic and clean toilet facilities for the children by moving their snack sales far from the toilets, if possible, building proper stalls or a hall for the snack sales. In addition, the awareness on health and sanitation should be provided to teachers, children and even sellers. The improvement of the library condition and increase in the availability of textbooks are necessary to attract the children's attendance. As for the KS, it is needed to increase the sufficiency of textbooks in school library due to its huge lack. The improvement of the school library will increase the attendance of the children in this place and will motivate them to have a better performance in their study.

Computer facilities should be made available in the two schools at least for administrative purpose. The enhancement of sport facilities should be improved in the two schools. Seriously, the KT has to monitor school environment to ensure that no gambling and fighting is taken place for unfavorable cases for the children who may want to participate. The school might closely collaborate with the police station for a strict measure to prevent any misbehavior of both teachers and pupils.

- **Enhancement of quality of school teachers**

The two schools should provide technical training on using of new technology in teaching, teaching materials and visual aids particularly for the KS. The attractive teaching methods and delivery would increase children's attendance in the classes. Those teachers from the KT should be encouraged to have higher education as they are still young. The teachers should be considered by the MoEYS on their low salary to provide some incentive so that good teachers will remain in the compulsory education. In addition, the teachers of both schools should improve their communication with the parents of the children by particularly from the PHHs regarding the follow-up assignments, exam results and other problems that may emerge from the pupils. Therefore, a regular meeting at least once a semester should be organized between the teachers and the parents at the school.

- **Planning Implications on Future School Curriculum**

It is envisaged from the research that many children particularly girls from the PHHs started working during their compulsory education to earn income to support their family. The parents of those from the PHHs did not expect their children to have higher education but prefer them to assist their family economically. This means that those pupils will perhaps be engaged in occupation right after their basic education. In this perspective, the school curriculum at this level should include occupational development both from farm and non-farm sectors e.g. sewing, fishing and farming to enhance basic knowledge and skill for their possible job opportunities in future as some of them (particularly from the PHHs) may not afford to go for any further study after completing the compulsory education.

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