



# EDUCATION

GENDER IN EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING  
CAMBODIA GENDER ASSESSMENT

Cover photo:

In the final exam for the high school class of 2014, there were 11 students who received an A score; 5 of them were girls.


**Oet Sreypov (18)** is from Kampong Cham province, and is now studying medicine at the University of Health Sciences. She wants to be a doctor to help her family, because members of her family are often ill, and other Cambodian people too.

**Sambath Vibolroth (18)** is from Phnom Penh, and she will study Architecture at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia. She is aware that few women in Cambodia have pursued a career in this field, but it is her dream to become an architect.

**Chan Kethyapheara (17)** is from Kampong Speu, and will study Economics at the American University of Phnom Penh. She would like to become an economic analyst so she can help develop the Cambodian economy.

**Out Sokphalkun (18)** is from Siem Reap, and will study Business and Economics at the American University of Phnom Penh. She would like to be a businesswomen and economist because she enjoys it, and so that she has the skills to help Cambodia in the context of ASEAN economic integration.

**Yean Sophea (18)** is from Prey Veng province, and she is now studying medicine at the University of Health Sciences. She would like to be a doctor because health is very important for all people.



# 4. EDUCATION

## GENDER IN EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

### POLICY CONTEXT

Cambodia has successfully put in place a supportive legal and policy environment, with specific examples of policies as well as an established institutional structure for gender mainstreaming in the education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sectors at the national level.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia of 1993 (Article 68) and the Law on Education of 2007 (Article 31) recognizes nine years of basic education as the right of every citizen.

Cambodia is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has demonstrated its commitment to eliminate discrimination against girls and women in the education sector in compliance with Article 10.

In response to Education for All and gender equality policies in the education and vocational training sectors, since 2008 the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS), the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) and line ministries have achieved remarkable results in terms of gender mainstreaming in policies and plans in their sectors, including the Education Strategic Plan (2009-2013), the Curriculum Development Master Plan (2010-2014), the Teacher Development Master Plan (2010-2014), the Master Plan for Capacity Development in the Education Sector (2011-2015), the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan (2011-2015), the Policy on Human Resources in the Education Sector (2012), the Teacher Policy (2013), the National Policy of Cambodia Youth Development




(2011), the MoLVT Strategic Plan (2009-2013) and the social marketing strategy: Strategy for Gender Equity in TVET (2014-2018).

▲ There are few female teachers in technical teacher training institutions.

These laws, policies and plans have contributed to the promotion of gender equality in education and vocational training through improved physical infrastructure, better access and opportunities for girls to education and training, better social attitudes and more favourable conditions for the participation of women at all levels across the sectors.

In light of Cambodia's integration into the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, and as intended in the Government's Rectangular Strategy Phase III, the development of high quality, capable human resources, focusing on equality and high standards of work ethics, is crucial to supporting the economic growth and competitiveness of the country, both now and in the future. This is especially important for Cambodia's transition from lower-middle-income country status (to be reached in the near future) to upper-middle-income country status by 2030, and a developed country by 2050, as envisaged by the Royal Government.



Human resource development, especially among youth, will target developing knowledge and know-how, entrepreneurship, skills, creativity and innovation in every sector, particularly science and technology and research and development. Other focus areas will include improving physical health, ethics, a sense of personal responsibility, national conscience and professionalism, with a reliable social safety net and without gender discrimination.

## FINDINGS

### Gender parity in enrolment

- Gender parity in enrolment has been achieved at primary and secondary levels, and progress has been made in tertiary education where the proportion of female students is steadily increasing, from 33.8 percent in 2008, to 35.8 percent in 2009, 37.1 percent in 2010 and 37.6 percent in 2011<sup>1</sup>.
- Gender parity in education is improving, but gaps remain between regions and age groups. Females in rural areas, particularly girls from ethnic minorities, are generally more disadvantaged than others, except at lower secondary level where the net attendance rate for boys (27 percent) is lower than for girls (33 percent)<sup>2</sup>.
- Although improving in younger age groups, low levels of literacy and large gaps between women and men in older age groups remain a major gender issue and development challenge.
- Although slowly increasing, access to preschool remains quite limited and most children enrol late. However, there is gender parity in enrolment at this level.

### Increased overage enrolment and reversed gender dropout

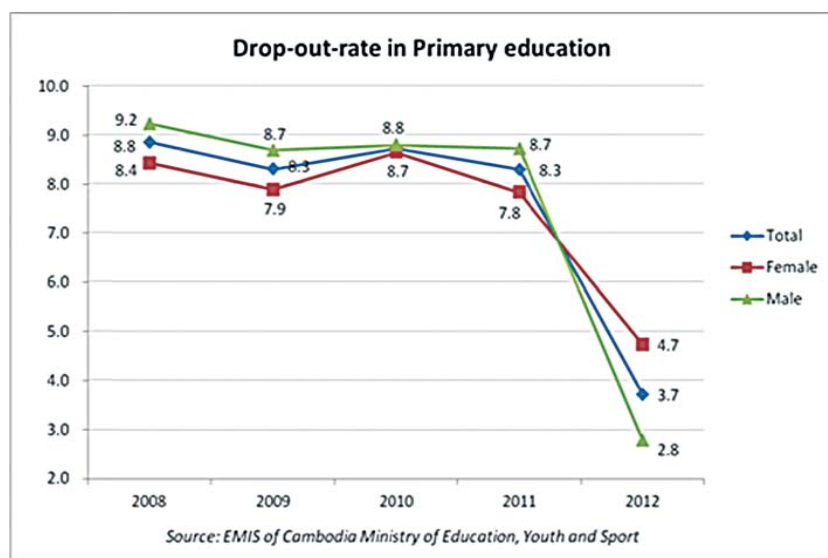
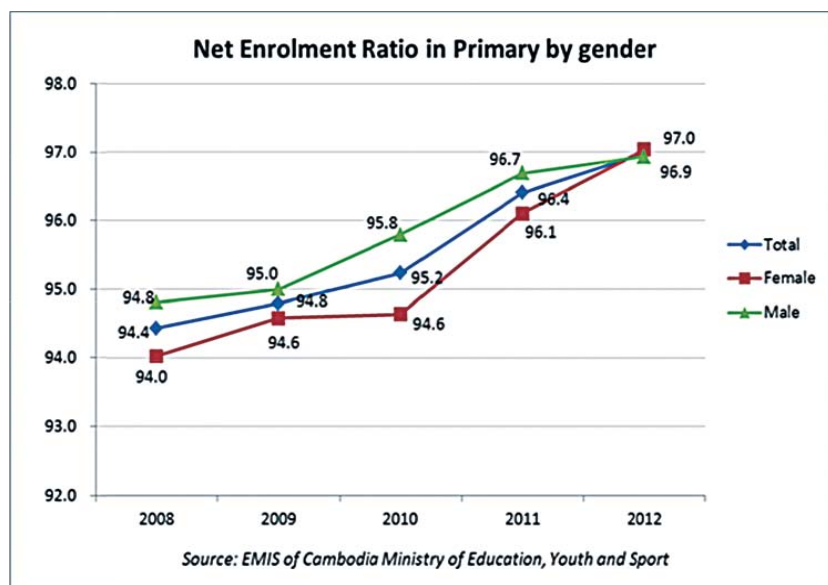
- Overage enrolment in primary school has increased significantly since 2008. This will have negative impacts on subsequent schooling experiences for girls and boys, particularly girls.
- The gender gap in the drop-out rate in 2012 for primary education has been reversed for the first time since 2008<sup>3</sup>, to the disadvantage of girls. The largest dropout happens in Grade 5 for both girls and boys. Boys are more vulnerable than girls to dropping out of school in Grade 5.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Education Management Information System (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Education Management Information System (2012).

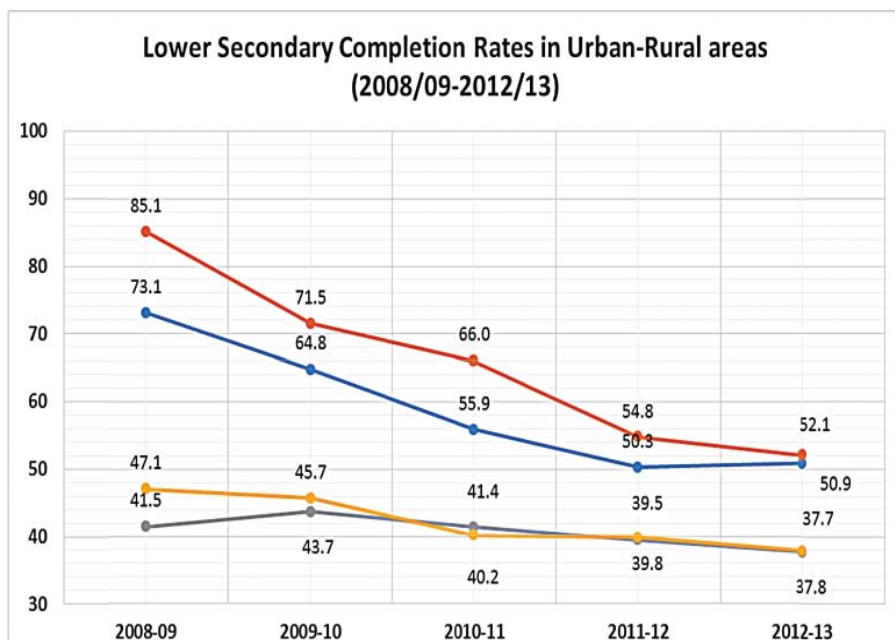
<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Education Management Information System (2008; 2012).

Girls have better chances of completing their primary and lower secondary education than before





- Girls have better chances of completing primary school, than before but with a very mixed picture in the gender gap at provincial level, and between urban and rural areas.
- Girls do better in net enrolment and surpassed boys in gross enrolment in 2012<sup>4</sup> at the lower secondary school level, but drop-out rates generally remain higher than boys.
- Urban boys do better than urban girls in completing lower secondary school, while rural children lag behind urban children, but over time there is no difference between boys and girls.
- Beyond lower secondary, girls' access to education is limited and completion is challenging.



Source: EMIS of Cambodia Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Education Management Information System (2012).

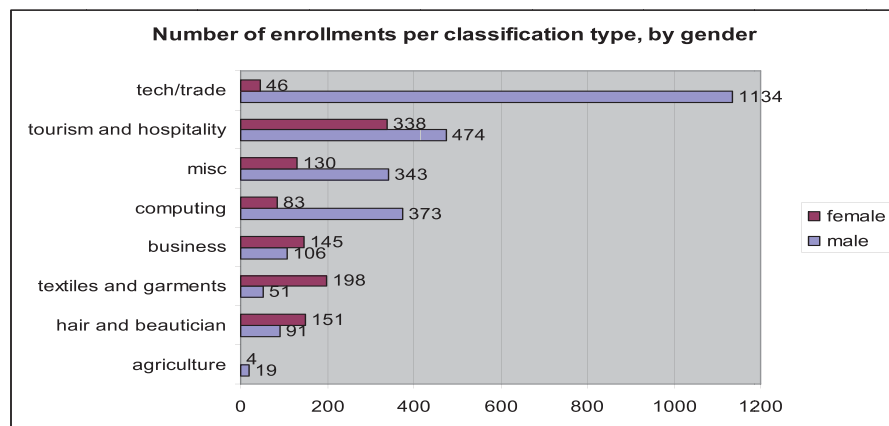


### Significant progress in TVET has been made but girls and women still experience lower employment opportunities and wage discrimination

▲ More young women are attending university than before.

- Women tend to be employed in lower positions and low-skilled jobs, and seldom in management positions.
- Women are mainly concentrated in a few sectors, usually with less social and economic value. Female participation is weak in formal, long-term, high-skilled and high-demand training programs in sectors such as construction and mechanics, where jobs are higher paid and more valued.
- While the participation of girls in public TVET has increased, progress remains limited. Training offered to women is often gender-stereotyped, in skills such as weaving, textiles and garments, beautician and hair-dressing, and handicrafts.
- The number of female teachers and trainers remains low in technical teacher training institutions (TTTI).






Source: MoLVT/ADB (2012) Final Report of the TVET Baseline Survey

## Non-education factors: social, cultural and economic challenges

- Social norms on gender relations remain a major challenge in expanding education and training opportunities for girls and women.
- Illiteracy and low levels of parents' education, particularly in rural areas, continue to be serious obstacles in ensuring children's education, especially for girls.
- Child marriage is still practiced despite the legal age of marriage being 18.
- Violence in the home affects children's continuity in school.
- Opportunity costs of education remain high for poor families.
- Children of women who suffer gender-based violence, girls with disabilities, lesbian girls and transgender persons have higher school absence and drop-out rates due to their personal and family situations and/or bullying from school peers.

## School-level issues

- More attention is needed for child protection issues in schools, particularly for girls to travel safely to and from school, to be free from violence at school, and to have better access to facilities for personal hygiene.

- 
- The quality of teaching and learning is low, in terms of curriculum, textbooks and teachers.
  - Families in rural areas, particularly among ethnic minorities, have limited awareness of the relevance of education and the broader, longer-term benefits for children and families, especially for girls.
  - The impact of scholarship programs on retaining girls (and boys) in school is unclear.
  - School schedules and timetables need to be harmonized with farming seasons and labour needs at the local level.
  - Community and parent engagement in school activities and children's education remains weak.

### Sector policy and institutional capacity issues

- Policies and plans are well established, but there are gaps in implementation at all levels.
- Institutional and human capacity for gender mainstreaming remains weak at sub-national level.
- While basic education is free of charge, it is not yet compulsory and there are concerns related to additional informal costs and opportunity costs for parents.

### Emerging concerns

- Rapid growth of industrial employment opportunities and ASEAN economic integration in 2015, together with increasing materialism in society, will require skilled workers and will absorb young girls and boys into the labour market.
- Disability remains a neglected factor.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Review and reform the legal framework and education sector policies to accelerate gender mainstreaming efforts and to advance gender equality in access to and through education*

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make nine years of basic education compulsory under the law and enact legislative and administrative mechanisms as a priority.</li> </ul>                | National Assembly, MoEYS, MoIn. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There should be special and urgent mechanisms to ensure the quantity and quality of a basic nine-year education for ethnic minority children.</li> </ul> | MoEYS,                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articles 10 and 13 of CEDAW should be included in the school curriculum, from Grade 6 onwards, together with training for teachers.</li> </ul>           | MoEYS, MoWA                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Education Strategic Plan and TVET, and annual action plans and budgets.</li> </ul>          | MoEYS, MoLVT                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate adequate budget and necessary material resources to eliminate all informal fees and direct costs.</li> </ul>                                    | MoEYS                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align education and training sector policies and plans with gender-related policies and strategies of non-education sectors.</li> </ul>                  | MoEYS, MoLVT, LMs               |

### *Strengthen institutional and human capacities to implement and monitor the implementation of policies and plans for gender mainstreaming*

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the roles of the Gender Mainstreaming Action Group of MoEYS and line ministries to support the sub-national level in implementing CEDAW implementation and gender mainstreaming.</li> </ul> | MoEYS, LMs, SNAs |
|---|------------------|



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to promote regular gender training at sub-national level in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA).</li></ul>	MoEYS, MoWA, SNAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Accelerate the implementation of affirmative action (Article 4 of CEDAW) to increase the share of female staff at all levels - administrative as well as school-level leadership.</li></ul>	MoEYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Accelerate the expansion of teacher training with priority on increasing the number of female teachers for secondary education and technical and vocational training.</li></ul>	MoEYS
<b><i>Reinforce gender responsive programming, expand access and improve the quality of education and training for women and girls, with particular attention on women and girls from vulnerable groups</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand the availability of and safe access to equal education, particularly at secondary, technical and vocational training level.</li></ul>	MoWA, MoEYS, MoLVT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Introduce and institutionalize gender-responsive guidance and counselling to provide timely advice and age-appropriate guidance and counselling through specific training for teachers. Expand and strengthen the existing Girls Counselling Program and tracking system.</li></ul>	MoWA, MoEYS,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Diversify provision and types of education and training at secondary, technical and training levels to expand access to and increase relevance of education for girls and women.</li></ul>	MoEYS, MoWA, MoLVT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand literacy and non-formal education programs for women and out-of-school adolescent girls to promote their empowerment through integrated skills training.</li></ul>	MoEYS, MoWA, SNA, MoLVT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand early childhood care and education, and scale up one year of pre-primary education.</li></ul>	MoEYS, MoWA,

- Promote the career guidance/mentorship program to engage women to learn about emerging career opportunities and entrepreneurial routes into non-traditional trades.

MoWA, MoLVT

***Expand advocacy and awareness-raising efforts to challenge social norms and practices that continue to discriminate against girls and women in education and beyond***

- Improve coordination between MoEYS, MoLVT, MoWA and other stakeholders for gender in education and training in their advocacy and awareness-raising efforts.

MoWA, MoLVT,  
MoEYS

- Strengthen School Support Committees and local mechanisms to encourage parents and the community to participate in supporting schools and teachers to promote gender equality in day-to-day teaching and learning activities.

MoWA, MoEYS,  
SNA

- Strengthen cooperation between relevant ministries and the media to influence changes in gender attitudes, particularly in education and vocational training.

MoEYS, MoLVT,  
MoWA, MoIn

- Conduct further research to strengthen the evidence base on gender issues in education, technical and vocational training and a gender-responsive labour market.

MoWA, MoLVT,  
MoEYS



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Cambodia Gender Assessment 2014** was produced under the overall leadership and coordination of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, with support and contributions from Government Line Ministries, Development Partners, and Civil Society. MoWA would like to express its sincere gratitude to all our partners in this collaborative effort.

Our deep appreciation goes to the following groups, who in various ways supported this endeavor:

**The MoWA CGA Working Group** was responsible for the overall process, oversight, and approval of the document. Under the overall leadership of HE Dr Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs, the CGA working group was chaired by HE Khim Chamroeun, Secretary of State, with direct support from HE Keth Sam Ath, MoWA Senior Advisor, HE Kim Siphat, Director General, Mr The Chhunhak, Deputy Director General, Ms Nhean Sochetra, Director of Gender Equality Department; and Ms Te Vouchlim, Director of Department of Planning and Statistics. Inputs for each chapter were provided by members of the CGA Working Group and other relevant officials with technical support from the UNDP/SIDA PGE III team led by Ms Mia Hyun, Senior Policy Advisor to MoWA, supported by other team members including Ms Dy Many, Management Specialist; Mr Pen Bory, Gender Policy and Aid Effectiveness Specialist; Ms Heng Seltik, Women's Economic Empowerment Specialist; Mr Chhuon Thavrih, Gender Budgeting Specialist; and Mr Kim Sopor, Technical Assistant. **The Technical Working Group on Gender** provided a forum for consultation with other stakeholders including line Ministries, Development Partners, and Civil Society. **Peer Reviewers**, including experts from MoWA, Line Ministries, Development Partners and Civil Society, assisted in reviewing the draft documents in their respective area of work. **Communications**, photos, design by *Good Morning Beautiful*.

**Chapter and Policy Brief 4: Education and Vocational Training:** Overall guidance by HE Keng Samvada and HE Im Sithe, Secretaries of State of MoWA. This chapter was drafted by Ms Maki Hayashikawa (UNESCO Paris) and Mr Santosh Khatri (UNESCO Phnom Penh) and sponsored by UNICEF and UNESCO. Inputs provided by HE Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State of MoEYS, Ms Long Nimol, Deputy Director General of MoWA, Ms Nom Bophary, Director of Women and Education Department of MoWA, Mr Tep Oeun, Deputy Director General of TVET of MLVT, Ms Erika Boak (UNICEF), Ms Lisa Kim (UNICEF), Ms Naomi Neijhoft (UNICEF), Mr Nimol Soth (UNESCO) and Ms Ek Sophanna (Plan International).







**Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia**

Trung Morn Street, Phum Dam Nak Thom III

Sangkat Steung Meanchey

Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia

Tel/Fax : (+855) 23 880 737

Email : [mwa@online.com.kh](mailto:mwa@online.com.kh)

Website : [www.mowa.gov.kh](http://www.mowa.gov.kh)

Facebook : [www.facebook.com/mowa.gov.kh](http://www.facebook.com/mowa.gov.kh)