



គោលដៅដៃគូរបស់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសិក្សា  
NGO EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

**act:onaid**

## PROMOTING RIGHTS IN SCHOOLS

### The state of children's rights in Cambodian primary schools



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Introduction

##### 1.1 Background of the Study

Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all human rights. It also promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits.

An educated population is a necessary foundation for a modern, productive and knowledge – based economy that can effectively participate in today’s globalized world. Education is a crucial means for the social, moral and skill development of a child. It develops the child’s ability to function effectively and efficiently in a fast changing and globalized society. To this end, a safe learning environment (school) and knowledgeable teachers who can create such an environment are crucial.

In this light, NEP has worked together with Action Aid Cambodia on a Promoting Rights in Schools (PRS) project. Action Aid Cambodia aimed at actively engaging parents, children, teachers, unions, communities and local civil society organisations in collectively monitoring and improving the quality of public education. PRS offers a set of practical tools that can be used as a basis for mobilisation, advocacy and campaigning.

PRS is based on 10 clearly stated rights derived from national legal instruments (e.g. the Constitution), international human rights conventions and policy, and discussions with communities and schools. This report will investigate to what extent children in Cambodian primary schools experience the ten rights. The ten rights are:

1. Right to free and compulsory education
2. Right to non-discrimination
3. Right to adequate infrastructure
4. Right to quality trained teachers
5. Right to a safe and non-violent environment
6. Right to relevant education
7. Right to know your rights
8. Right to participate
9. Right to transparent and accountable schools
10. Right to quality learning

(From *ActionAid Promoting Rights in Schools: providing quality public education*)

The PRS approach is inspired by both education and human rights frameworks and by initiatives such as UNICEF’s global Child-Friendly Schools and UK-focused Rights Respecting Schools Awards. PRS also involves the Right to Education Project ([www.right-to-education.org](http://www.right-to-education.org)) and aims to secure, free, compulsory, quality education for all, focusing on the state as being responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling education rights. Schools, their governance structures (such as School Support Committees, and District and Provincial Offices of

Education) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport are the key institutions that can be held accountable for achieving these goals.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

This study uses information from school directors, teachers, parents and children to measure how each of the ten rights are currently being experienced in Cambodian primary schools. The three aims of the research are:

- To understand the current status of implementation of the ten educational rights.
- To assess which are the educational rights that Cambodia have implemented well.
- To identify which rights that NEP and Action Aid can bring forward for the campaign initiative.

This study will provide information for different social groups, stakeholders and teachers in order to create strategies and identify practices for exercising children's rights in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **1.3 Children in Cambodia**

As a traditional society Cambodia has a strong family base. Families provide extended networks of mutual obligation. Households, especially in rural areas, are usually multi-generational and grandparents play significant roles in the daily lives and development of children. Within these traditional structures children are not seen as having rights but responsibilities. Their level of effective participation in decision-making is low. However, they play important parts in the family's economy, usually contributing to the family through low paid labour. Children can face challenges at each stage of development:

- as newborns, the challenge to survive, when infant and under-five mortality rates are particularly high
- as young children, the challenge to thrive, when nutrition is problematic, and health, medical and early childhood services are inadequate in number, distribution and quality
- as children of primary school age, the challenge to acquire a basic education;
- as teenagers, the challenge to make the transition, through education, training and work to a larger role in the family, economy and broader society.

Cambodia is a signatory to the United Nations General Assembly Convention on the Rights of the Child but Cambodian children are still vulnerable to deprivation of education, trafficking, exploitation, abuses and other threats to their rights and welfare. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has made the following points about children's rights and education in Cambodia (UNCRC, 2011):

1. Corruption remains pervasive and continues to divert resources that could enhance the implementation of the rights of children
2. Disabled children and those from ethnic minorities remain highly discriminated against in their access to education.
3. School enrolment is particularly low in Rattanakiri and Mondulhiri provinces
4. There is a lack of school infrastructure as well as materials for schools.

5. Physical punishment of children is viewed as an acceptable form of discipline by parents and teachers, and is widely practiced.

Positively, the Committee did recognize progress made to increase primary and secondary school enrolment and to reduce the gender gap. A fuller discussion of the Committee's report is in the Literature Review.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

*The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (hereafter referred to as *the Convention*) is the most widely ratified international convention ever and Cambodia is a signatory. The Convention says that children (all human beings below the age of 18) are born with fundamental freedoms and the inherent rights of all human beings.

Article 28 describes the child's right to education. All children have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Discipline in school should respect the child's dignity with no practice of physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect.

Article 29 describes the goals of education for children, which should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others people, human rights, cultures and the environment.

The Convention is the only international human rights treaty that expressly gives non-governmental organizations (NGOs) a role in monitoring its implementation (under Article 45a). Furthermore, each signatory should assess their laws in relation to education and levels of funding for educational services. They must also report back on children's rights in their country, which Cambodia first did in 2009 and subsequently submitted a joint second and third report that was considered by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in June 2011 (UNCRC, 2011).

In their response to the joint second and third report, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child advised that "The Committee is concerned that in spite of the significant economic growth in the State party (Cambodia), the budget devoted to social sectors has only increased half as much as in other areas since 2007, and the budget dedicated to education is only 1.9 per cent of GDP. The Committee further notes, with serious concern, that despite the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Law in March 2010, corruption remains pervasive in the State party [Cambodia] and continues to divert resources that could enhance the implementation of the rights of children."The Committee advised that teacher salaries remain low and the overall level of corruption leads to teachers taking money to pass pupils taking examinations.

Regarding equality of education, the Committee advised three groups of children suffered inequality; girls, rural and ethnic minority children, and disabled children. Indeed, the Committee concluded that disabled children and those from ethnic minorities remain "highly discriminated against in their access to education."

The Committee was concerned that *Chbap Srey* (code of conduct for women) is being taught in schools when it could legitimize the perceived inferior role of girls and women in society. They also found that girls were much more likely to be affected by drop-out, absenteeism and repetition than boys. However, the Committee noted "the remarkable progress made to increase

primary and secondary school enrolment, ensure equitable access to education throughout the country and reduce the gender gap.”

Although the Committee noted improvements in access to education throughout the country, they expressed concern that enrolment is particularly low in Rattanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces. Additionally, they found that there were still problems in the quality of education, appropriateness of curricula and provision of educational services in remote geographical areas.

The Committee advised that children with disabilities, especially those in remote areas, can also find it hard to access education services. The Committee recommended that Cambodia should “improve the quality of mainstream and special education, and further develop non-formal education programmes as well as comprehensive and regular teacher training adapted to the different types of disabilities.”

There were two other relevant points of concern raised by the Committee. Firstly, they found that there is a lack of school infrastructure, especially toilets and drinking water, as well as materials for schools. Secondly, they expressed concern that physical punishment of children is viewed as an acceptable form of discipline by parents and teachers, and is widely practiced.

The Committee was further concerned that there is insufficient coordination among the relevant ministries to ensure the setting up of a systematic and comprehensive database recording information against all areas of the Convention.

## **2.2 Government Policy in Cambodia**

Article 48 of the Constitution declares that Cambodia will protect the rights of the children as explained in the Convention on the Rights of Children and shall protect children from acts that are injurious to their education opportunities. Furthermore, Article 47 says that parents have the right to educate their children.

Cambodia has incorporated the relevant concepts of the Convention into a number of laws namely Labour Law, Education Law, Criminal Law in Transitional Period, Crime Procedure Code, Civil Code, and Law on the Crackdown of Human Trafficking and Sex Exploitation.

### **2.2.1 Education Law**

**Article 1:** This law aims to determine the national measures and criteria for establishing a completely comprehensive and uniform education system ensuring the principles of freedoms of studies in compliance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

#### **Article 31: Right to access education**

Every citizen has the right to access quality education of at least 9 years in public schools free of charge. The Ministry in charge of education shall gradually prepare the policy and strategic plans to ensure that all citizens obtain quality education as stipulated by this law.

**Article 32:** Right of enrolment for grade 1 (one) of the general education program. Enrolment of the children for grade 1 (one) of the formal general education program shall be set at an age of 6 (six) years or at least 70 (seventy) months on the date of the beginning of the school year.

## **2.2.2 Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2009-2013**

ESP 2009-2013 was formulated to ensure linkages between education policies and strategies with development programs and actions as well as between planning and budgeting. In this phase, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) intends to continue to give highest priority to equitable access with high quality education, especially basic education, in order to realize the National Education For All (EFA) Plan by 2015. ESP 2009-13 also gives greater emphasis to expanding early childhood education, expanding non-formal education, technical and vocational training and expanding opportunities to access secondary education and post-secondary education through the continued and improved partnership among RGC, development partners, private sector, non-governmental organizations, communities and parents.

## **2.2.3 Child Friendly School Policy (CFS)**

Within the education sector, several policies were approved by MOEYS to ensure child rights in school are promoted the most important of which is the Child Friendly School (CFS) policy. The purpose of the CFS model is to move schools and education systems progressively towards quality standards, addressing all elements that influence the well-being and rights of the child as a learner and main beneficiary of learning while improving other school functions in the process (MoEYS, 2007).

MOEYS has established this CFS policy for all schools throughout the country in basic education in order to ensure:

- Implementation of Child Rights is universally recognized
- Strengthening the quality and effectiveness of basic education
- Successfully applying decentralization of the system
- Commitment of MOEYS to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), targets of National Action Plan for the Education for All and the Education Sector Plan and its objectives for national education (MoEYS, 2007).

## **2.3 Child Rights Practices in other Southeast Asian Countries Region**

In Thailand, a Government declaration in 2005 reaffirmed the right of all children, including non-Thai children living in Thailand, to receive an education. Furthermore, the government announced the extension of mandatory free education from a period of 12 years to 15 years in 2009. The net enrolment rate for primary school age children (6 to 11 years) increased from 81.4 per cent in 2000 to 90.05 per cent in 2009. Similarly, the net enrolment rate for secondary school age children (12 to 17 years) increased from 55.4 per cent in 2000 to 72.22 per cent in 2009.<sup>1</sup>

In Laos, a comprehensive national education assessment in 2008 found that enrolment in pre-schools had increased by 35% since 2000, and overall, the net enrolment rate in primary schools had increased from 80% to an estimated 86%. However, national retention rates remain a significant concern as approximately 40% of children that start Grade 1, do not complete all

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<sup>1</sup>All information accessed online at: [www.unicef.org/thailand](http://www.unicef.org/thailand)



five grades of primary school. National figures also mask significant differences between urban and remote, rural areas<sup>2</sup>.

Child participation in the Philippines has reached a new level with child and youth representations in the Council for the Welfare of Children as well as in the National Anti-Poverty Commission, and at regional and sub-regional levels. Moreover, a more recent initiative of the Government was the Bright Child Campaign that stressed convergence of interventions along the areas of health and nutrition, education and psycho-social development of children.

Cambodia performs comparatively poorly on education to other countries in the region. For instance, in 2007, only 54.5% of students who started grade 1 reached the last grade of primary school compared to 67% in Lao, 70% in Myanmar (measured in 2008) and 85% in Vietnam (measured in 2002). Furthermore, Cambodia's literacy rate in 2008 for people aged 15-24 was 87.5% compared to 95.7% in Myanmar, 96.9% in Vietnam although it is higher than the rate in Lao (84%).<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> All information accessed online at: [www.savethechildren.org.au](http://www.savethechildren.org.au)

<sup>3</sup> All from United Nations Statistics Division (2011): 'Millennium Development Goals Country Data'. Accessed online 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012: <http://www.devinfo.org/index.html>

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3. Method of the Study

The study focused on the current practice of promoting rights in schools using the 10 Rights Framework developed by Action Aid International. This research was undertaken in 12 provinces across Cambodia to identify the current state of children's educational rights across the country. A total of 72 primary schools were included in the study - 6 primary schools from each province, although for some data, the sample is less than 72.

Provinces: Battambang, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Speu, Mondul Kiri, Oddar Meanchey, Phnom Penh, Prey Veng, Ratanak Kiri, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Svay Rieng

This research employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain information at the school level. Four sets of questionnaires comprising mainly pre-coded questions were developed to gather information from students, teachers, parents and school directors respectively. Interviews were carried out with students, teachers, parents and schools directors. In addition, checklists were completed alongside observations to examine the condition of the school facilities and to gather some secondary data about the school, such as the number of teachers and students.

A maximum of eight teachers per school were selected for interview and fifteen students per school from Grades 4, 5 and 6 were randomly selected for the study due to the following reasons:

- Older students are more able to express their feelings and answer the questions from the questionnaire.
- They are able to read and complete the questionnaire. (NB: Following discussion with NGO partners, it was later agreed that the pupils would be interviewed by NGO researchers rather than completing the questionnaires on their own.)
- They have better understanding on their rights and what they have studied about child rights.

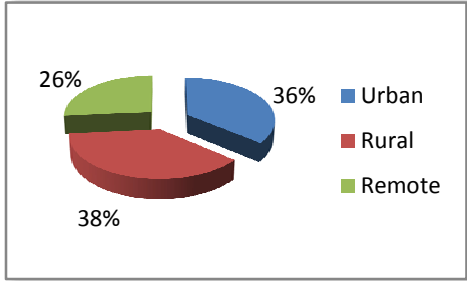
Pre-testing of the questionnaires and checklists was conducted to make sure that all the questions contained in the questionnaires and checklists were relevant and applicable to the local context. Existing material and research was also reviewed to get relevant data for the study.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY GROUPS**

**4. Background and characteristics of the study groups**

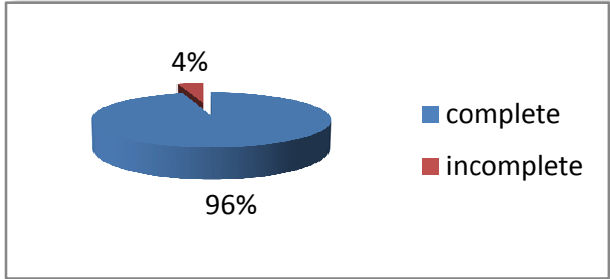
The graph below indicates the location of the schools included in our survey.

Figure 1: Location of schools selected



A “complete” school is one that offers all grades while incomplete schools do not offer all six grades. If a school is complete it may not need a multi-grade teaching programme, drop-out may be reduced, and average enrolment may fall also. The number of complete schools has risen steadily in most provinces since 2004/5 based on EMIS records. With more complete schools the need for Multi-grade Teaching and Accelerated Learning programmes should be reduced.

Figure 2: School Classification



The graph shows that there are more complete schools than incomplete schools in the 12 provinces where the research was conducted. The complete schools composed of 96% while only 4% are still incomplete. Almost 2% of the school directors said that the incomplete schools vary from grades 1-4 and grades 1-5.

The largest numbers of respondents were the students with a total of 1,068 and the smallest number of respondents was the school directors (72). More males in every category were interviewed, except for parents where there was a large female majority. Nationally, 48% of primary school teaching staff are female and 26% of non-teaching staff are (EMIS, 2011/12).

**Table 1: Distribution of the Total Number of Respondents**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Gender</b>		<b>Total</b>
	Male	Female	
School directors	60	12	72
Teachers	274	187	461
Students	602	466	1,068
Parents	174	409	583
School support council members	52	20	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>1162</b>	<b>1094</b>	<b>2256</b>

## CHAPTER V

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

#### 5. Analysis of children's experience of the ten rights

In this chapter the data collected through the questionnaire, observation, interviews and focus group discussions will be presented and then followed by analysis and discussion to answer to what extent children are experiencing the ten rights laid out in PRS. The annexes have details for each province allowing comparison to each other and the average from the twelve provinces studied.

##### 5.1 Right 1: Right to free and compulsory education

*There should be no charges, direct or indirect for primary education. Education must gradually be made free at all levels.*

###### 5.1.1 School enrolment

Cambodia has successfully increased the net enrolment rate for primary school from 91.3% in 2005/06 (EMIS 2005/06) to 96.4% in 2011/12 (EMIS 2011/12), and the UN Committee has praised the Cambodian government for this. However, there is a high drop-out rate throughout the grades in primary school; 8.6%, 7.7%, 7%, 8.3%, 9.6% and 8.9% for grades one to six respectively (EMIS 2011/12). This means that there are many children who are experiencing their right to a free education for a relatively short time.

However, children beginning school late is a problem with 31.5% of students beginning primary school over the age of six (EMIS 2011/12), which is the prescribed starting age for primary education, although this has fallen from 37% in 2005/06 (EMIS 2005/06). A second problem is that students are dropping out of school at a high rate. For instance, the drop out rates for grades 4, 5 and 6, the grades that students interviewed for this study are from, are 8.3%, 9.6%, and 8.9% respectively (EMIS, 2011/12).

This consistently high drop out rate in every grade contributes to a low net enrolment rate for lower secondary school, 35%, and subsequently for upper secondary school, 20% (EMIS 2011/12), although these figures have also risen from 31% and 11% respectively since 2005/06 (EMIS 2005/06). Furthermore, it could be that attendance rates are even lower than enrollment rates especially during periods such as harvest and around public holidays.

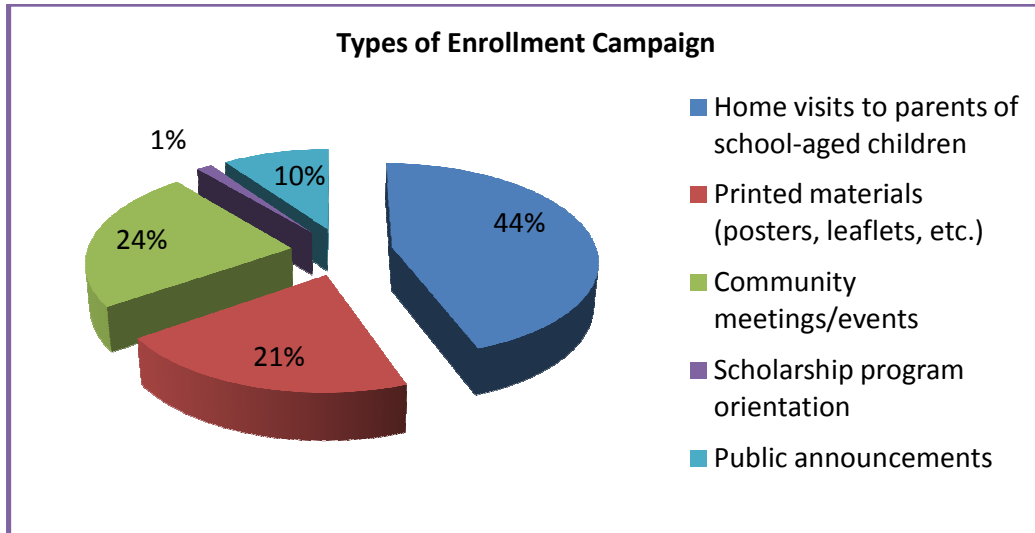
###### 5.1.2 Campaigns to Mobilize Children to go to School

MOEYS have made significant reforms in the education sector in order to attract children to school and at the same time raise awareness among parents of the importance of education. According to the school directors interviewed, enrolment campaigns are done in many forms. Figure 4 indicates that of the five types of enrolment campaign according to the school director, the most common were home visits to school-aged children's parents (44%) while community meetings/events (24%) and printed materials (21%) were both used significantly in enrolment campaigns.

These various methods of enrolment campaigns are among the several strategies of MOEYS to ensure that all school-aged children and parents are aware that getting their children to school

is the right of every child and it also aligns with the National Strategic Development Plan and Education For All goal of Cambodia.

**Figure 3: Types of enrolment campaign**

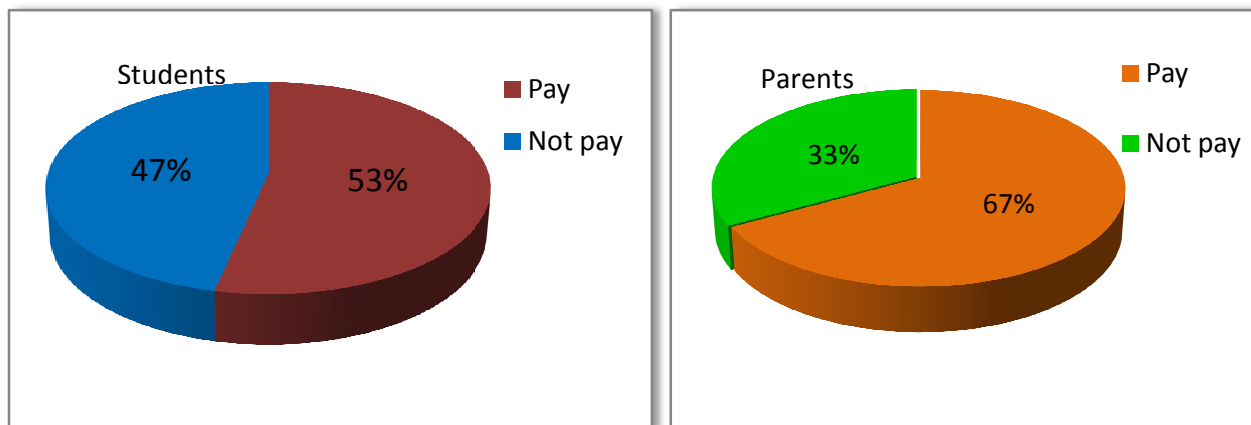


**5.1.3 Informal School Fees**

However, limited enforcement along with low teacher salaries contributes to informal school fees being a common practice in state schools in Cambodia. A previous NEP research study (NEP, 2007) highlighted that primary school students paid an average of \$69.33 per year.

Similar to the study referenced above, this study found that 53% of student respondents reported that they incur costs when attending school, whilst 67% of interviewed parents advised that they incurred costs for their child to go to school.

**Figure 4: Are payments made when children attend school?**



However, these figures misrepresent the number of families that incur costs when children attend school. When we asked parents and children how much they spent on individual items, as many as 80% or 90% said that they spent money on specific items, far higher than the

responses given to the general question. The difference is probably due to some parents and children considering expenditure on some items to be reasonable, while others are harder to justify and maybe should not be incurred by families, but should be the responsibility of MoEYS or the school to provide; for example, materials for the teacher. The table below shows the items that students and parents reported spending money on.

**Table 2: List of items students reported paying for**

Types of expense	Students		Parents	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teacher's learning materials/stationery	18%	82%	11%	89%
Students' own learning materials/stationery	93%	7%	90.5%	9.5%
Bicycle parking fee	6%	94%	7%	93%
School uniform	82.5%	17.5%	92%	8%
Examination fee	19%	81%	15%	85%
Extra tuition fee inside of school	33%	67%	28%	72%
Extra tuition fee outside of school	20%	80%	20%	80%
Teacher's note	14%	86%	7.5%	92.5%
Daily teacher's fee	13%	87%	11%	89%
Appraisal record book	26%	74%	16%	84%
Other expenses	11%	89%	32%	68%

Looking at the statistics above, we must be careful not to think that the percentage of students advising they pay a fee is equal to the percentage of schools or classes in which fees are collected. For instance, although 18% of students reported buying stationery for their teacher, this practice happened in more than 18% of classes. Rather, we found that in 26% of classes studied, there were at least two students (five students were interviewed in each class) who reported buying stationery.

Likewise, although 19% of students reported paying an examination fee, at least two students reported paying this in 24% of classes studied and at least two students in 30% of classes reported paying for an appraisal record book. We have used two students reporting paying an informal fee as the basis for analysis to reduce the chance that the result came from a misunderstanding by the student or inaccurate recording of data.

These statistics indicate two things: firstly that the practice of collecting fees by teachers in class is more widespread than a simple analysis of student responses; and secondly, that within the same class, there are some students who are paying fees and some who are not. Why some students do not pay fees and who chooses which students do pay fees should be researched in more depth, as should why some teachers charge fees and others do not.

**Table 3: The amount of money they spent on each item (students)**

Types of expense	Student responses: Mean average of expenditure (Riels)	Parent responses: Mean average of expenditure (Riels)
Teacher's learning materials/stationery	1400 per time	6870 per time
Students' own learning materials/stationery	16200 per time	28,885 per time
Bicycle parking fee	2860 per month	Data not returned
School uniform	2325 per month	3975 per month
Examination fee	2300 per time	2500 per time
Extra tuition fee inside of school	12500 per month	12,480 per month
Extra tuition fee outside of school	18400 per month	16410 per month
Teacher's note	1800 per time	3090 per time
Teacher's fee	13200 per month	16200 per month
Appraisal record book	1200 per month	1100 per month
Present for Teacher	6800 per year	
Other expenses	1200 per time	6740 per time

Whilst not being representative of the average situation, in a worst case scenario, if a student incurred costs for all items listed above, he/she would spend around 51,100 Riels per month to cover their basic material and school fees plus 22,900 Riels per time on some line items including: teacher teaching materials, student's own learning materials, examination fees, teacher's note and miscellaneous items. Assuming 9 months of a school year and non-recurrent items happening once a year, the total cost would be 482,800 Riels (\$119). If compared to the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$955<sup>4</sup>, sending a child to school could take up to 12.5% of a parent's income.

The provincial findings in the appendices also detail regional variances and it can be seen that nearly 90% of students in Phnom Penh report paying a daily fee to teachers whereas such fees were rare in other provinces. Additionally, over 90% of students in Phnom Penh were asked to pay monthly performance appraisal fees, which again was much higher than in other provinces.

As well as differences among provinces, there are also differences among the urban, rural and remote schools, with informal school fees much more common in urban schools. For instance, at least two students in 60% of urban schools reported buying a present for their teacher, whereas this was the case in only 15% of rural schools and 11% of remote schools. The equivalent percentages for paying for a teacher's note are 64%, 48% and 26% respectively, which are nearly identical to those for schools which have at least two students reporting that they pay for performance appraisal monitoring (64%, 44% and 26%).

Differences in response rates of students at schools in the three types of location are shown in the table below. Students in urban areas are certainly more likely to pay fees, which are also

<sup>4</sup> Economic Institute for Cambodia for July 2012, accessed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012: <http://www.eicambodia.org/>



likely to be higher. It could be that living costs are higher in urban areas and thus teachers in urban areas increase their income by charging fees, and because there is greater wealth in urban areas, there are more students who are able to pay fees.

Another explanation offered by a VSO volunteer working with schools in Mondolkiri is that rural schools are very keen to retain as many students as possible otherwise the school will receive a lower amount of a Program-Based budget, which is issued to schools based on the number of students enrolled. Charging fees may lead to children dropping out thereby reducing the school's Program-Based Budget.

Table 4 – Frequency of informal school fees by location

Type of expense	% of students paying (urban)	% of students paying (rural)	% of students paying (remote)
<b>Stationery for teacher</b>	23%	15%	18%
<b>Present for teacher</b>	21%	7%	3%
<b>Examination Fee</b>	22%	13%	22%
<b>Teacher's Note</b>	20%	12%	10%
<b>Daily Teacher's Fee</b>	25%	8%	3%
<b>Appraisal Record Book</b>	41%	22%	11%
<b>Extra tuition outside of school</b>	32%	14%	11%
<b>Extra tuition inside of school</b>	56%	22%	16%

Table 5 – Amounts of informal schools by location

Type of expense	Urban - mean average expenditure (riel)	Rural - mean average expenditure (riel)	Remote average - mean expenditure (riel)
<b>Stationery for teacher</b>	1460 per time	1270 per time	1450 per time
<b>Present for teacher</b>	8330 per time	3570 per time	3390 per time
<b>Examination Fee</b>	3450 per time	950 per time	1840 per time
<b>Teacher's Note</b>	2650 per time	990 per time	650 per time
<b>Daily Teacher's Fee</b>	780 per day	180 per day	500 per day
<b>Appraisal Record Book</b>	1430 per month	860 per month	1350 per month
<b>Extra tuition outside of school</b>	24,200 per month	11,880 per month	8300 per month
<b>Extra tuition inside of school</b>	13,900 per month	9220 per month	12,115 per month

Our survey found that 33% of students reported paying for extra tuition inside of schools, and further analysis shows that this group of students is spread out over 56% of the schools surveyed. At least two students in 84% of urban schools reported paying for extra tuition inside of school, compared to only 44% in rural schools and 37% in remote schools. That only a minority of students in schools where this is happening pay the fee is likely due to an average cost of 12,500 riel per month, which many families would find prohibitive, Therefore, only children from wealthier families can afford to pay and benefit from this extra tuition, which appears to lead to better student performance (Brehm et al, 2012).

Teachers are allowed to provide extra tuition and if students are willing to attend extra tuition, this could be seen as valuing education. However, extra tuition appears to create inequalities based on the student's family's ability and willingness to pay for extra tuition. Furthermore, Brehm et al found that extra tuition classes were used to continue teaching of the national curriculum which would then not be repeated in classroom, although this was a study of only six schools. However, it could be that there are students who are not receiving the full curriculum because they cannot afford to pay for it.

### **Children are only partly enjoying the right to free and compulsory education**

Cambodian law prescribes a right to nine years of free education for children and the vast majority of children can and do access primary education. However, there are a significant number of children and families who are incurring unreasonable expenses as a result of attending school. Furthermore, drop out rates are significant throughout primary school and secondary school meaning that only one-third of children enroll for lower secondary school.

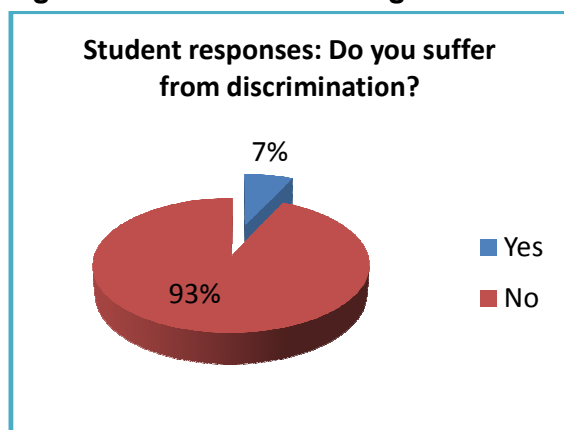
Therefore, whilst in Cambodia, children do have a right to enroll in education and this is happening in Grade 1 at very high levels, drop out rates are significant and there are some unreasonable costs of attending school. Thus, children in Cambodia are at best only partly enjoying this right.

### **5.2 Right 2: Right to non-discrimination**

*Schools must not make any distinction in provision based on sex, race, colour, language, religion, political opinion, nationality, ethnicity, ability, or any other status.*

Cambodia has just recently ratified a policy for children with disability. The objective was to give students with disabilities the opportunity to obtain an education both formal and non-formal with their regular peers in public schools to enable them to become successful and productive members of society. However, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is concerned that insufficient data has been collected in some areas covered by the Convention, particularly on children with disabilities, and that data collection mechanisms remain fragmented.

**Figure 5: Students suffering discrimination**



Discrimination, to some extent, does exist in the areas studied. Seven percent (7%) of interviewed students reported being discriminated against. The most common reason for

discrimination among students is related to the low social status of the children (51%). The second most common reasons are being disabled (9%) or a slow learner (9%). The table below represents different reasons for discrimination in the studied schools.

**Table 6: Reason for discrimination – students’ responses**

Reason for Discrimination	Number	Percentage*
Social status	38	51%
Disability	7	9%
Slow learner	7	9%
Calling HIV/AIDS children	2	3%
Role in school	1	1%
Religious	1	1%
Did not advise	19	25%
N=75		

\* Does not total 100% due to rounding

Rattanakiri and Mondulkiri were both provinces included in the study and it may have been expected that we would find a higher incidence of discrimination there due to a larger proportion of ethnic minorities living there. However, only 2% of children in Rattanakiri and 7% of students in Mondulkiri felt that they suffer from discrimination. Where discrimination was reported by students, ethnicity was not given as a reason, although there should be two considerations. Firstly, of the 75 students who reported discrimination, 19 (25%) of them did not answer why, and it could be that within this group there were students who felt discriminated against because of ethnicity but did not say so. Additionally, social status was given as the reason for discrimination by 38 students (51%) and ethnicity could form part of social status.

It is important to acknowledge that this study did not interview children who do not attend school. The reason for not finding discrimination due to ethnicity within schools could be because children of minority ethnic groups are not in school and that they face discrimination in accessing schools. Indeed, Rattanakiri has the lowest level primary school enrolment rate (EMIS 2011/2) and a high proportion of people from minority ethnic groups, which could be an indication of this. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concluded that those from ethnic minorities remain “highly discriminated against in their access to education” (UNCRC 2011). Further research needs to be done to investigate this.

It should also be noted that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concluded that disabled children also remain highly discriminated against in terms of accessing education (UNCRC 2011).

The UN Committee was encouraged by progress made in school enrolment of girls with girls making up 47.6% of the primary school population, increasing to 48.7% in lower secondary but declining to 45.7% in upper secondary school (EMIS 2011/12). Additionally, whilst 29.7% of girls being admitted to school are over age is too high and harming the educational development of girls, this is below the average for both sexes of 31.5%. Furthermore, students did not report

being discriminated against because of being a boy or a girl. Indeed, only 5.2% of girls reported having suffered from discrimination compared to 8.1% of boys.

If students in schools will be continuously discriminated against in any form or manner, without any support or plans to combat the issue, there is a possibility that students will drop out of school. Those kinds of discrimination and any form of discrimination against the right of a child must be strongly addressed by MOEYS, teachers and education officials, so that it will not have an adverse effect on the child and his / her holistic development.

### **Children are mostly enjoying the right to non-discrimination**

Discrimination within schools does not appear to be a widespread problem in the areas studied, with 7% of students reporting having suffered from discrimination. Students also reported low incidences of discrimination due to ethnicity, poverty or HIV, however there are limitations to our research. Also, these positive responses should be balanced however by awareness that it has been reported by the UN that children of ethnic minority groups and disabled children are not enrolling in schools as frequently as the average and that this can be considered discrimination of access to education.

### **5.3 Right 3: Right to adequate infrastructure**

*There should be an appropriate number of classrooms, accessible to all, with adequate and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. Schools should be built with local materials and be resilient to natural risks and disasters.*

#### **5.3.1 Classrooms and Classes**

Within funding support from NGOs and development partners, more schools and classrooms have been constructed to address the growing needs of schools. The total number of primary schools and classroom has increased by 184 schools and 1595 classrooms between 2009/10 and 2011/12. (EMIS, 2010 and EMIS, 2012). This indicates that there has been progress made to reduce the class-classroom ratio, which should contribute to the reduction of double shift teaching.

However, national figures show that there are more classes than there are classrooms in every province. The national average is 1.42 classes for every classroom, with the problem being greater in urban areas where there are 1.53 classes for every classroom (EMIS, 2010/11). Our research produced similar findings as illustrated in the table below. Svay Rieng was closest to achieving one classroom for every class with Siem Reap and Battambang having over 1.5 classes for every classroom.

**Table 7: Number of Classrooms and Classes**

Province	# of schools surveyed	Total # of classrooms	Total # of classes	Class-classroom ratio
Battambang	6	57	87	1.53
Kampot	6	57	65	1.14
Kandal	6	81	121	1.49

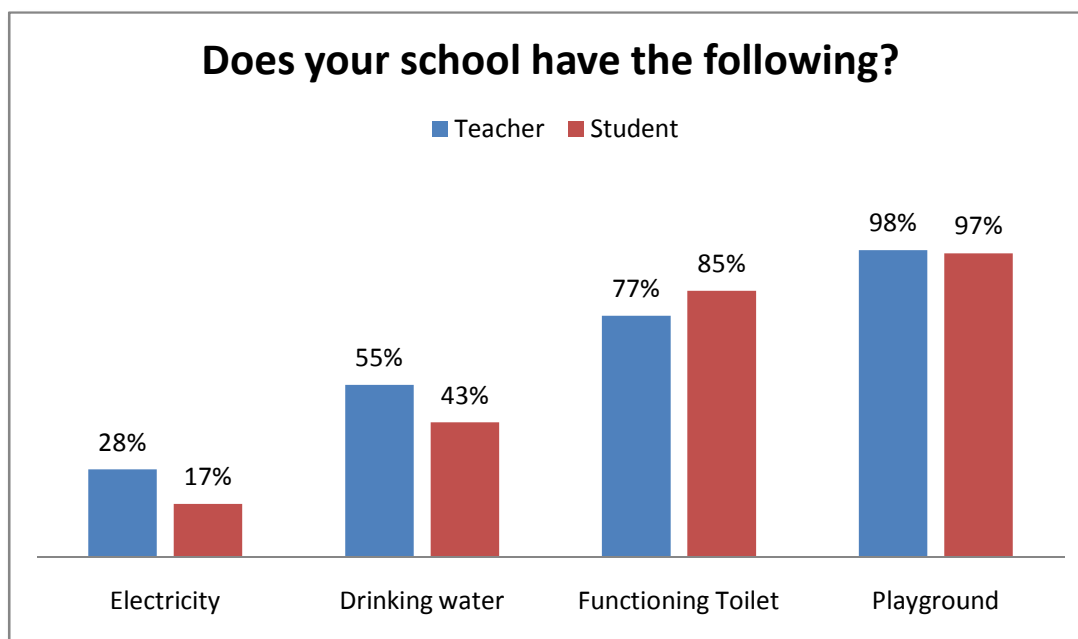
Kg. Speu	6	47	70	1.49
Mondulkiri	6	31	44	1.33
Oddar Meanchey	5	44	60	1.36
Phnom Penh	6	105	150	1.43
Prey Veng	6	64	76	1.18
Rattanakiri	6	59	75	1.27
Siem Reap	6	33	51	1.54
Sihanoukeville	6	62	88	1.42
Svay Rieng	6	78	82	1.05

\* Total Number of school surveyed is 71.

To deal with this, we found that three-quarters of schools operate a double shift, which rather being a problem could be seen as an efficient use of buildings that would otherwise be lying empty. However, even if there were more classrooms, schools would still have to operate a double shift because there are not enough teachers, which is the real problem. This is discussed in more detail later in this report.

### 5.3.2 School Facilities

**Figure 6: Availability of Facilities in Schools**



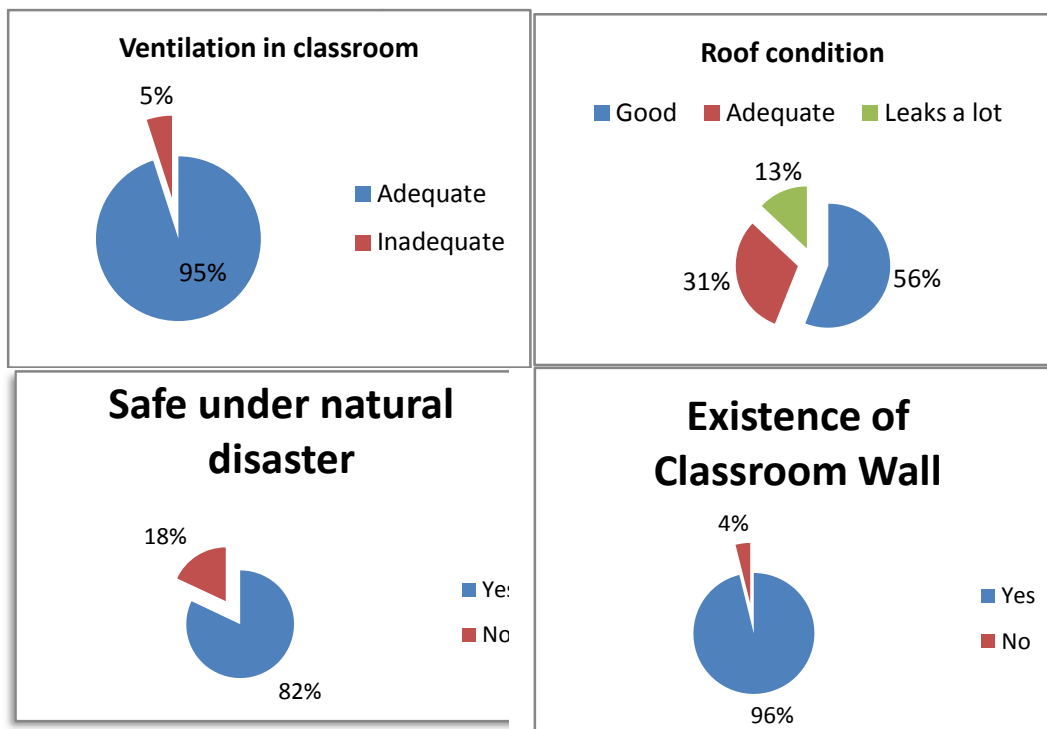
Similar to the analysis of informal school fees, it would be wrong to think that because 85% of students advise their schools has a functioning toilet, 85% of schools must have a functioning toilet. Analysing the students responses at the school level shows that the 15% of students who do not think their school has a functioning toilet are located within more than 15% of schools.

For instance, there were at least two children in one-third of schools who said that there was not a functioning toilet. This was the case in 47% of remote schools. This means that to increase the number of students who think their school has a functioning toilet, improvements to toilet facilities would have to be made in more schools than a simple analysis of the graph above suggests. Interestingly, female students were slightly more likely to advise that their toilet was functioning and was easy to use. Approximately, half of schools surveyed had separate toilets for boys and girls.

Only 17% of students reported that their school had electricity, but again, this 17% were located in a greater percentage of schools than 17%. There are also clear geographical differences, as could be expected. In every remote school surveyed, at least two children in every class reported an absence of electricity, and this occurred in 96% of classes in rural areas. In total, there were only five schools, all urban, where only one or no student reported an absence of electricity. Whilst electricity may be not be a current necessity in education, it will become so in the future as Cambodia looks to develop IT skills of teachers and students.

Availability of potable water in schools is also important to other facilities such as toilets, water supply and maintaining cleanliness. If safe water is not available in schools, children may acquire illnesses or diseases like diarrhea, which is the most common illness among children in Cambodia. However, in many rural and remote areas in Cambodia, many toilets are not usable due to lack of water supply, are dilapidated, often without doors, are dirty and isolated. There is also no potable water, faucets and places for hand washing.

**Figure 7: School buildings**



It is important that school facilities are in good condition, conducive to learning for the students and at the same time a reliable workplace for teachers and school staff.

Responses from teachers and students were nearly identical for questions on the conditions of the school roof, ventilation, the presence of a classroom wall and whether the school is safe under natural disaster. The four graphs above show the responses from teachers and report that most school building roofs are in good condition, there is adequate ventilation, there are classrooms walls to act as a separator for the classrooms, and the school remains safe when struck by a natural calamity like a storm, or seasonal monsoon rains with strong winds.

However, if we analyse the responses of students by the class that they are in then the situation looks worse, as for 31% of classes there were at least two students who advised that the roof leaks.

### **Children are partly not enjoying the right to adequate infrastructure**

The vast majority of respondents did report that their school had adequate boundary walls, roofs, ventilation, a water supply and toilets which are positive signs of an infrastructure conducive to education. Additionally, whilst there are more classes than classrooms, the current structure of the school day (lessons in the morning only) mean that using the same classroom in the afternoon could be considered an efficient use of resources. One challenge that may become more important in the future is the lack of electricity in schools which will restrict development of IT skills amongst teachers and students.



#### 5.4 Right 4: Right to quality trained teachers

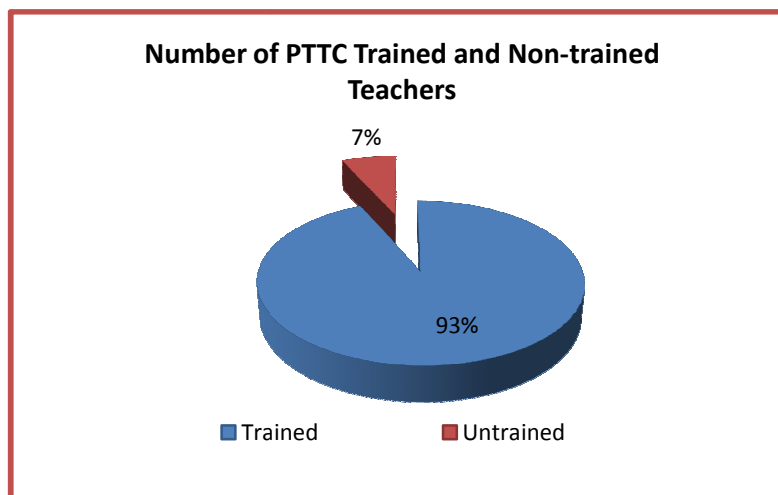
*Schools should have a sufficient number of trained teachers of whom a good proportion is female; teachers should receive good quality pre-service and in-service training with built-in components on gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights. All teachers should be paid domestically competitive salaries.*

##### 5.4.1 Pedagogy Training Courses Obtained by Teachers

In Cambodia, incoming teachers are trained at Teacher Training Centers (TTC) in order to be equipped with appropriate teaching knowledge and skills, so they are well-prepared once they enter the teaching workforce. The training at TTC is among other requirements set by MOEYS for those who wish to enter the teaching profession. The requirements are necessary to ensure that only qualified candidates are deployed in the workforce.

Ninety three percent (93%) of interviewed teachers have received pedagogy training at TTC while only 7% have not attended any formal pedagogy training. This reflects progress towards increasing access to trained teachers. Going through a pedagogy course can contribute to improvement of teaching ability, but does not necessarily mean all trainees will be highly qualified, which will also depend upon their educational attainment and quality of TTC and resources available.

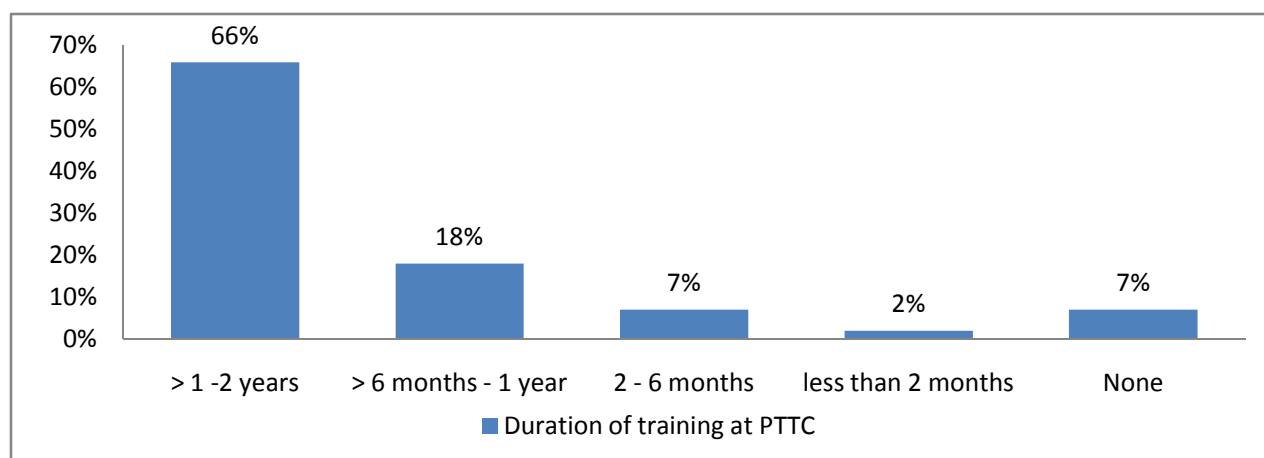
**Figure 8: Number of PTTC Trained and Non-trained Teachers**



However, nearly one-fifth (16%) of teachers have either attended teacher training college for less than six months or not at all, as the graph below illustrates.



**Figure 9: Duration of training at primary teacher training college**



#### 5.4.2 Educational Background of Teachers

As indicated in the below table, 55% of the teachers finished Upper Secondary level of education and only 5% of teachers have no education past primary level. However, due to the increasing complexity and dynamic nature of education, MOEYS has an objective that all primary schools teachers' are expected to be more qualified than just successful graduation of secondary school and two years pedagogy training. The expectation is that this will provide quality education for children in the future.

**Table 8: Characteristics of teachers by Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment	Percent
University level	11%
Upper secondary level	55%
Lower secondary level	29%
Primary level	5%

Educational levels of teachers in our study are similar to national figures for teachers at all school levels (EMIS 2010/11).

**Table 9: National statistics on level of teacher educational attainment**

Highest level of education completed					
Primary school	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Bachelor	Masters	PhD
2.8%	40.4%	47.5%	8.8%	0.5%	0.01%

To attract better trained teachers it may be necessary to increase the salaries that teachers receive. The basic starting wage for a primary school teacher is approximately \$50 per month, which is very low in comparison to the minimum wage for garment factory workers of \$83 per month. Below is how the average monthly wage of primary school teachers compares to other workers in Cambodia and it shows that teachers' salaries are not domestically competitive and that this is likely preventing the recruitment of candidates who have the education and skills to become quality teachers.

#### Comparison of salaries in Cambodia<sup>5</sup>

Job	Average monthly wage
Primary school teachers	\$66
Drivers	\$88
Construction Workers	\$83
Restaurant workers	\$70
Repair Service Workers	\$100
Beauticians	\$73
Tourism Workers	\$80

#### 5.4.3 In-service Training Received by Teachers

Table 10 below shows that 82% of teacher respondents are given further professional development through various organized trainings either by MOEYS or INGOs while 18% of the teachers do not have the opportunity to participate in further training for professional development. Training given includes teaching methods and strategies, and key programs of the Government.

**Table 10: Further Training Received In-Service**

Response	Percent
Yes	82%
No	18%

Support for teachers, particularly for new teachers, is often uneven and inadequate. Even if well-prepared, due to shortage of teachers in rural and remote areas in Cambodia, new teachers often are assigned to the most challenging schools and classes with little supervision and support. Mentoring and coaching from veteran colleagues could support the successful development of a teacher, especially in these areas. Quality induction programs create opportunities for novice teachers to learn from best practices and analyze and reflect on their teaching.

Additionally, it is critical for veteran teachers to have on-going and regular opportunities to learn from each other. On-going professional development keeps teachers up-to-date on new research on how children learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom, new curriculum resources, and more. The best professional development is on-going, experiential, collaborative, and connected to and derived from working with students and understanding the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of their society.

<sup>5</sup>[www.prake.org/](http://www.prake.org/) accessed on 06/12/12. The salary for teachers is of teachers in their first few years and includes allowances they receive.

## Children are only partly enjoying a right to quality-trained teachers

It is positive that the vast majority of teachers have received pedagogical and in-service training. However, our research found that over one-third of teachers in primary schools are educated up to lower secondary level only, and national figures for all teachers indicate that the rate is over 40%. There is still a need for children to be taught by quality, trained teachers.

Success in fulfilling this right will directly lead to an improvement in fulfilling Right 10 – the right to a quality education. Attracting educated people to become teachers should be an aim of MoEYS, which will necessitate better working conditions and salaries for teachers. The country, however, would reap the benefit from this extra investment through a higher skilled workforce that supports economic development.

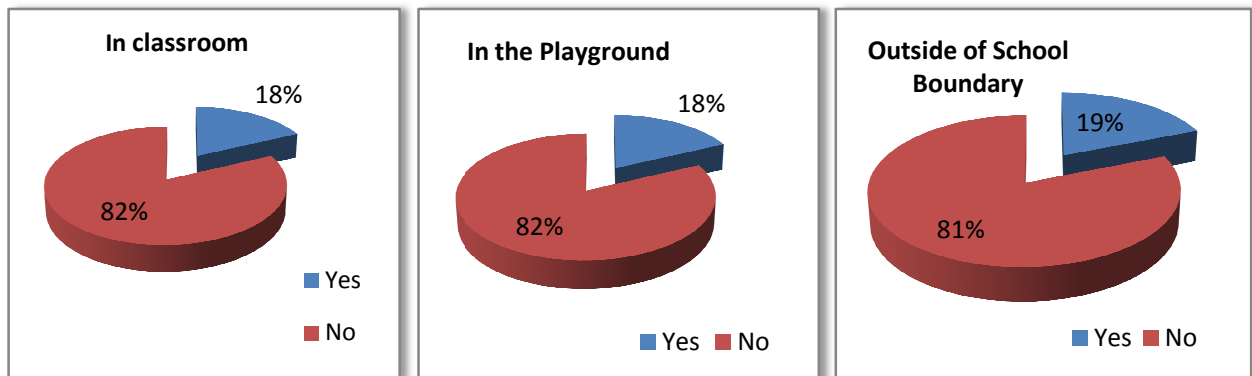
### 5.5 Right 5: Right to a safe and non-violent environment

*Children should be safe on route to and in school. Clear anti-bullying policies and confidential systems for reporting and addressing any form of abuse or violence should be in place.*

#### 5.5.1 Students Experiencing Abuse/Violence

Students were asked whether in the last six months they had suffered violence, abuse or threatening behavior in the classroom, in the playground and then outside the school boundary. For both in the classroom and in the playground, 18% of students said they had experienced violence, abuse or threatening behavior. 19% of students said that they had experienced such behavior outside the school boundary. 20% of female students reported experiencing violence, abuse or threatening behavior in each of these three places, approximately 3.5 percentage points higher in each than boys.

**Figure 10: Students experiencing violence/abuse/threatening behavior (student responses)**



In addition, parents were asked about whether their children suffered violence, abuse or threatening behavior. Worryingly, only 9% of parents thought that their child had suffered violence, abuse or threatening behavior at school, which is half of the percentage of children who said they did, indicating a lack of awareness amongst parents and or that some children do not feel comfortable telling their parents about bullying.

### 5.5.2 Different Forms of Abuse/Violence

The small number of parents who advised that their children had experienced violence, abuse or threatening behavior were then asked whether their children have received a particular form of punishment. 58% of this small group of parents advised that their children have received physical/corporal punishment although it should be recognized that for this question, the number of parents answering this question was only 69.

**Table 11: Parents response on the types of punishment experienced by their children**

Type	% of Parents advising their children have experienced
Scolding	36%
Insulting/Cursing	20%
Stand in front of flag	10%
A form of penalty	32%
Physical/Corporal Punishment	58%

These figures are disturbing because they imply that there is violation of the right to a safe and non-violent environment in school of a significant number of students, and that in some cases teachers are the cause of this. This is contrary to MOEYS approved policy on child friendly schools (CSF), specifically dimension 3 of the CFS framework, which refers to Health, Safety and Protection of children. The objective of dimension three is to ensure that all children participating in education are cared for and supported by all concerned people and institutions to keep them healthy and safe and protect them from violence at school.

Bullying is often one of the main sources of violence among students, where children suffer teasing, taunting and other forms of verbal or physical abuse. Bullying can occur within school, but also on the journey to and from school, indicated by 19% of student respondents advising they were victims of violence, abuse or threatening behavior outside of the school boundary. Education planners and schools should identify safe ways for children to travel to school and back, such as secure walking paths in rural and remote areas or safer streets in urban centres. It may be that teachers receive support about how to identify and prevent bullying among students.

Teachers, school administrators and non-teaching staff must give attention to students' emotional, psychological and physical well-being, protecting them from verbal and emotion abuse by teachers and their peers. It should also be noted that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern that physical punishment of children is viewed as an acceptable form of discipline by parents and teachers in Cambodia, and is widely practiced.

#### **Some children are not enjoying a right to a safe and non-violent environment**

Both our research and that of the UN has found that some teachers are physically abusing students, which is unacceptable. Furthermore, 18% of students advised that they were victims

of violence, abuse or threatening behavior in the classroom in the last six months, with more suffering such behavior in the playground or outside the school boundary.

Greater efforts must be made to ensure that students do not suffer violence or abuse from other students or teachers whilst at school or on their way to/from school.



## 5.6 Right 6: Right to a relevant education

*The curriculum should not discriminate and should be relevant to the social, cultural, environmental, economic context and language of learners.*

### 5.6.1 Extra Topics to be Incorporated into Lessons

**Table 12: Teacher response on topics incorporated into lessons and teaching**

Area	Responses		
	Yes	No	Not enough
Health (HIV/AIDS)	77%%	15%	7%
Environmental education	99%	1%	n/a
Local environment	95.5%	0.5%	4%
Livelihood/life skills	88%	7%	5%
GenderEquality	89%	11%	n/a

Integrating relevant social, cultural, environmental, economic context and language of learners into the curriculum is a complex endeavor that brings added dimensions to the curriculum-development process. As shown in Table 12, topics such as HIV/AIDS (77%), environmental education (99%), livelihood/life skills (88%) and gender awareness (89%) are incorporated within the lessons in schools of Cambodia.

Traditionally, the school curriculum provides a plan of instruction that indicates structured learning experiences and outcomes for students. It specifies the details of student learning, instructional strategies, the teachers' roles, and the context in which teaching and learning take place. Even with the curriculum reform done by MOEYS, some teachers still feel that they are not able to incorporate teaching on subject such as HIV/AIDS (22%) and livelihood/life skills (12%).

For children to be capable of progressing in further education and into skilled work, it is relevant and necessary that schools promote problem solving abilities and creative expression. The majority of teachers advised that promoting these skills were included in their lessons, although this could be a case of teachers reporting satisfaction with the level of problem solving and creating expression within their schools against a low standard of including problem solving abilities and creative expression.

**Table 13: Teacher perceptions on whether problem solving and creative expression are promoted in their lessons**

	Problem solving abilities	Creative expression
Yes	73%	80%
Not enough	12%	10%
None	15%	10%

### 5.6.2 Local Language Proficiency of Teachers

Of the studied provinces, two provinces, Rattanakiri and Mondolkiri, have significant ethnic minority populations. Seventeen of the thirty interviewed teachers in Mondolkiri know at least some of the local language, while most, 18, of the 33 teachers in Rattanakiri do not know the local language at all (see graph below). This can increase the challenges of communication between teachers and students, affecting the ability of teachers to teach and children to learn.

**Table 14: Local Language Proficiency of Teachers (responses by teachers)**

Provinces	Know a lot	Know some	Not at all	Total
Mondolkiri	8	9	13	30
Rattanakiri	11	4	18	33

### Children are enjoying the right to a relevant education

Our research found that the curriculum does include subjects that are relevant to the social, cultural, environmental and economic context of students. However, in two provinces, we found that language remains a barrier to students receiving an education.



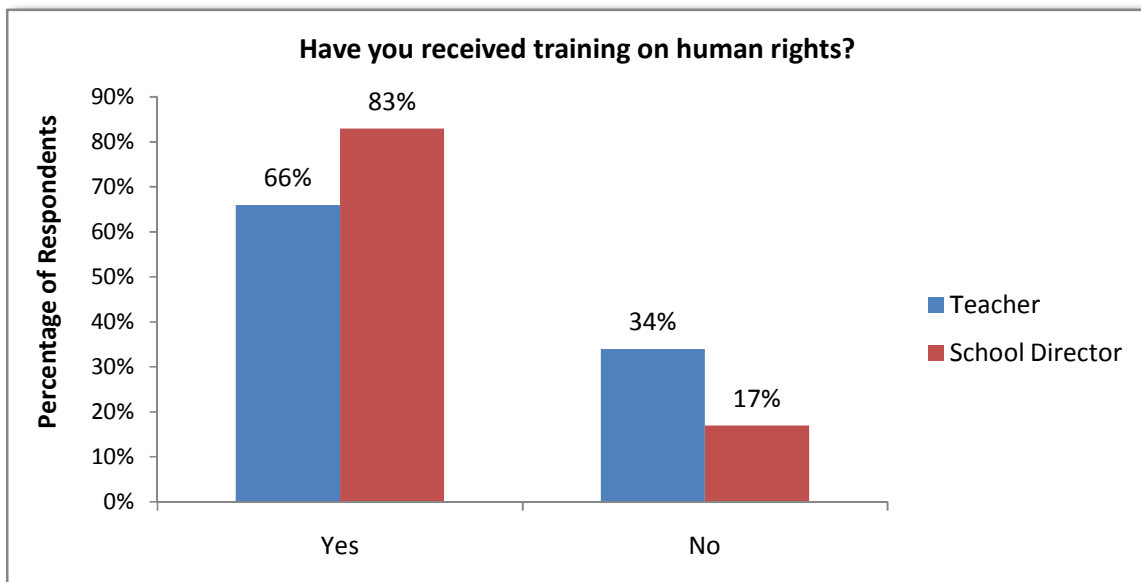
## 5.7 Right 7: Right to know your rights

*Schools should teach human rights education and children's rights in particular. Learning should include age-appropriate and accurate information on sexual and reproductive rights.*

### 5.7.1 Human Rights Training Received by Teacher and School Directors

The concept underpinning human rights education is that education should not only aim at forming trained, professional workers, but also at contributing to the development of individuals who possess the skills to interact in a society. Human rights education aim at providing pupils and students with the abilities to accompany and produce societal changes. Education is seen as a way to empower people, improve their quality of life and increase their capacity to participate in the decision-making processes leading to social, cultural and economic policies.

**Figure 11: Teachers and School Directors Trained on Human Rights**



MOEYS has made efforts by collaborating with international NGOs and local NGOs to train its education professionals in human rights. The curriculum of MOEYS stipulates that students are taught human rights and child rights for 40 hours per school year. Figure 11 indicates that 83% of school directors and 66% of teachers interviewed received training in human rights. It is important for MOEYS to take into serious consideration that educating all its personnel on human rights helps them feel the importance of human rights, internalize human rights values and integrate them into their teaching.

Education on human rights, aside from instructional use, also gives educators a sense of responsibility for respecting and defending human rights and empowers them, through learned skills, to take appropriate action. Understanding and applying human rights might also contribute to reducing the incidence of physical or corporal punishment in schools, the incidence of which is described above.

### 5.7.2 Mainstreaming of Human Rights Topics in School

The above below indicates that both human rights and child rights are taught in the schools



according to all types of respondents (teachers, students and school directors). There were discrepancies among the respondents though, as 78% of school directors and 67% of teachers said human rights were taught in school, but only 38% of students thought so.

**Table 15: Response of teachers, school directors and students: are human rights and child rights are taught in their school?**

Respondents	Human rights		Child rights	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	67%	33%	85%	15%
School Directors	78%	22%	96%	4%
Students	38%	62%	68%	32%

It appears that students are much more likely to be taught about child rights rather than human rights. In each category of respondent, there were many more who said child rights were being taught than human rights. However, there were also discrepancies among the three groups of respondents as 96% of school directors advised that child rights are taught in their respective school which is significantly higher than the response of the students (68%) and slightly higher than that of teachers (85%).

A holistic approach to human rights education means that human rights are implemented at all levels of the education system, and that students are also taught through both content transmission and experience.

**More children need to know about their rights**

The biggest disparity was between whether children felt that they were being taught about human rights and whether teachers/school directors thought that children were. It could be that children are being taught about human rights without their awareness that the specific lesson was about human rights. However, if children are not aware that they are being taught about them, then they will find it difficult to identify and understand what rights they have.

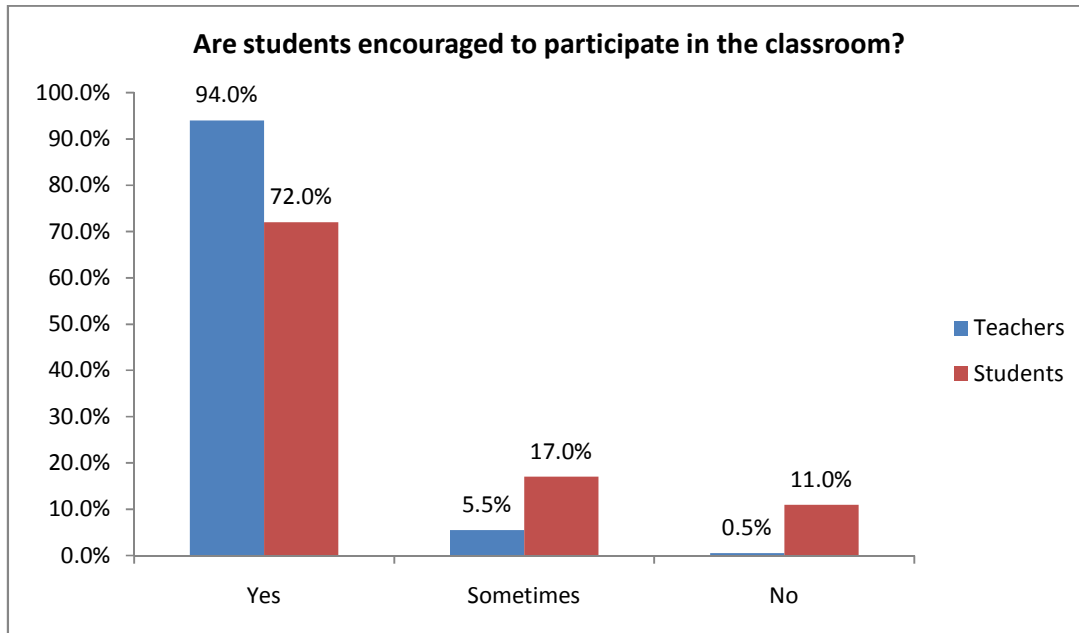


## 5.8 Right 8: Right to participate

*Girls and boys have the right to participate in decision-making processes in school. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to enable to full, genuine and active participation of children.*

### 5.8.1 Classroom Participation

**Figure 12: Response of teachers and students in classroom participation**



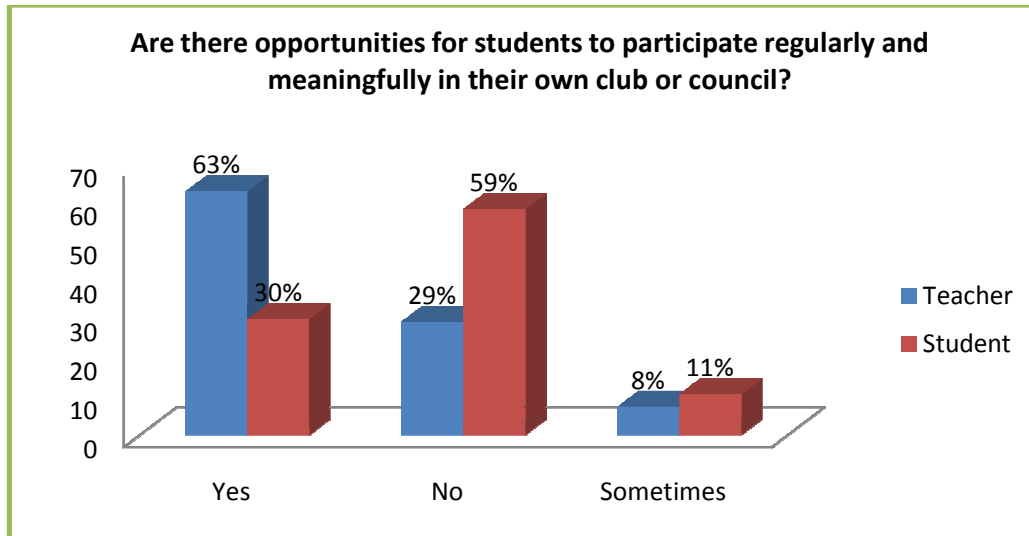
The figure above shows that for teachers when asked if they encourage student participation in the classroom, 94% said 'yes' and for students 72% said 'yes'. This would seem to indicate that most teachers in Cambodia now recognize the value of allowing their students to participate in the classroom; although how teachers understand what participation means could be variable. Good teachers know the best methods for encouraging class participation. The classroom dynamic works to its optimum when the entire room is engaged and works into the educational philosophies being extolled by the teacher.

Only 0.5% of teachers and 11% of students said no participation is occurs inside their classroom. Attitude is a true reflection of leadership, and as such, class participation is the direct result of a good teacher. Each class differs in many facets, but the ability to engage the students, and to illuminate their minds is always because of the capabilities of the teacher.

### 5.8.2 Teacher and Students Participation in School Club

There are a number of reasons that both educators and parents expect young people to benefit from participation in clubs and youth organizations. These reasons have to do with the activities, roles, and relationships available to children and adolescents when they participate in clubs. Activities are important in several ways. For one, activities offered by clubs or youth organizations enable members to learn valuable skills. Many of the activities offered by clubs help students to extend and elaborate on the more formal knowledge learned in school.

**Figure13: Student participation in school clubs**

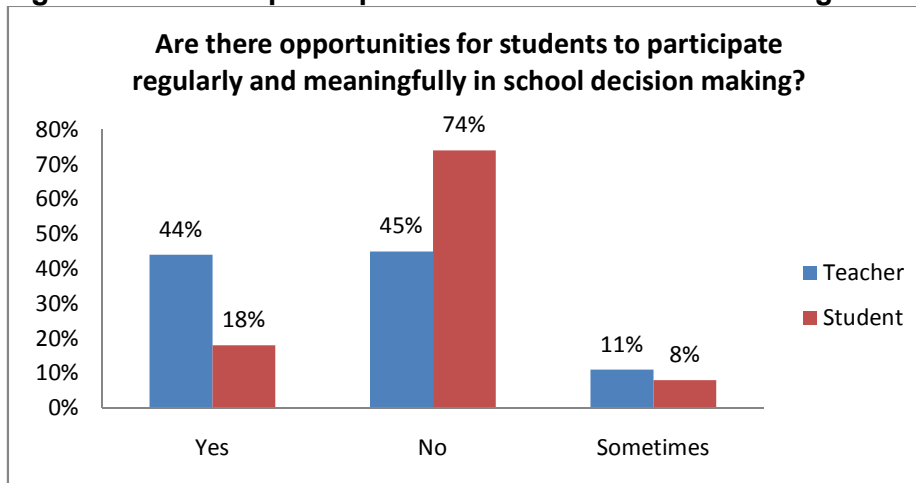


However, the above graph indicates that 29% of teachers said that there are not opportunities for students to be involved actively in school clubs or school council, whilst 59% of students advised this. The potential reason for the difference may be due to teachers only encouraging some students but not all for instance, encouraging the clever ones, but not the others. Another reason may be that teachers encourage all students to be part of the student council or child club, but that some students do not feel that they are being encouraged.

It is important for teachers, parents and community to realise that one of the advantages of school clubs or any extra-curricular activities is socialization. Students are able to share their interests with other students or peers and make new friends. School clubs also hone students' potential and become a venue that recognizes their talent and promote self-esteem.

### 5.8.3 Students Participation in Decision Making

**Figure14: Student participation in school decision making**



Students need to feel that what they are learning is important. They want the opportunity to express the concerns they have about their world and their future. Students are more likely to develop a strong commitment to the community and its future if they are able and permitted to take part in determining its direction. Participation in decision making at the school level is a means through which students are able to develop responsibility and experience the democratic process.

Figure 14 shows that 44.5% of teachers surveyed advised students are not involved in decision-making process in school while nearly an equal proportion, 43.6% said that students are involved in decision making. Responses from students contrast with this however as 74.1% of students said they do not get involve in decision-making with only 25.3% advising that they are at least sometimes involved in decision making. Participating students in decision-making in partnership with others will enable students to understand the views of others and to develop skills in resolving problems they encounter.



### Children are not enjoying their right to be involved in school decision making

It should be remembered that this is a survey of children in grades 4, 5 and 6 so their capacity to be involved in decision-making is still limited. However, they should still be encouraged to play some role in deciding how their school operates, which is not happening currently.

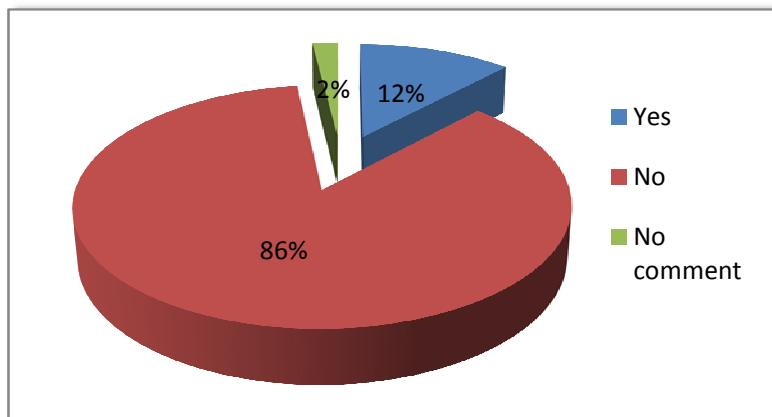
It is practical that a few students may represent all students in any decision making process therefore justifying why only a minority of students felt that there are regular opportunities for students to participate in school decision making. What is important is the process for choosing which students are involved in decision making. If students do have a representative role then students should be able to select which students represent them.

### 5.9 Right 9: Right to Transparent and Accountable Schools

*Schools need to have transparent and effective monitoring systems. Both community and children should be able to participate in accountable governing bodies, management committees and parents' groups.*

#### 5.9.1 Parent Awareness on Program Based Budget

**Figure 15: Have parents ever heard or seen list of school program based (PB) budget?**

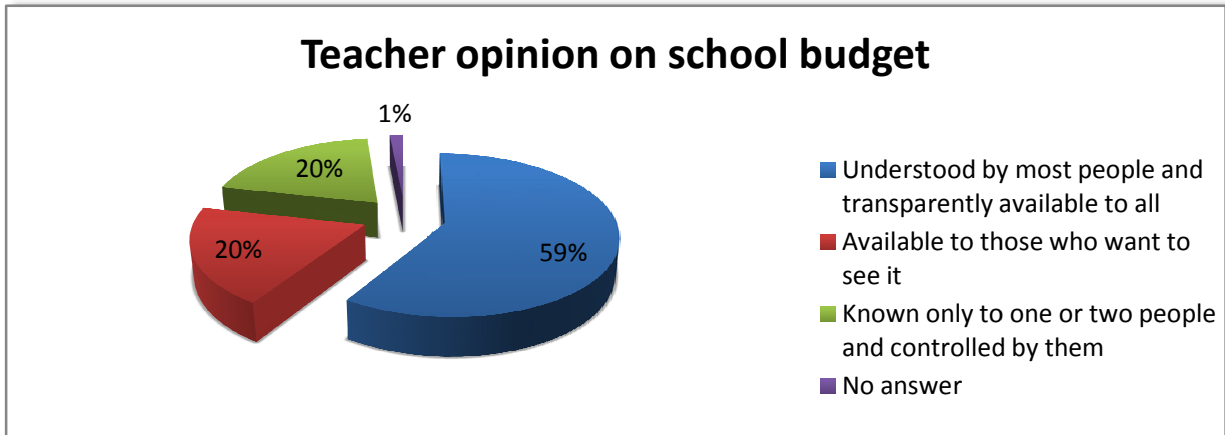


The vast majority of parents reported that they have never seen or heard about the school's PB budget, which could be expected given the general lack of involvement in their child's education as reported by parents during our study. Part of the reason could also be due to a lack of transparency by the school but the majority of school directors interviewed advised that they did make their school operational budget available for scrutiny.

#### 5.9.2 Teacher Opinion on School Budget

Fifty nine percent (59%) of teachers advised that school budgets were understood and transparently available to all that is a good sign for being able to hold the school to account. This discrepancy of the figures obtained from school directors, teachers and parents may be due to the limited involvement of parents in their child education, which parents admitted during this research.

**Figure 16: Transparency of school budget**



### 5.9.3 School Budget Inspection

The majority of the school directors surveyed, 93%, advised that the school budget is inspected, although it is concerning that some did not know. Under MOEYS, the Inspectorate of Education is the department that is in-charge of assessing and inspecting the schools, including the school budget. It is vital that the school budget is inspected so that the community at large will know and become aware of how and for what purposes the budget in the school are utilized and used. This way, it creates transparency among education stakeholders.

**Table 16: Number of times school budget is inspected according To School Directors**

Number of times the school budget is inspected	Response rate
never	4%
once a year	21%
twice a year	39%
more than twice per year	33%
No answer	3%

A high percentage of the school directors (39%) said during the interview that the school budget is inspected twice a year, followed by 33% that said more than twice a year and 21% that said once a year.

For some schools that are not inspected, it may be due to several reasons like understaffing of an inspectorate department where there are more schools than school inspectors, lack of transport especially for those inspectors deployed in rural areas, and insufficient funds to conduct school inspection. But many among the school directors do not know anything about

school inspection. This may be due to the fact that some schools are located in areas that are too remote to be reached by school inspectors.

### **Children are partly experiencing a right to transparent and accountable schools**

School directors reported a willingness to be transparent about the school budget as nearly three-quarters reported making the school budget available to the public or anybody who wants to see it. Teachers also reported high levels of transparency. Parents, however, reported low levels of knowledge about school operations, with 86% never having seen or heard of plans to spend the program-based budget.

A lack of willingness on behalf of parents to involve themselves in their child's education does contribute to this (70% of parents said that they never ensured or monitored their child's participation in school activities) but school directors should proactively try to encourage parent and community participation in school operations as the community could be a vital source of support for under-resourced schools. It is reasonable to expect that parent participation would also translate into greater student participation in school, reducing dropout.

## **5.10 Right 10: Right to quality learning**

*Girls and boys have a right to a quality learning environment and to effective teaching processes so that they can develop their personality, talents and physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential.*

### **5.10.1 An incomplete education**

The quality of education that a child receives is determined in part by the length of education that they receive. As discussed above, many children drop out of school before completing lower secondary school. In 2010/11, only 117,021 children successfully graduated from grade 9 (EMIS, 2011/12) whilst 618,642 children enrolled in grade 1 nine years earlier (EMIS 2003/04). The challenge must be to ensure as many children enrolling in grade 1 actually complete their basic education up to grade 9.

### **5.10.2 Teachers performing double shifts**

Seventy five percent (75%) of school directors interviewed advised that their school operates a double shift schedule, and in 91% of those schools there is at least one teacher teaching a class in the morning and one in the afternoon. In some cases, schools have six, seven or eight teachers in their school doing double shifts. Even if there were more classrooms available, there would not be any teachers available to teach in them.

Furthermore, using classrooms in the morning and afternoon is an effective use of buildings, meaning that they are not lying empty and unused as much. Therefore, MoEYS should prioritise recruiting more teachers to reduce the necessity of teachers doing double shifts.

MoEYS prescribe that there should be between 18 and 20 hours of primary school instruction per week, equivalent to 684 to 760 hours per annum (MoEYS, 2004). This is slightly less than the average for developed countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2011), which is 775 hours per annum (for 7-8 year olds) but more than in Vietnam, which prescribes 660 hours at primary school level<sup>6</sup>. If teachers were doing double shifts it is possible that they could be providing more than 1300 hours of instruction in a year, far

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<sup>6</sup><http://en.moet.gov.vn/?page=6.7&view=4401> accessed 9th August 2012.

above international averages. This could obviously impact upon their ability to prepare for lessons or mark the work of students.

### **5.10.3 Second jobs and loss of teaching hours**

Two previous studies by NEP found that there is a high prevalence of teachers having second jobs, with 90% of teachers in 2008 reporting that they had a second (NEP, 2008) and one in 2012 finding that 67% of teachers reported having a second job (NEP, 2012). This can impact upon their ability to prepare adequately, and indeed may impact upon the number of hours that teachers do actually provide. 43% of teachers advised they would not be absent as much if their salary was increased to \$100 per month allowing them to give up a second job plus 78% of teachers said that they would be able to spend more time preparing lessons if their salary was increased because they would concentrate only on teaching (NEP, 2012).

Further NEP research on Effective Teaching Hours in Primary Schools found the teaching hours in the studied areas were considerably lower than they were set in the Policy for Curriculum Development 2005-2009. The average number of weekly class period in the studied primary school were as follows: 24.89 class periods (16.6 hours) at grades 1 and 2, 25.05 class periods (16.7 hours) at grad 3, 25 class periods (16.66 hours) at grade 4, 25.81 class periods (17.20 hours) at grade 5 and 26.15 class periods (17.43 hours) at grade 6 . The same research report revealed that there were shortfalls of total weekly instructional hours of all subject, but mathematic. The biggest shortfalls were in Khmer and Physical subjects.

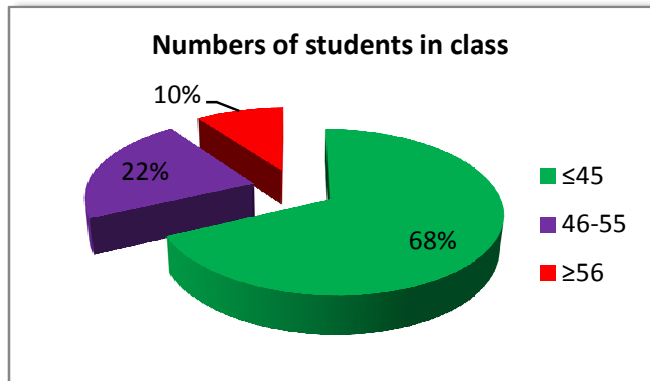
A study of teaching hours by Department of Curriculum Development, (MoEYS, 2008) found that approximately 46 days, up to 153 hours, were lost a year with two main causes being teacher absenteeism and teachers teaching for fewer hours.

### **5.10.4 Number of students in classes**

Thirty two percent (32%) of teachers reported that they have class sizes of more than 45 students, which is the maximum recommended by MoEYS, indicating that large class sizes is an issue that needs to be addressed in order to make sure students receive a quality education. Official MoEYS figures report that there is an average of 38 pupils in a primary school class (EMIS, 2011/12) much higher than the average of 21 pupils for countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011). Teachers are unable to give enough time to specific students who need support or to student participation when there are too many students in the class, seriously affecting student learning.



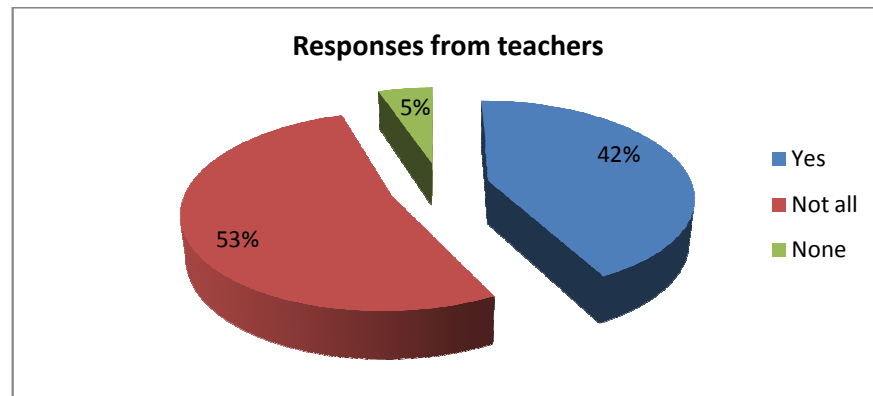
**Figure 17: Average number of students in classes – responses from teachers**



### 5.10.5 Availability of textbooks

The lack of textbooks remains an issue. Only 42% of teachers reported that their children have their own text book for each of their subjects. Sharing textbooks among three or more students as was reported by teachers restricts the ability of students to follow the teacher and do their own exercises. It also limits the ability of students to use textbooks outside of school hours for further learning or homework.

**Figure 18: Whether children have their own text book for each subject**



### Children suffer poor quality of learning

Children are not experiencing the right to quality of learning. The common practice of teachers doing double shifts in the one day and a high student-teacher ratio remain obstacles to achieving quality of education. These factors can reduce the teacher's time for preparation, ability to focus on individual children and likely negatively impact upon their effectiveness in the classroom. The relative lack of quality, trained teachers, as discussed under Right 4, only exacerbates this problem. Finally, a lack of textbooks can affect the child's learning in the classroom and limit opportunity to work at home, negatively affecting the quality of their education.



## CHAPTER VI CONCLUSIONS

### 6. Conclusions

Chapter 5 contains descriptions and analyses of information available to judge how well children are currently experiencing the ten rights as set out in the Promoting Rights in Schools programme. For each right, there is a summary of the information found. Following presentations of the findings and comparisons to the descriptions of what each right should entail with NGOs and their communities that participated in the research as well as the Research Advisory Group for this report, the following judgments were made regarding the experience of children in Cambodia against the ten rights.

1. Right to free and compulsory education	Partly experienced
2. Right to non-discrimination	Mostly experienced
3. Right to adequate infrastructure	Partly experienced
4. Right to quality trained teachers	Partly experienced
5. Right to a safe and non-violent environment	Partly experienced
6. Right to relevant education	Mostly experienced
7. Right to know your rights	Partly experienced
8. Right to participate	Rarely experienced
9. Right to transparent and accountable schools	Partly experienced
10. Right to quality learning	Rarely experienced

When analyzing the experience of children in relation to their right to participate in school decision making, we should consider that our survey was of children in grades 4, 5 and 6. The capacity of young children to be involved in decision making is less than would be the case for children in lower and upper secondary schools. Similarly, it may not be wholly unexpected that children in grades 4, 5 and 6 do not have complete awareness of their rights given they are still early in years and development.

The right to quality learning (Right 10) is arguably the most important right and failing to provide this must be a serious concern for MoEYS. However, it should be understood that there are many factors that contribute to a quality education, therefore it will take determined and long-lasting efforts to provide the basis for a quality education.

Firstly, MoEYS could increase children's experience of quality education by implementing policies to increase the number of teachers available, reducing the pupil teacher ratio in classes and also the need for teachers to perform double shifts, which this report found a high incidence of. The findings of this research indicates that recruiting more teachers should be a greater priority than building more schools or classrooms.

Secondly, MoEYS should continue efforts to improve the distribution of textbooks so that more children have their own textbook for each subject. Additionally, it was apparent from our study that students are giving money to teachers for teaching materials, and MoEYS should ensure that teachers have proper materials to teach with. Further research could identify which materials teachers are lacking thus assisting MoEYS to consider whether resources could be targeted to provide these materials.

Thirdly, a finding of this research is that many children do not complete grade 9 (lower secondary education) limiting the ability to say that the right to a quality education is mostly being experienced. Analysis could begin with considering findings from a World Bank report that the reason for 53.5% of children not attending or having never attended primary school was because they were considered to be too young, even after the child was of school-going age (6 years old and above)<sup>7</sup>. This indicates that changing parental perceptions towards their child's education is paramount but our research found that 70% of parents said that they never ensured or monitored their child's participation in school activities.

The consequence of starting primary school late could be that by the time the child completes primary school, parents may think that the child has reached the age where they should now be contributing to the household. Indeed this was the explanation given for 28.6% of children not attending or having never attended lower secondary school.

Fulfilling the right to quality-trained teachers (Right 4) will also contribute greatly to children receiving a quality education. Attracting teachers who have higher qualifications, such as university degrees could greatly improve the child's experience. Currently, over one-third of teachers have only completed primary or lower secondary school. Increasing salaries, which our research shows are domestically uncompetitive, and working conditions may be required for this, which may also reduce the incidence of teachers having second jobs, thereby reducing the loss of teaching hours. If fewer teachers had second jobs this would give them more time to prepare for lessons, as teachers have reported<sup>8</sup>, which should improve the quality of education. The benefits from a more educated population and workforce resulting from enacting these policies could exceed the extra costs that this requires.

Improving the working conditions of teachers might also help to reduce the amount of unreasonable informal costs that this research found families experience when children attend school. Such costs include paying for tuition within school, paying daily attendance fees to teachers and paying for teacher's materials. This harms children's right to a free education (Right 1).

It is not just MoEYS that could implement changes to improve children's experience of these ten rights however. At the school level, teachers and school directors should make improvements to ensure that children enjoy a safe and non-violent environment, with it being made clear to teachers that corporal punishment or physical/mental abuse of students is unacceptable. School directors and teachers should be trained in classroom and student management and work to reduce the incidence of violence amongst students whilst at school. Training should consider why girls are slightly more likely to report experiencing violence, abuse or threatening behavior in the classroom and in the playground.

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank (2012) 'Matching Aspirations: Skills for implementating Cambodia's growth strategy'. The World Bank

<sup>8</sup> NEP (2012), *Assessing the Impact of Incentives on Teacher Motivation*, NGO Education Partnership

School directors have a role to play in increasing the transparency and accountability of schools. Whilst the inspection system may be restricted by a lack of resources, transparency and accountability can be achieved by greater involvement of the community including commune councils, school support committees and parents, also by posting information on public notice boards.

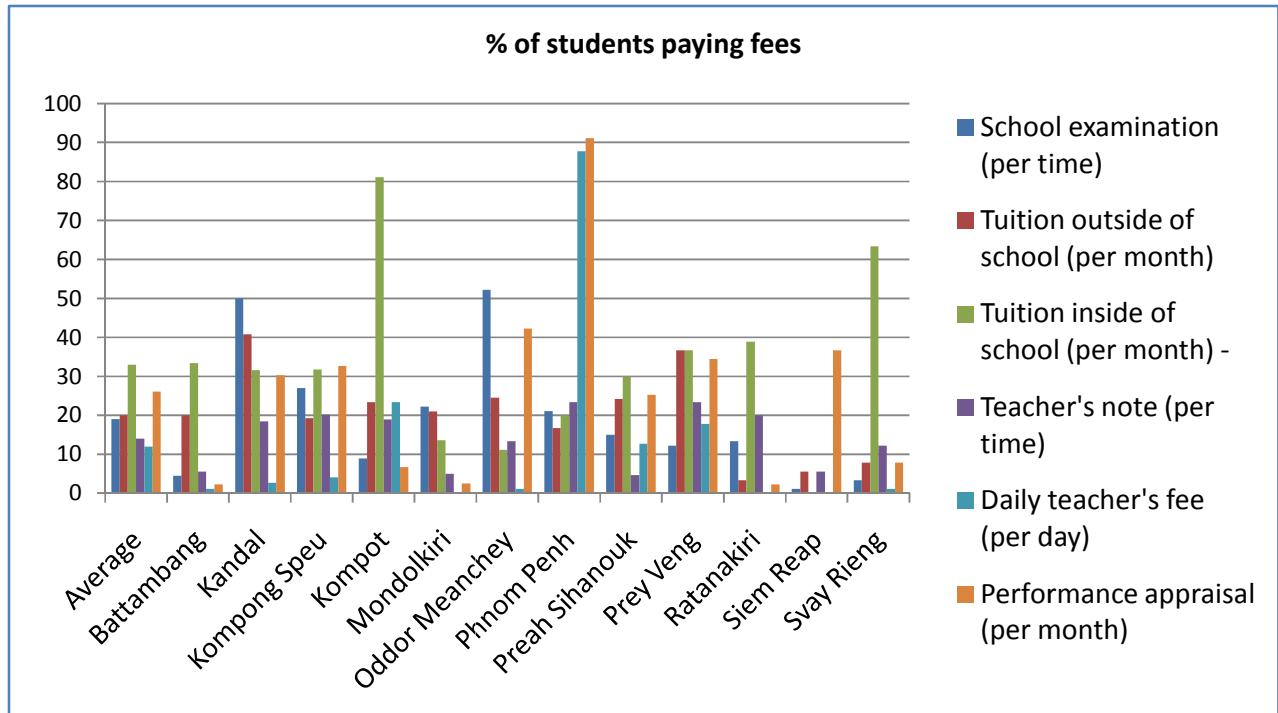
With leadership from MoEYS and commitment from school directors, teachers and the community, there is an opportunity to radically improve the experience of children relating to their educational rights. Because children often lack the ability or opportunity to tell us that their rights are being infringed, we should take our responsibility to provide these rights for them ever more seriously.

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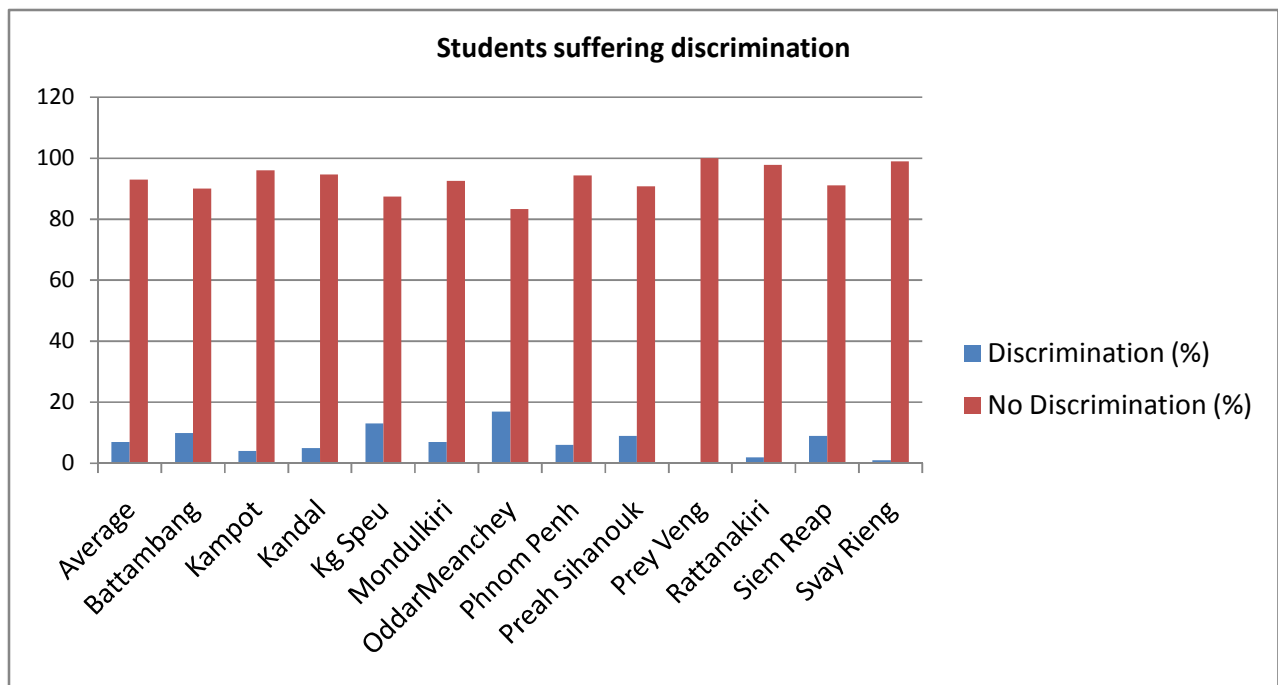
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## 8. Appendices: Provincial findings

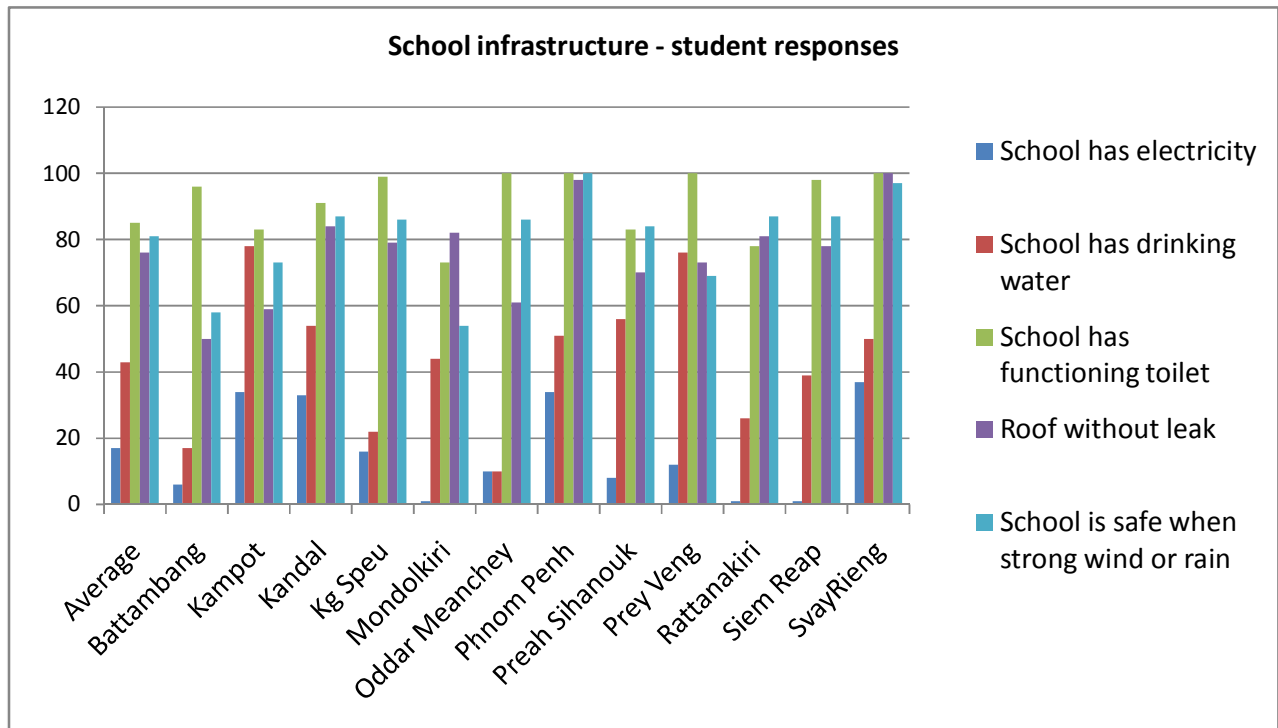
### Annex 1: Right 1, Provincial Findings



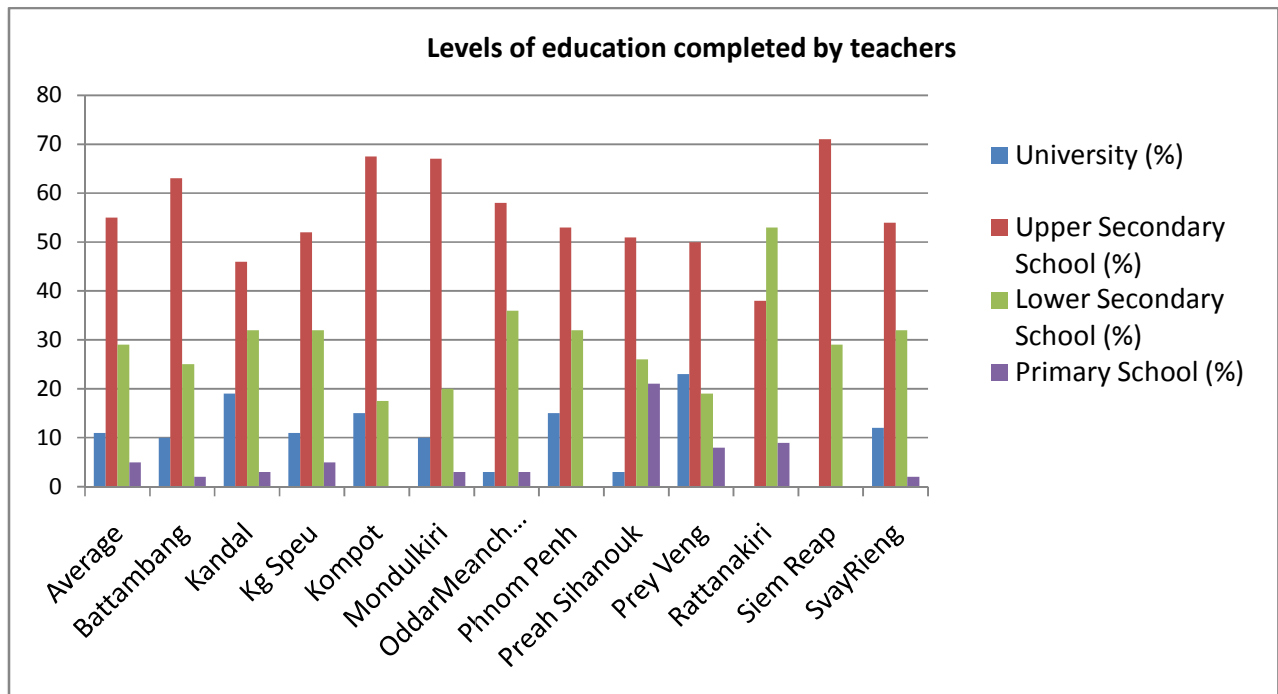
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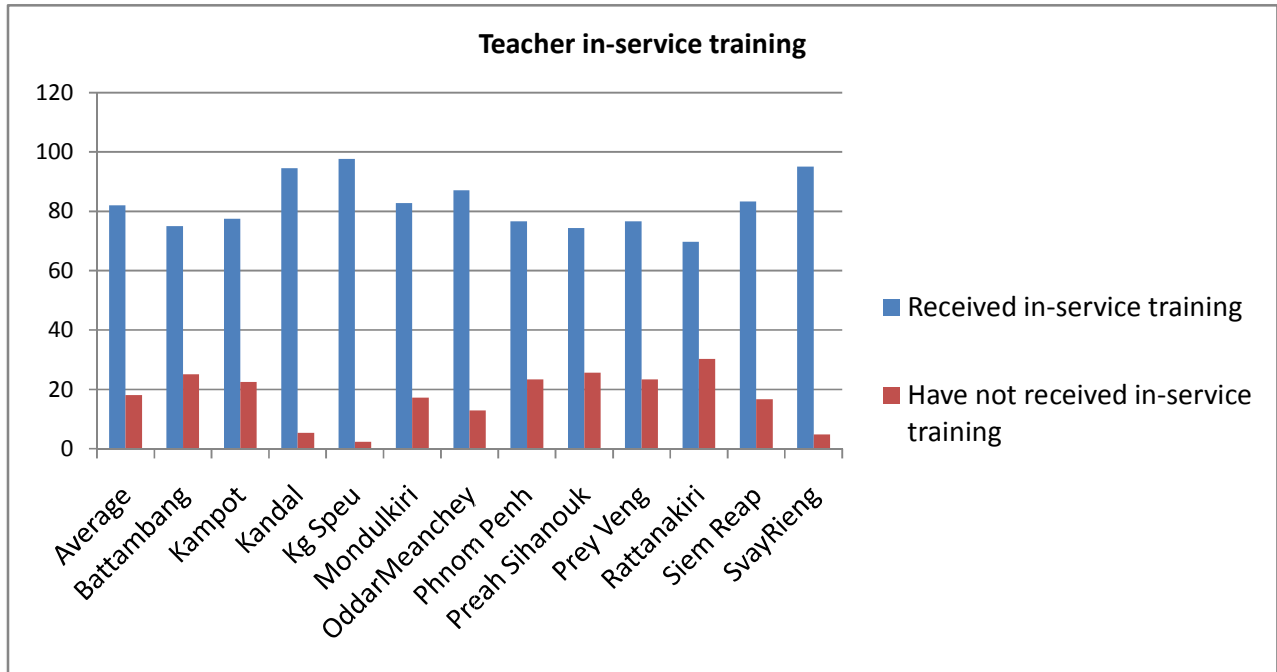
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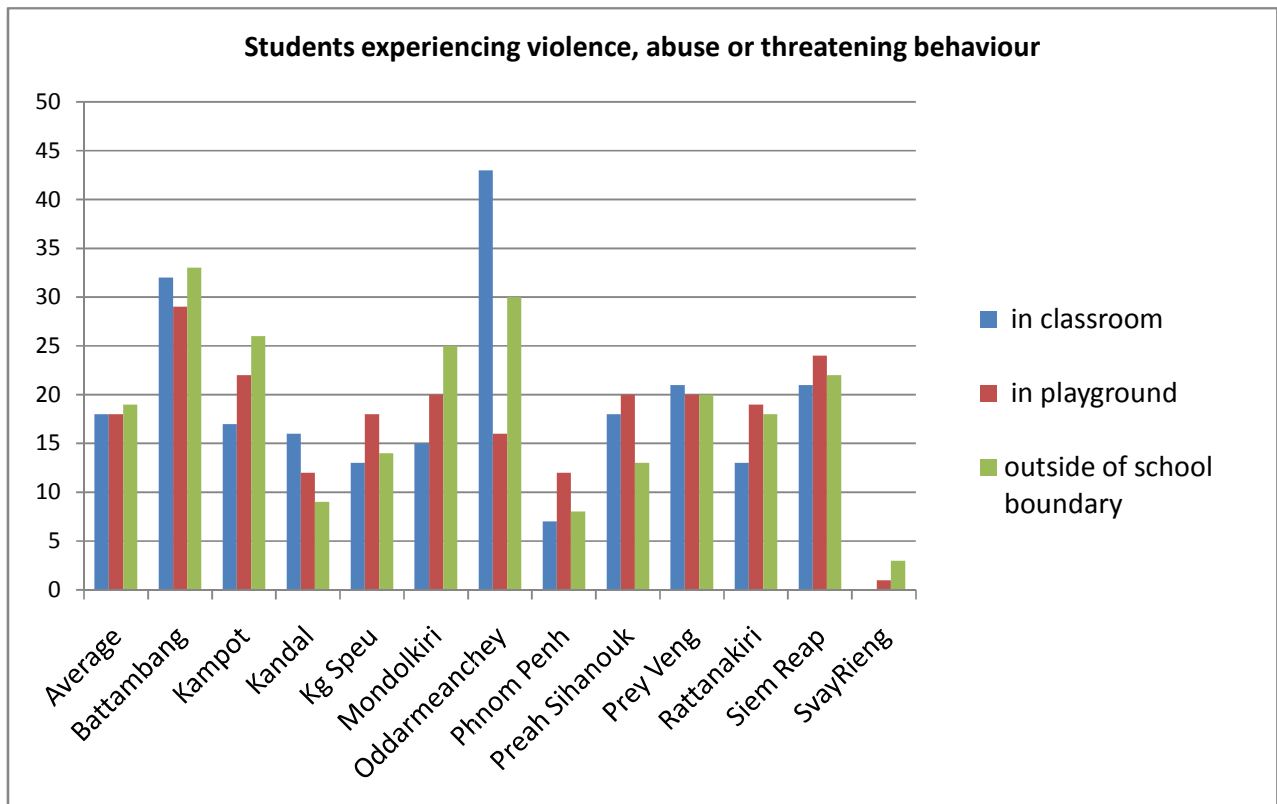
### Annex 4: Right 4, Provincial Findings



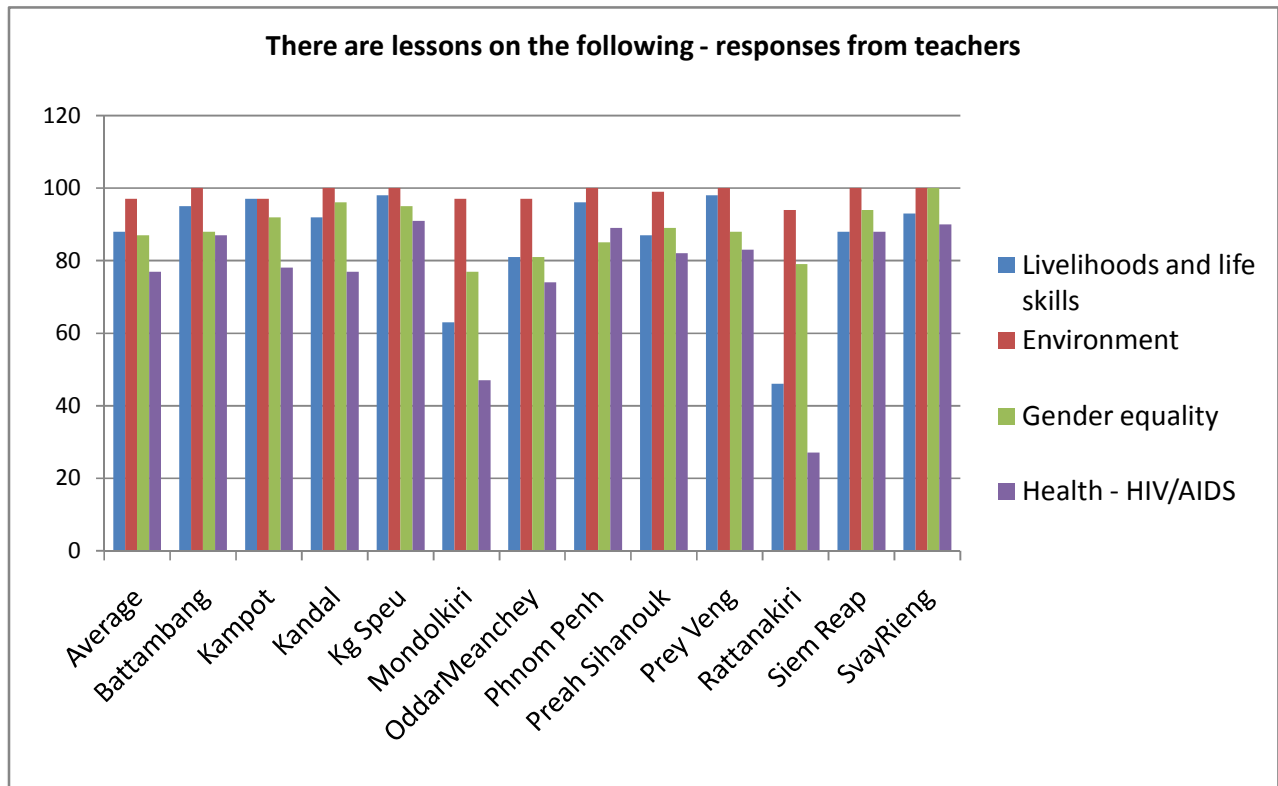




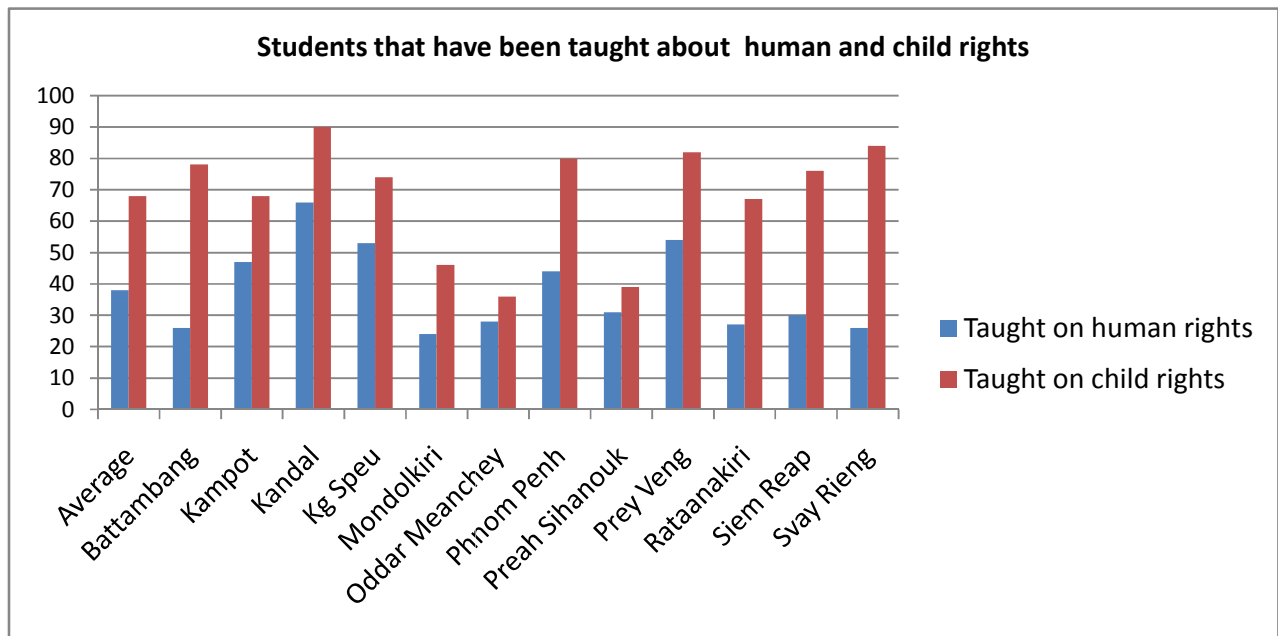
## Annex 5 - Right 5, Provincial Findings

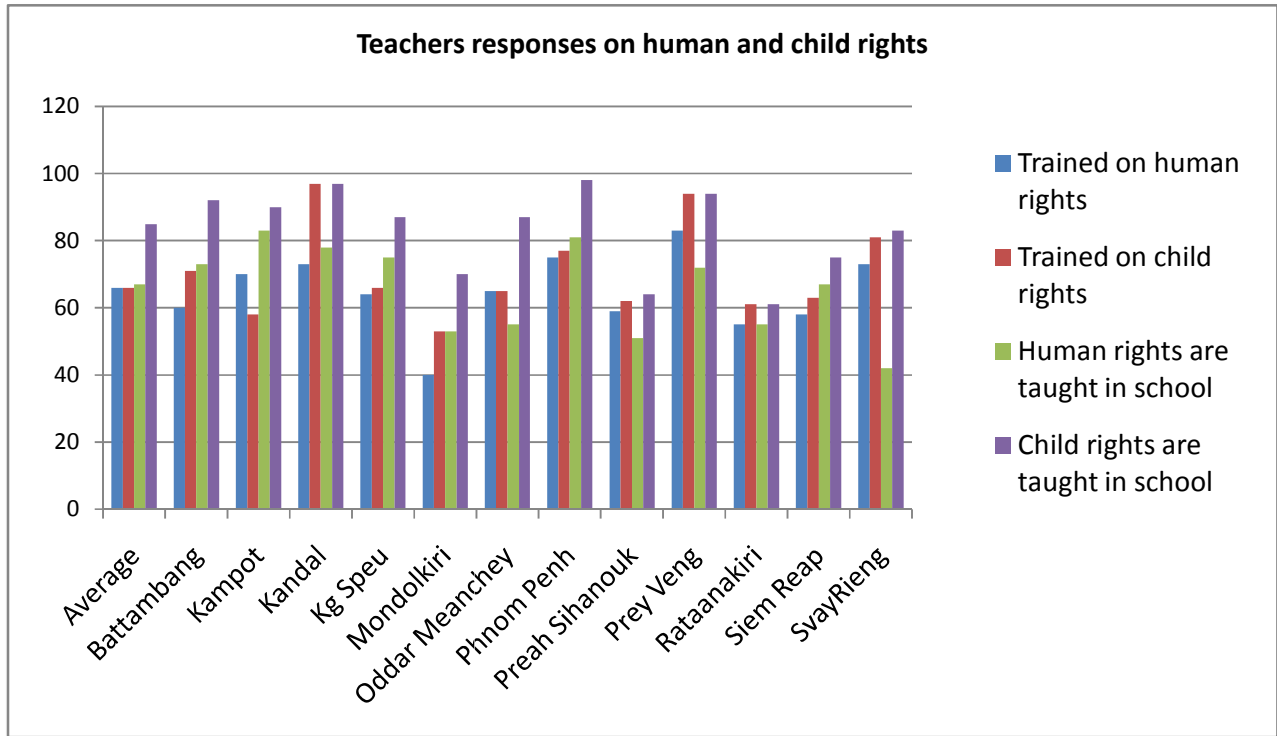


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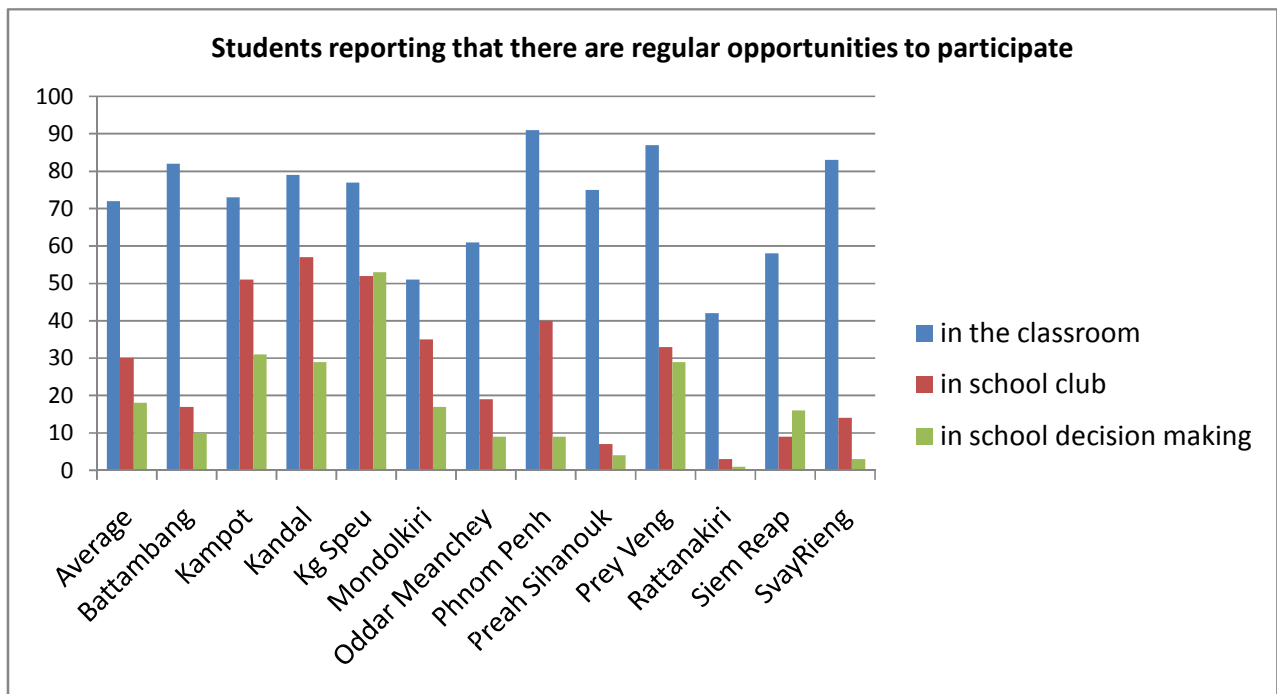


### Annex 7 - Right 7, Provincial Findings

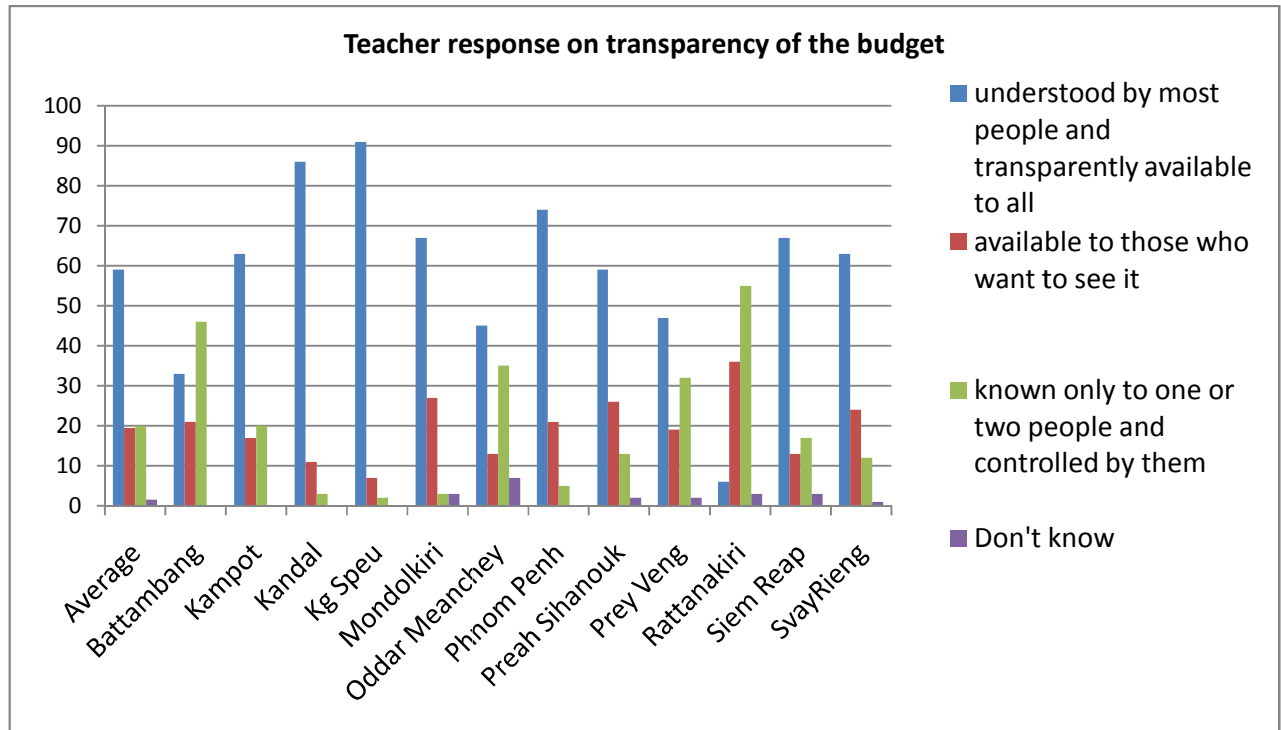




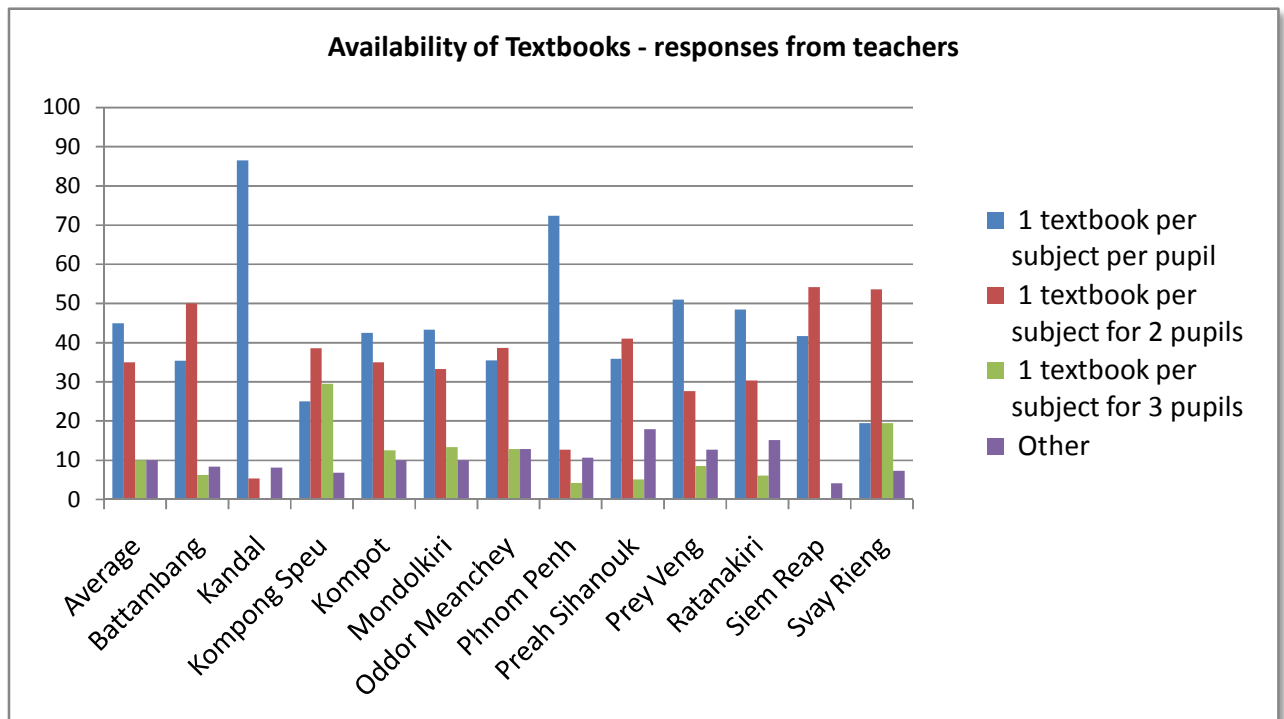
#### Annex 8 – Right 8, Provincial Findings

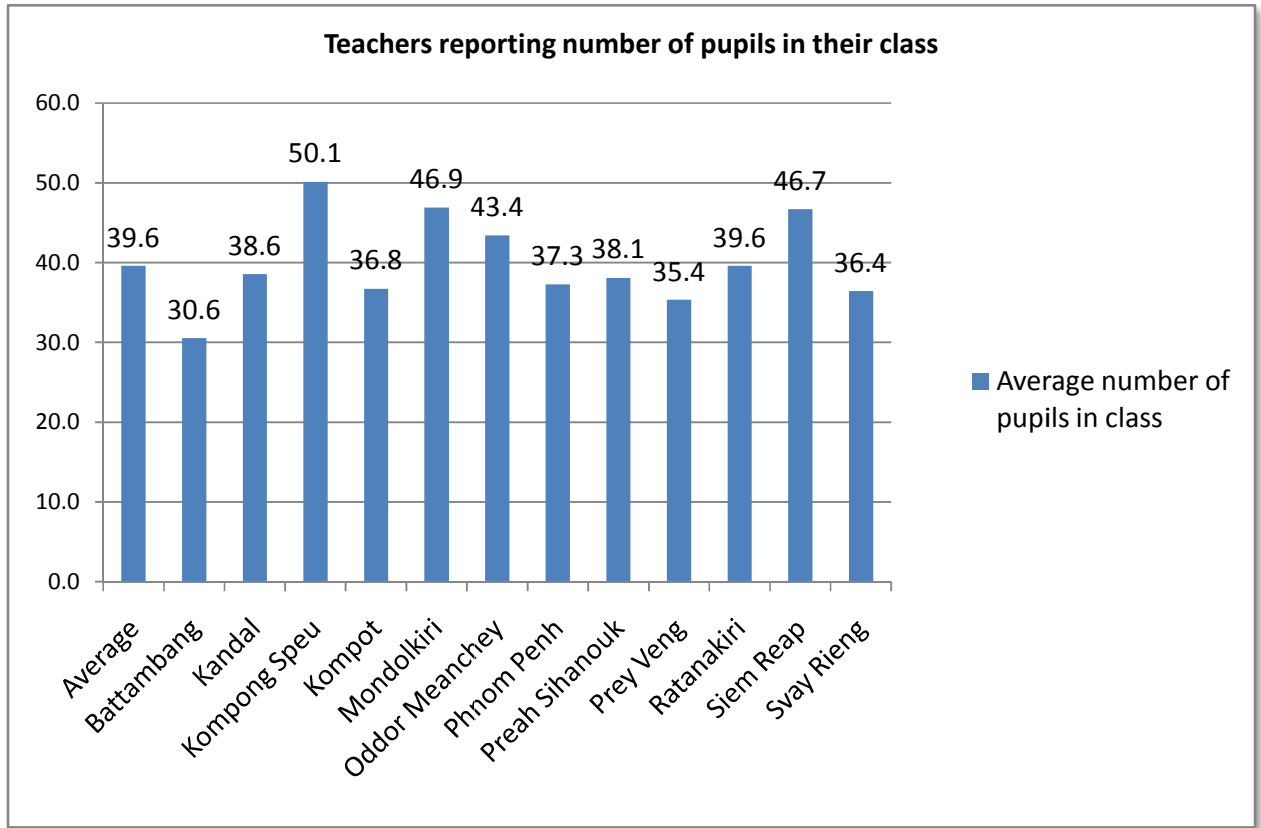


Annex 9 – Right 9, Provincial Findings



Annex 10 – Right 10, Provincial Findings





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### **About NEP**

NGO Education Partnership is a membership organization that promotes active collaboration between NGOs working in education and advocates on behalf of its member organizations in policy meetings and discussions with the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in Cambodia. Over 100 educational NGOs working in Cambodia are members of NEP

More information on NEP can be found at:

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