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Post Conflict Reconstruction of Education in Cambodia: STARTING AFTER ZERO YEARS

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List of Acronyms

ADB Asian Development Bank

ASEAN Association of South East Asian Nations

CDK Communist Party of Kampuchea

DK Democratic Kampuchea

EFA Education For All

ESP Education Strategic Plan

ESSP Education Sector Support Program

FDI Foreign Direct Investment

GDP Gross Domestic Product

IFI International Financial Institution

IMF International Monetary Fund

LDC Least-Developed Country

MDG Millennium Development Goal

MoEYS Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NPRD National Program to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia

NSDP National Strategic Development Plan

ODA Official Development Assistance

PRK People's Republic of Kampuchea

PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

RGC Royal Government of Cambodia

SWAP Education Sector-Wide Approach

SAP Structural Adjustment Program

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Program

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF The United Nations Children's Fund

UXO Unexploded Ordinance

WB World Bank

Abstract

Education has traditionally been earmarked as the catalyst for development and Nation building in Cambodia. The education sector is often cited as one of Cambodia's success stories and continues to be accorded high priority on the National agenda. However, after more than two decades of war, the country and the education sector is struggling to gain its footing amidst an educational crisis. While attention is increasingly being paid to the Millennium Development Goal target of universal primary enrollment by 2015, a target that Cambodia may achieve, the sector is characterized by severe deficiencies of quality, access, sustainability and equality. As much as these deficiencies can be attributed to poor governance, corruption and war, they are also being exacerbated by the legacy of war that continues to impacted internal social dynamics within the country. Additional attention must be paid to these issues, particularly that of gender, as Cambodia continues its reconstruction effort in a society rife with poverty.

Relevance to Development Studies

Despite its tragic history, Cambodia has been overlooked in South East Asian development studies due largely to its geographical location between two regional powers, Thailand and Vietnam. Since the end of the Khmer Rouge led civil war that destroyed much of the country and classified it as a failed/phantom state by some, Cambodia has adopted a modern market economy resulting in little progress in education sector reform. However the roots of today's 'educational crisis' in Cambodia can be traced to many things, including the post conflict reconstruction effort, high levels of aid dependency, the ever-present tensions between modernity and tradition and the legacy of war that still haunts the country to this day. Education has, and must continue to be, the catalyst for development in Cambodia. In order for this to occur, greater emphasis must be given to the continuing reconstruction effort as well as the legacy of war, and other internal dynamics, that have contributed to the crisis.

Keywords

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Motivation

My visit to Cambodia in 2006 had a profound impact on me, and my decision to pursue additional studies. While traveling the country I learned much about the civil war and Cambodian society. The legacy of war that still permeates the society is so vast it can be felt in all corners of the country. Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in South East Asia; infrastructure is lacking, many youth are unemployed and uneducated, living conditions for the majority are minimal and the problems are being compounded as Cambodia continues to fly under the radar in much of the development studies discourse. I believe that education can prove to be a catalyst for Cambodia's development but its record up until now is mediocre.

These experiences in both rural and urban Cambodia have inspired me to investigate how education is affected by conflict and reconstruction. More directly, how have internal factors, particularly the legacy of war, contributed to the education crisis in post conflict Cambodia? As Cambodia has maintained many traditions in their society, one in which women out number men, a particular focus will be drawn to the roles of gender and tradition in potentially exacerbating the crisis. In addition, what facets of reconstruction, if any, have contributed this situation? Through this, conclusions and recommendations will look at how the crisis can be broken or solved. These questions were essential in guiding the research in order to investigate and uncover the dynamics that have led to Cambodia being in this unfortunate position of educational crisis.

1.2 Introduction, Relevance and Justification

Despite its tragic history, Cambodia has been overlooked in South East Asian development studies due mainly to its geographical location between two regional powers, Thailand and Vietnam. Since the end of the brutal, Khmer Rouge led civil war that destroyed much of the country and classified it as a failed/phantom state, Cambodia has adopted a modern market economy resulting in little progress in education sector reform (Gros, 1996). However the roots of today's 'educational crisis' in Cambodia can be traced to many things, including the post conflict reconstruction effort, high levels of aid dependency, the ever-present tensions between modernity and tradition and the legacy of war that still haunts the country to this day (Ayers, 2000).

Three lines of arguments have attempted to explain why the Cambodian education system has been characterized by a series of successive crises. First, the rapid expansion of education during Prince Sihanouk's reign was abruptly halted by the civil war and rule of Lon Nol in the early nineteen seventies and then was completely torn down during the Khmer Rouge led revolution of 1975-1979. The Khmer Rouge not only destroyed Cambodia's educational infrastructure but also effectively eliminated the majority of the sector's key

personnel (Ayers, 2000). The second argument purports that the Vietnamese backed successor regime to the Khmer Rouge, in the 1980s, was not internationally recognized and was deprived of vital development assistance. Lastly, education in Cambodia has always been caught in the nexus between modernity and tradition. The market-oriented nature of contemporary Cambodian education has been unable to overcome its socialist past (Ayers, 2000). As accurate as many of these arguments are, they also omit a number of contributing factors to the current crisis.

The importance of education, and its contribution to the development of human resources and capacity, has emerged as a crucial element in economic development, post conflict reconstruction, poverty alleviation and gender equality. These objectives also have an interlinking relationship, as one is not necessarily achievable without success in the other realms. Economic growth is essential for poor people to have access to income generating opportunities. By increasing equitable access to quality and applicable forms of education, growth can increase employment opportunities (WB, 2002: 96). However, the education system needs to be responsive to labor market demands, which has resulted in greater focus being paid to vocational training and targeted skill development programs (MoEYS 2002: 8).

As many emerging economies struggle to increase labor market demand, the informal sector grows, as it too is responsive to education. According to evidence presented by Colclough (2002), schooling improves productivity in rural and urban self-employed and even encourages entrepreneurship. (Colclough, 2002: 148). In more traditional societies, educational opportunities often result in some level of urbanization, which, can reignite the tradition versus modernity debate and also result in the loss of family labor and decreased agricultural production.

The role of education in reducing poverty has jumped to the forefront of policy agendas in the last few decades. The benefits of education stretch far beyond the classroom and permeate the lives of those able to access it, particularly for girls (Kadzamira & Rose, 2003). However, both at the state and household levels, decreased educational attainment is both a cause and outcome of poverty. As direct and indirect costs of education continue to burden many households, the poor find themselves particularly disadvantaged and unable to realize the benefits of schooling. In addition, the opportunity cost of sending children to school is often too great for the poor, as their labor is needed to increase household income. A family's decision to meet the costs of education depend largely on their perceptions of what private returns it will bring in the short and medium term. Although many countries have failed to reach the goal of full primary enrollment, education still stands as an important means of reaching other goals, like reducing poverty and hunger, put forth in the Millennium declaration (Kadzamira & Rose, 2003: 501).

1.3 Background of the Khmer Rouge Period

On April 17th 1975, the communist Khmer Rouge advanced into Phnom Penh and launched Democratic Kampuchea, declaring and end to over two thousand years of Cambodian history. Pol Pot, the enigmatic leader of the Khmer Rouge nicknamed Brother Number One, announced a new era of Cambodia, starting with 'Year Zero'. "The 'new Cambodia' lasted exactly three years, eight months, and twenty days, during which time the people of Cambodia were subjected to a cataclysmic social experiment" (Clayton, 1998: 1). It has been estimated that between one and three million people, mainly Cambodians, died during the Khmer Rouge's reign (Heuveline, 1998). Their ideology was extremely peasant-worker oriented. Furthermore, any other person with knowledge of a foreign or minority language, associates of previous regimes, educated in the West or possessing professional skills, like doctors, engineers and teachers, were executed as they were seen as threats to the revolution. Markets and currency were abolished, religious figures defrocked and schools demolished. Their primary goal was to destroy all social, political, cultural and economic infrastructures so that it would prove impossible for these structures to re-establish themselves. Pol Pot's vision, in retaliation to an increasing urban-rural divide, was that of an equal society where all live harmoniously united in the common effort to build and defend their beloved fatherland and increase production which was to fuel the '1976 Four Year Plan to Build Socialism in All Fields' (Clayton, 1998: 4). The enemy of the Khmer Rouge was, generally, capitalism and modernization. Through this, Brother Number One advocated a policy of produce and consume locally which called for self-reliance and international isolationism (Clayton, 1998).

Since the mid nineteen seventies, Cambodia has been defined by these atrocities committed under the Democratic Kampuchean revolution of 1975-1979. According to Ayers (2000), Democratic Kampuchea was one of the most radical revolutions ever (Ayers, 2000). In the end, all policies and goals set forth by Pol Pot et al were complete failures. Education, under the Khmer Rouge, provides a vivid illustration of how this cycle of destruction and construction was envisioned by the communist leaders (Clayton, 1998).

1.4 Limitations

The limitations of my research are few but are particularly pertinent to the outcome of this paper. It appears that very few statistics, particularly relating to education, exist prior to 1990. This has limited my analysis by not being able to draw on the situation of the education sector prior to the outbreak of violence and war. A literature review of the Prince Sihanouk and Lon Nol periods provide a glimpse into the past but not deep enough to aid any conclusions developed in this research.

A more personal limitation is also worth noting. I am a Canadian, studying in the Netherlands. I have visited Cambodia and traveled to remote

regions. Having said that, I admit that my understanding of Cambodian society is limited. Furthermore, my comprehension of Khmer socio-cultural traits is even more limited as my experiences have shown me that they are not particularly open about discussing issues related to poverty, war and the inner working of their society. My initial intention was to gather primary data but an injury prevented me from traveling so I have relied on secondary data for my analysis. While secondary data analysis and literature reviews are effective strategies, additional insight gained from primary research would have been a welcome addition. Some depth may be lacking but the overall objective is to draw some general conclusions that can help formulated some solutions to the educational crisis in Cambodia.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology employed in this research paper is that of secondary data analysis and literature reviews. Various books, articles, reports, and data were consulted to best achieve a holistic understanding of the issue at hand. The analysis follows a two-pronged approach. First, the use of four generally accepted principles of reconstruction were utilized to gain an understanding of how the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), and particularly the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), has responded to the needs of the education sector during this difficult time. Second, pertinent social aspects will be analyzed and explored in order to recognize the roles society, and the legacy of war, have played in the crisis. While other factors may have contributed, the principles and social aspects analyzed aim to provide relevant insight into how Cambodia got to this point, and what solutions, if any, exist to help propel the education sector forward.

1.6 Organization of Research Paper

The organization of this research paper is as follows. Chapter one has addressed introductory elements of this problem by explaining the relevance and justification of the research. Chapter 2 focuses on theoretical aspects related to the research. Chapter three looks at education policy, in general, and within a post conflict setting. Chapter four details the educational background in Cambodia and pertinent policy orientations. Chapter five presents a practical analysis of the reconstruction effort through the use of accepted principles as well as how social aspects, pertaining to the legacy of war, have contributed to the crisis. The final chapter is dedicated to concluding remarks and suggestions for improvement.

Chapter 2: Theory

This chapter expounds on the theories of modernization, targeting and post conflict aid. Classical modernization theory is employed to accentuate the functions of modernity and tradition and their respective roles in creating cultural norms and capital flows. Targeting describes how groups of similarly

marginalized peoples are identified and systematically engaged. The section on post conflict aid examines optimal patterns of delivery and weighs the benefits and drawbacks of external aid dependency.

2.1 Modernization Theory

The classical modernization school emerged after the end of the Second World War in large part due to the collapse of European colonization and the subsequent independence movements of many new nation-states (So, 1990: 17). Searching for a theory to guide the development of the "Third World", the modernization school adopted two: the evolutionary and the functionalist theory. Classical evolutionary theory, born out of the industrial and French revolutions, made three assumptions. First was that social change was unidirectional which inevitably saw human society as moving along a continuum from a primitive state to an advanced one. Second was a value judgment based on the belief that this change represented progress and a sense of civility in the movement to an advanced state. Last was the idea that social change was evolutionary, not revolutionary, and it may take centuries to evolve from a simple, primitive society to that of a complex, modern state (So, 1990: 19).

The other theoretical origin of modernization theory, the functionalist theory, was formulated by Talcott Parsons in the early nineteen fifties. Central to Parsons' argument is the divergence between traditional and modern societies. Through the concept of 'pattern variables', four applicable patterns that distinguish traditional societies from modern ones will be explained.

The first pattern is *affective* versus *affective-neutral* relationships. Essentially, traditional societies have an affective component and the relationships are generally face-to-face, personal and emotional. In contrast, modern societal relationships are characterized by indirect, detached and impersonal interactions, making them affective-neutral. The second set of pattern variables is *particularistic* versus *universalistic* relationships. In traditional societies, social ties are utilized in everyday life, as there exists trust and an obligation to fulfill social promises, meaning the relationships are particularistic. In modern societies, characterized by high population density, relationships are universalistic as interacting with strangers is usual and society is guided by written rules and responsibilities. The third pattern is *collective orientation* versus *self-orientation*. In modern societies, by stressing encouragement in oneself, developing talents and a career, self-orientation helps to energize the individual, which, theoretically, leads to greater productivity and innovation. In traditional settings, allegiance is owed to the family, community or tribe, known as the collective. Individual interests are sacrificed for the good of the collective. The fourth pattern is *ascription* versus *achievement*. In modern societies, market competition has produced an evaluation based on achievements. In traditional societies, a person is assessed

based on their ascribed status like family name, personal relations or caste. (So, 1990: 21-23).

Classical modernization theory's central claim is that economic development is closely linked to changes in social, cultural and political life as a result of Western values and systems being imposed on non-Western societies. "Modernization was widely viewed as a uniquely Western process that non-Western societies could follow only in so far as they abandon their traditional cultures and assimilated technologically and morally "superior" Western ways" (Inglehart and Baker, 2000: 19). Theorists point to the low levels of capital in most least-developed countries (LDC) as the reason for a lack of economic development. For this reason, governments of these poorer countries have tried to use external capital flows, namely official development assistance (ODA), external debt, and foreign direct investment (FDI), for development initiatives. Essentially, proponents of modernization strongly advocate for international financial linkages as the solution to the problem of low levels of capital in LDCs (Billet, 1993: 4-5).

While modernization theorists supply a bounty of evidence to support their claim that external capital flows are good for development, the opposition, dependency theorists, see it in a different light. Their arguments relied heavily on the mounting discontent of many LDCs coupled with the fact that very few of them had actually seen benefits of external capital flows and most now have balance of payment problems. Opponents of modernization have challenged the unidirectional hypothesis of the evolutionary theory by labeling it as 'Americanization' or ideologically ethnocentric. Through this, critics argue that alternative routes of development have been overlooked in favor of the unidirectional theory. They point to the experiences of Asian Tigers like Taiwan and South Korea who followed a more authoritarian path to development. Furthering their claim, opponents believe that development can, and has in some instances, been stopped or reversed and the emphasis on the developing world following a Western path is overly optimistic (So, 1990: 54-55). In addition, it has been argued that cultural values also play a crucial role in the development process allowing different societies to pursue alternative trajectories to development (Inglehart & Baker, 2000: 22).

Another source of strong criticism emerges from the functionalist assumption that tradition and modernity cannot coexist. While modernization theory posits that traditional societies are stable and peaceful, scholars have pointed to the fact that traditional societies are culturally diverse and often rife with conflict, albeit on more of a vertical plane. Moreover, critics argue that tradition and modernity are not mutually exclusive and that modern values exist in traditional societies, like China, and that these forces have always coexisted. Critics support the claim of the cultural lag theory that posits that traditional values never die. In fact even as the conditions that originally gave rise to these values die, "traditional values are usually revitalized at a crucial turning point in

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the modernization process" (So, 1990: 56). Some even believe that tradition may even help the process of modernization by using already established cultural norms, like loyalty (So, 1990: 56).

The process of modernization is also concerned with creating good modern citizens. "In the context of time, a good citizen would also be modern-that is, have modern attitudes, a modern work ethic, modern skills, and a commitment to the economic goals and political aspirations of the modern nation" (Harbison and Myers, 1964, in Ayers, 2000: 443). It is believed that education is the key that turns the engine of modernity, therefore standing as a crucial element in creating modern citizens. As important, and relevant, as this argument is, it completely ignores the potential coexistence of modernity and tradition. Both create demands, mostly competing, yet it appears that education, as a path to modernization, leaves little space for tradition.

2.2 Targeting

The practice of targeting has had mixed results in recent poverty alleviation and educational schemes. The main goal of targeting is to raise the living standards and wellbeing of the poor, generally done through better public spending policies and income generating schemes (Van de Walle, 1998). However the long history of targeting tells us that it is not a statistical exercise but rather a political activity (Hirway, 2003). There are two main ways targeting can be used, through narrow or broad/universal targeting. The main problem, thus far, with the practice of targeting has been too many non-poor benefitting from the targeted schemes resulting in the gap between the poor and non-poor widening. Also, too many poor are seen as unwilling or unable to participate in these programs for a variety of reasons like lack of education, poor health, societal or community stigmas.

In situations where one region of a country has fallen behind other regions in their economic growth, broad targeting can be effectively used. The focus of this broad targeting is on types of spending that are more important to the poor like social services such as primary health and education on the one hand, and rural development on the other (van de Walle, 1998). "Money spent on primary education, for example, is likely to reach more poor children than money spent on secondary or tertiary education, because many poor students will have dropped out of the higher levels, unable or unwilling to afford the opportunity and other costs of continued schooling." (Van de Walle, 1998: 233) It is widely believed that improving access to such social services for the poor will remarkably enhance their wellbeing (Van de Walle, 1998).

Broad targeting has, traditionally, been performed by focusing on geographic targets like provinces, states or regions. Certain population groups within geographic areas have also been the focus of targeting. Geographic targeting has been successful in reaching the poor because often there are significant discrepancies in living conditions between geographic regions and,

local administration is already in place making the actual implementation a lot easier and smoother (Bigman et al, 2000).

One of the main criticisms of broad targeting comes from the view of the poor themselves. Many broad targeted schemes view the poor as patients and is done in a forceful manner. The practice of "targeting often has this substantive feature of taking a passive view of the beneficiaries, and this can be a major source of allocation distortion" (Sen, 1995: 11). What Sen (1995) advocates is the need to see the recipients as agents, not patients. To ignore the fact that poor people think, make decisions, act and respond undermines the entire process of well-being and capability enhancement.

Conversely, many scholars believe that the narrower the target, the greater the impact. Narrow targeting can be seen as an intentional attempt to concentrate benefits on the poor, regardless of the type of spending. One benefit of narrow targeting is its popular policy proposals to reduce budget deficits and public spending while still safeguarding the poor from vulnerabilities (Van de Walle, 1998). Two distinct means of narrow targeting have emerged. First is indicator targeting, which identifies a characteristic of poor people that is closely linked with low income. This can also be a geographic area, albeit on a smaller scale, like a municipality or village (Bigman et al, 2000). Additionally, indicators like nutritional status, gender, landholding class, disability or household size are often used to identify targeted groups and to weed out undeserving peoples (Van de Walle, 1998). Although much debate has centered on the usefulness of income as an indicator, the bottom line is households with similar incomes are probably going to have similar needs (Nelson, 2003).

The most efficient type of narrow targeting is self-selection. Effectively leakages are bypassed by implementing a cost of participation that rises as income rises but leaves the benefits unchanged (Van de Walle, 1998). Critics point to the fact that self-selected participants often have to change their behavior and can be further stigmatized within their village (Van de Walle, 1998). Economically, the costs are significantly lower than in other sectors, namely defense, and the renewed social services are having a positive impact on household income generation (Clark[a], 2009).[i]

2.3 Post-Conflict Aid Patterns

In a post conflict society, generally associated with mass humanitarian needs, economic recovery is arguably the most important variable in ensuring lasting peace and stability (Addison, Chowdhury & Murshed, 2005: 222).[ii] Narrowly, a functioning post-war economy is important, but it is the broader implications of growth, poverty reduction, employment generation and general confidence that ultimately signal success or failure. Aid alone is not sufficient in reconstructing a conflict torn economy, as it has rarely, if ever, been sustainable. Additional issues of domestic revenue mobilization, promotion of education and the role of the financial system are equally important. Many

scholars believe that effective policies must accompany any form of aid to ensure some level of positive growth (Burnside & Dollar, 2000: 864).

A particularly pertinent issue in analyzing how crucial aid is for post conflict economic reconstruction is when and how it is delivered. Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) study on post conflict absorptive capacity provides us with critical knowledge regarding this. They found that "during the first three post conflict years absorptive capacity is no greater than normal, but that the rest of the first decade it is approximately double its normal level" (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004: 1125). They also found that growth is increasingly responsive to policy in post conflict societies (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004: 1125). The reason is, that during this time, the financial system has had a chance to recover and, coupled with the influx of aid, experiences supra-normal growth ranging between 1.2% and 1.7%. Through this they argue that if donors phased in their aid, as opposed to frontloading it, aid could be more effective (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). What nearly all these actors have espoused is the need to supplement aid with effective policies.

As crucial as aid appears to be in post conflict economic reconstruction it can also be misguided and misused. First is the threat of corruption. This is especially potent in societies emerging from a conflict that has a distinct ethnic dimension. Murshed (2008) explains that in poverty stricken societies, time horizons are very short which makes the raiding of natural resource rents or fungible aid money to finance the interests of a narrow political faction all the more attractive (Murshed, 2008: section 6.3.2). In addition, a common focus of recent Western aid has been strategic interests. Due to their location in Europe, Bosnia received three times the amount of aid that Cambodia did, even though Cambodia had twice the population and arguably a more destructive war. The political and social impact of a war in Europe was too great and, coupled with a North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) intervention and an American peace agreement, donors felt like it was their doing (Suhrke & Buckmaster, 2005: 741).

The last major limitation of aid has to do with pledging gaps. These "typically stem from a tendency by donors to exaggerate their intended contributions, delays (both inevitable and entirely avoidable) in project approval and disbursement, and unrealistic expectations about how quickly money can be made to flow" (Brynen, 2005: 240). Apparently this has been particularly problematic in Afghanistan where only $90 million of the $1.8 billion pledged went to the government. The rest of the aid went to the United Nations (UN) and various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Brynen, 2005: 240).[iii] This accentuates the need for the local actors to get involved not only to improve their capacity but to give them a sense of ownership as well (Clark[b], 2009).[iv]

Chapter 3: Policy

3.1 Education Policy

Contemporary education policy tends to focus more on issues of quality, equality, equity and access, particularly at the primary level. Decentralization has emerged as a key policy priority, in much of the developing world, in order to achieve these goals. "The expected benefits of decentralization include increased efficiency in the production of services, improved decision making with the use of local information, greater accountability, and improved responsiveness to local needs and conditions" (Rondinelli 1981; Winkler 1988, in Parry, 1997: 107). Access to education, particularly in remote rural regions, has seen positive consequences as a result of decentralization however quality has not followed suite in many cases. Moreover, the process of decentralization is also inherently focused on the strengthening of institutional capacity at all levels. This is particularly important in a post-conflict environment where institutions are weak. Decentralization also works as a more effective system of checks and balances. This not only decreases corruption but also increases accountability at every level, from the state to the community. Another positive is the improved operational autonomy of all education institutions and increased delegated authority to provinces and districts in planning, managing and monitoring (MoEYS, 2002: 19). The purpose of decentralization is to increase efficiency so that resources allocated to certain regions or groups can be effectively used and not squandered (Parry, 1997: 109-113).

Policies that promote better quality and efficiency of the education system are crucial for ensuring that the delivery of education is well rounded and can lead to employment opportunities. What has been seen in many contemporary developing and post-conflict countries is that the emphasis of education is on increasing enrollments, especially at the primary level. However, these figures only show half of the picture. When quality and efficiency are second-tier priorities, dropout and repetition rates often spike. For many poor families this causes serious problems, as their children are not gaining what they should from school. This often results in parents pulling their children out of school as the opportunity cost of production at home trumps education. However, when quality and efficiency are top priorities, the investment returns to education become noticeable, not only from the perspective of parents and children but also through the reduction in repetition and dropout rates (Colclough, 2002: 147-149). A key component in ensuring improvements is effective teacher training, as teachers are not only educators but also role models. Quality and efficiency are extremely important policy priorities but are too often overlooked in favor of indicators, which are presented as end goals.

Another vital policy issue facing many developing and post-conflict societies is equitable access to education services. A particularly pertinent issue

here is that of gender and the importance of equitable access for women of all ages. All too often women are excluded from development policies and resources, which leaves them in a position of exclusion and increases their, and their families', vulnerability. In addition, women generally experience development differently then men do as their experiences tend to be more gendered. However, women have a very important role to play in economic development. Education serves to both empower and build confidence in women to succeed, be productive and contribute to the growth of their society. Contemporary development studies acknowledge the holistic role empowerment plays in both the male and female development process (Pearson, 2002: 163-167). Unfortunately, in societies where traditional values still dictate much of the decision-making, girl's education is not as highly valued. This has resulted in high dropout rates in upper primary, secondary and particularly tertiary level education. To circumvent these problematic rates, targeted interventions are used to attract girls into attending school and to relieve some of the costs and barriers to their entrance. What has been particularly important in recent decades is the need to promote equity within the education sector by implementing proper policies that accrue to women (Pearson, 2002).

Another important policy initiative in modern education development is that of pro-poor policies, particularly in rural areas. This has emerged as a pressing issue that can be addressed by using specific targeted interventions that introduce new subsidy/incentive programs for children of poor families so that they can go to school or benefit from post school training (MoEYS, 2002). Quality must somehow be ensured, which has unfortunately been the downfall of many rural education programs. The selection process is usually done by using a poverty index, but involving local grassroots community organizations is important if the initiative is to be successful. A good way of ensuring pro-poor policies are effective is by eliminating primary and lower secondary school costs as well as focusing on areas or groups that have been effected by violence, drought or disaster (MoEYS, 2002). Similarly, interventions that target disadvantaged children or minorities are crucial for issues of equity and equality. These targeted policy priorities have been especially vital in post conflict environments were security is still an issue and marginalization and tensions between groups is still present.

3.2 Education, Conflict and Reconstruction

Traditionally, the root causes of conflict can be strongly connected to education. Education sector reforms, as part of post conflict development, can be both a stabilizing and destabilizing force. It can contribute to break the cycle of poverty but can also fuel a new conflict or trigger an old one (Degu, 2005). During the late nineteen seventies and early nineteen eighties, many developing countries used educational expansion as a key component of the modernization process. The number of primary, secondary and tertiary schools increased

during this time only to hit a wall, in the late eighties and early nineties, in the form of the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programs (SAP). These adjustment programs effectively suffocated social sector expenditure in many developing countries (Degu, 2005).[v]

There appears to be increasing recognition of the role education plays as both a perpetrator and victim of violent conflict. It has been argued that conflict affects education in three general ways. First, violent conflict directly affects children through the loss of relatives, physical violence and torture as well as through forced displacement. Second, the damage incurred through violent conflict directly affects student attendance because of security concerns. It also has an economic dimension as incomes, particularly of the poor, generally drop which limits the availability of funds to pay for education. Third, education infrastructure and institutions can become targets of destruction and can be used as bases of occupation for warring factions. In the face of these, the positive face of education emphasizes benefits including peace programs, provision of good quality education, reducing the impact of conflict on educational opportunities, linguistic and ethnic tolerance as well as the 'disarming' of history. However, these three affects imply that there is a need to confront the issues related to war, conflict and education and, with it, comes a sense of urgency to prevent destruction for future generations (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008: 478).

On the flip side, education can be a producer of violence in many situations where the education system promotes racism or xenophobic attitudes towards certain groups. Again, three causes of conflict can be linked to education. First, through the exclusion of already marginalized groups, education has been found to (re)produce economic and class relations, widening the gap of exclusion. Second, education can convey or reinforce particular 'essentialist' identities, based mainly on ethnicity, religion and nationalism. Last, schools and their surrounding environments have been known to reproduce violent and 'masculine' gender relationships that exist within a society. "Through social exclusion, violence and indoctrination, schools can serve as powerful weapons to produce rather than reduce violence" (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008: 479). Through this it can be seen that education can both produce and reduce violent conflict, but can rarely perform both simultaneously.

Many post conflict development initiatives pay little or no attention to educational reform, but choose rather to focus on political and economic reforms in an attempt to jump-start the reconstruction effort. Whenever educational reform has been central to the reconstruction effort, decisions were made purely on political and economic grounds. The reasons for this are four fold. First because the gains realized through educational reform are longer term whereas most leaders seek immediate results. Second, because the struggle

to maintain political power trumps the need to recognize success and failures of the educational sector. Third, the implementation of educational policy, and the subsequent evaluation of its effectiveness and scope, also takes time, usually decades. Lastly is the problem of resources and distribution. Often times in a post conflict setting, educational policy implementation requires more human, financial, and material resources than political leaders are willing to invest (Degu, 2005).

It is important to fully understand the role education plays in post-conflict development. Two applicable issues are at the forefront: discrepancies in educational opportunities and the realistic links between educational expansion, economic development and job opportunities. Discrepancies in educational opportunities have been one of the most controversial issues in many developing countries. As many of these countries have pursued a modernization initiative in the last few decades, an increasing urban bias has been common. As the gap between rural and urban resources grows larger, inequalities begin to take charge and dictate the lack of opportunities for rural inhabitants. While these discrepancies are a result of many things, educational disparities coincide with the disproportionate socioeconomic development of different regions. This has been the case in Cambodia as the main urban centers have flourished while the peripheries have stagnated and declined. Lastly, the links between educational expansion, economic development and job opportunities carries significant political and economic resonance. If educated citizens find themselves in a world with no job opportunities, not only has the intended knowledge been abandoned but the persons may begin to feel alienated. Through this, educational expansion is key to development but be coupled with subsequent economic development initiatives (Degu, 2005). This may be the area where Cambodia has fallen short, particularly in the Sihanouk and Vietnamese backed years. A further analysis will aid in the process of evaluation of this issue in Cambodia's post-conflict years[vi]

Much progress has been made in terms of primary education enrollment but little of this progress has translated to the secondary level (see figure 1 & 2). This is beginning to be seen as problematic as the benefits of primary education are less translatable as more people attain these basic levels. Additionally, as primary schooling is universalized, a major determinant of life chances and a prime source of subsequent inequities will be realized through participation at the secondary level. (Lewin, 2005; 410) According to Lewin (2005), evidence suggests that "those with secondary schooling generally increase their chances of formal sector employment, informal sector work often benefits from skills and competencies acquired from secondary levels schooling, and export-led growth is associated more with investment at post-primary than at primary level." (Lewin, 2005: 410).[vii] Post-primary education is gradually entering the fray because this additional education greatly enhances trainability, and often leads to higher earning and rates of return throughout life. This concern with secondary education is one that needs to take form through

proper national policies. While enrollment rates often vary between primary and secondary education, independently, this suggests the strong influence of policy decisions as well as the importance of potential targeting. (Lewin,2005)

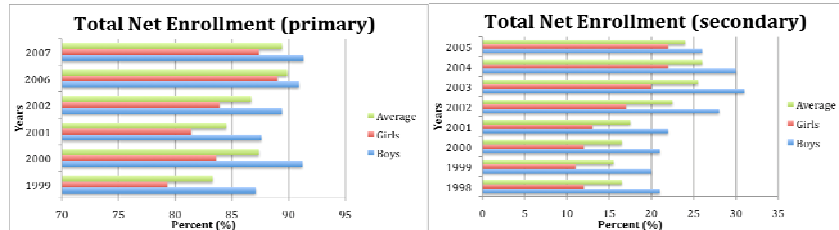**Figure 1**   **Figure 2**

Figure 1: United Nations STATS
(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia),
Figure 2: World Bank
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/CAMBODIAEXTN/0,,menuPK:293881~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:293856,00.html

Chapter 4: Education in Cambodia

4.1 Education Under Prince Sihanouk and Lon Nol

In 1965, a Cambodian examination of institution building espoused that emerging nations are characterized by a 'pragmatic ideology' that guides the leadership of the nation (Blaise, 1964, in Ayers, 2000: 448). Cambodia's 'pragmatic ideology' was promoted by Prince Norodom Sihanouk who gained control of the burgeoning nation-state after successfully lobbying for his self-titled 'royal crusade for independence' (Chandler, 1991, in Ayers, 2000: 449). His ideology was an abstraction that merged Buddhist notions of accumulating merit with absolute loyalty to the monarchy and Marxist egalitarianism. Although many questioned his ideology, it did effectively serve as a symbol of the country's commitment to modernization and economic development. His policies were devoted to national development at the expense of social injustice and underdevelopment (Ayers, 2000). For Prince Sihanouk, education was a form of professional preparation and represented a vital importance in the distancing of the country from its neocolonial dependency (Clayton, 1998).

A key policy in Prince Sihanouk's nation-building project was formal education. His true belief was that education could, and would, be the catalyst through which the country transformed into an industrialized and technologically advanced modern state. With this in mind, Sihanouk embarked on an incredible educational expansion program over the following fifteen years (Ayers, 2000). "With the education budget often absorbing more than 20 percent of the national expenditure, a multitude of new primary and secondary schools and, eventually, universities were inaugurated across the country, providing at least basic educational access for the vast majority of Cambodia's

children." (Ayers, 2000: 449) However, Sihanouk's power and influence over the country began to wane by the late 1960's as the emerging middle class and a small corps of intellects began to question his responsibility for the prevalence of corruption, nepotism and unemployment that was tearing the country apart. Criticized further for his leftist policies, poor economic management and his inability to avoid a conflict with neighboring Vietnam, Prince Sihanouk was deposed in 1970 by a pro-American regime led by his ally, Lon Nol (Ayers, 2000).

Similar to that of Prince Sihanouk, Lon Nol's state building principles were centered around a pragmatic ideology he dubbed "neo-Khmerism.' While Buddhism remained a central tenet, Nol's ideology effectively eliminated loyalty to the monarchy and replaced it with a strain of republicanism signaling the leadership's shift from socialism to capitalism and democracy. Although this represented a break from the Sihanouk years, some continuity was seen in certain aspects of his nation building ideology. Paramount in this continuity was Lon Nol's solid commitment to development and his faith in education as the catalyst to its fruition. What resulted was an increased importance on form over substance at a time when the ever-present tensions between modernity and tradition and an impending conflict inside and outside its borders threatened to strangle their meager progress.

Nevertheless, Nol and his government reaffirmed their belief in the basic principles of modernization. In addition, they committed themselves to a continuation of the educational expansion pursued by Sihanouk, vowing to overcome his mismanagement. Unfortunately the tender hooks the country hung on to were to come crashing down with the alignment of Prince Sihanouk with his sworn enemy, Cambodia's Khmer Rouge. While the Khmer Rouge rebels worked the rural areas and continued to seize vast swathes of land, Lon Nol was being kept afloat by the humanitarian assistance and military aid of the United States. In April 1975, Lon Nol's regime fell to the communist Khmer Rouge who immediately established Democratic Kampuchea (DK). The leaders and members of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) claimed that their only agenda was to transform Cambodia by replacing impediments to national autonomy and social injustice with revolutionary energy (Chandler, 1993, in Ayers, 2000: 450). Their emphasis on self-reliance, self-mastery and complete isolationism was outstanding only in the level of brutality through which it was enforced (Ayers, 2000).

4.2 Education Under the Khmer Rouge

Prior to the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia boasted 5, 275 primary schools, 146 secondary schools and 9 institutes of higher learning. To do away with the past, the Khmer Rouge destroyed 90% of buildings, libraries and materials. 75% of the teaching force, 96% of tertiary students and 67% of all primary and secondary students were either killed, died of starvation or were forced to flee

their homeland (Clayton, 1998: 5-7). "The completeness with which the Khmer Rouge destroyed Sihanouk's educational system suggests both the threat they perceived that system to pose for their revolution and, more generally, the power they recognize in education as a social force."(Clayton, 1998: 15)

Representing mostly radical differences from the Sihanouk era, Pol Pot's new education policy was devoted to larger social goals. According to the 1976 four year plan, children were to be involved in three years of part-time primary education. Pol Pot strongly believed in unconventional logic represented by a type of fast track education where he stated that within ten years, students with no prior education would be able to go from illiterate to graduate engineers just by studying and through plenty of practical work (Vikery, 1984, in Clayton, 1998: 11).[viii]

However, consistency was the main down fall as hours of instruction were arbitrary. While little is known about the academic materials used in Democratic Kampuchea, much of the academic failure during this time can also be attributed to the poor quality of teaching. As most who had experience were exterminated, uneducated worker-peasants were chosen to be teachers based largely on their 'revolutionary attitude' (Vikery, 1984, in Clayton, 1998: 11). With the goal of creating good political consciousness, revolutionary songs of sacrifice were sung as part of the curriculum, full with images of children fighting for social change until their blood flows out to cover the ground (Chandler, Kiernan and Muy Hong Lim, 1982, in Clayton, 1998: 13). Finally, a mastery of technology by way of work and practice was the ultimate educational goal of the rurally oriented Khmer Rouge. A common aphorism of that time was 'the school is the rice paddy [and] the pen is the hoe' linking manual agriculture labor to education (Curtis, 1989, in Clayton, 1998: 11).

Democratic Kampuchea expired on January 7, 1979 when the invading Vietnamese drove the Khmer Rouge into Thailand. The resulting establishment of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) effectively stopped the destruction and construction of the 'new Cambodia' Pol Pot had envisioned. Signaling, once again, the important role education was to play in the new regime of the 1980's, Cambodia's new leadership vowed to end illiteracy and build a national education system of high standards (Clayton, 1998).

4.3 Education During Vietnamese Occupation

When the Khmer Rouge were finally driven out of Cambodia by the invading Vietnamese army, almost nothing remained and the education system had completely crumbled. The PRK, under the occupation of Vietnam, was not well received by many inside and outside Cambodia's borders. Through this, the Vietnamese-backed regime was forced to confront hostilities on three very crucial fronts. First, the Cambodians who survived suspected the PRK was installed and controlled by their traditional enemy, Vietnam, and aimed to brush the country with the same communist strokes that the previous regime had.

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Second, the PRK regime was militarily opposed by remnants of the Khmer Rouge period and other non-communist forces that were heavily financed and supported by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China and the United States of America (Corfield, 1991, in Ayers, 2000). Lastly, the PRK encountered considerable hostility from the international community in the form of sanctions against development assistance for both Vietnam and the new regime in Cambodia as they had deemed that Vietnam had invaded a sovereign state (Mysliweic, 1988, in Ayers, 2000). Notwithstanding this extensive hostility, the PRK advanced their policies through a nation building initiative that emphasized building socialist workmen in Cambodia. The new regime immediately targeted education as the means by which these new workmen could be shaped.

Taking a cue from the Sihanouk era, the PRK's basis for nation building revolved around rapid educational expansion. This expansion, particularly in primary education, was the largest of its kind even in comparison to the early years of Prince Sihanouk's reign. The central tenets of the new education system emphasized culture, technical awareness, capacity for work, good health and revolutionary morality. Beset by huge deficiencies in teaching, curriculum and material aids after the Khmer Rouge, the PRK pursued educational expansion with unrestrained vivacity as it was this sector, and no other, which was seen as the catalyst to development and the creation of a powerful socialist state (Ayers, 1999).

4.4 Education After The Paris Peace Accord

Education in Cambodia, since the 1993 coalition government came into power, has been a key pillar in the country's development policies. Encouraged by international donors who kept the economy afloat, Cambodia's progress has been largely reliant on human resource development. To compete economically with its ASEAN neighbors, the coalition government stressed the need to strengthen skills and capacity development and, again, singled out education as the key to success. The efforts to devise a comprehensive national development strategy finally resulted in the formulation of the National Program to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia (NPRD) in 1994. On the education front, rehabilitation begun earlier by way of an Education For All (EFA) conference organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Inter-sectoral Basic Needs Assessment Mission to Cambodia. Capacity Building for Education and Human Resources Sector Management, a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) project, eventually resulted in the Rebuilding Quality Education and Training in Cambodia Program which was ratified at the National Education Seminar in January 1994 and provided a foundation for policy making over the following two years.

According to the Minister of Education at the time, Ung Huot, Cambodia's educational priorities lay in three glaring areas, reflecting the new regime's commitment to development through education enshrined in the kingdom's constitution. First was the universalization of nine years of basic general education as well as developing new opportunities for combating illiteracy for those with little or no access to the formal system. Second was a focus on modernizing and, generally, improving the quality of education through effective reform to better align it with the present and future socioeconomic needs of the country. The last educational priority was geared towards linking training development with the needs of employers and workers (Huot, 1994, in Ayers, 2000). By the end of the 1990's, Cambodia had effectively incorporated the Asian Development Bank's suggestions and vowed to devote 15% of the country's total budget to education through the implementation of the Cambodia's First Socioeconomic Development Plan 1996-2000.

4.5 Education Since The Millennium

The Millennium signaled a renewed dedication to education in Cambodia. Cambodia has made significant strides in their commitment to education under current Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has been in power in various coalitions since 1985. While the international dedication to education was seen in 1990 at the education conference in Jomtien, Thailand, the next step came in 2000 at the Dakar conference where a framework for action was developed and adopted. The central goals included: expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015, equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes, eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 while achieving gender equality in education by 2015, and finally improving every aspect of the quality of education.[ix]

The more paramount issue of strategy was also developed and adopted at the conference. The strategies included: strong national and international political commitment to EFA, a sustainable and well-integrated framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies, ensure participation of civil society, develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management and meeting the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability. Conducting educational programs in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict and implementing integrated strategies for gender equality in education that recognize the need for change in attitudes, values and practices, were also mentioned.[x]

Since this declaration, Cambodia has experienced both successes and failures in its education sector. Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2006-2010 illustrates the government's continued commitment in the arena of education as a key factor in poverty alleviation by increasing sectoral budget allocation from 13.9% in 2001 to 19.2% in 2007. A central aim of this effort is to improve long-term human resource development and capacity building by delivering quality education to all Cambodian children and youth regardless of their religion, mother tongue, geographic location, gender, disability or socioeconomic status (WB,2002). Additionally, Cambodia has made tremendous, albeit somewhat uneven, strides in educational attainment reflective through the current literacy rate and net enrollment ratios. While the male adult literacy rate is a respectable 84.7% that of women still remains quite low at 64.1%. The net enrollment rate at the primary level is an impressive 93.3% but the survival rate is only 52.5% meaning that almost half of the children who start primary school do not finish it (see figure 3).[xi] Drop out rates constitute a major stumbling block in many post-conflict educational settings. The indicators get even worse as the level of education climbs and the geographic region gets farther from the urban centers. For example, the net enrollment ratio of secondary school in remote areas is 28.1% meaning, over 70% of children aged 12-14 are not in school.[xii] The factors mitigating this deficiency are low or no access to education (10-15% of communes have no lower or upper secondary school), a shortage of trained teachers, inadequate salaries and informal payment, overcrowding, shortage of material and libraries just to single out a few (ADB, 2008: 1).

Figure 3

United Nations STATS
(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia)
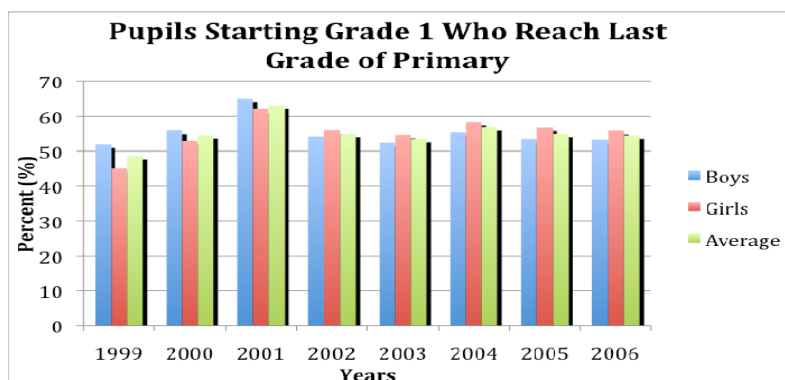
As the government continues its commitment to educational expansion and attainment, in an environment rife with corruption and informal employment, something more must be done. While Cambodia has poured much of its financial resources into education, it stands today amidst an educational crisis. Much of the post-conflict rhetoric espoused how important

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education was for the development of, not only the country, but, people's capacities and skills as well. Unfortunately, something in Cambodia has gone awry because the levels expected have not been attained. In order to better understand where they derailed, and what can be done to get them on track, a comprehensive framework will be used to practically analyze the post-conflict reconstruction of Cambodia's education sector.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Crisis

5.1 Post Conflict Reconstruction Analysis

The primary element associated with the educational crisis in Cambodia has largely emerged from reconstruction effort. Cambodia is an intriguing reconstruction case because fighting continued for the majority of two decades and involved multiple factions. In order to best analyze and evaluate the reconstruction effort, and the ways in which it has and has not contributed to the crisis, the use of principles will be employed. The recognition that post conflict reconstruction is multi faceted should not be overlooked. For the sake of efficiency, and significance to this particular sector, only areas of paramount consequence will be considered for analysis. It should be noted that many of the principles to be discussed are increasingly interrelated, creating a complex and dynamic situation. The analysis will include definitions of key concepts, a focus on the importance and implications of these principles, an indication as to where the RGC and the MoEYS priorities lay and, finally, an analysis of the progress made including pertinent solutions and policy recommendations.

5.1.1 Principle 1: Ownership

Ownership is the first principle to be discussed as it has been singled out countless times as the main driving force behind an effective reconstruction effort. Beginning in the nineteen eighties, and continuing until the new millennium, development became the primary focus of International Financial Institutions (IFI) of the West. Their introduction of SAPs took the ownership of development out of the hands of the state and into the hands of profit seeking pro-market capitalists. Their emphasis was on lowering developing countries' debt by cutting social spending, devaluing local currencies raising interest rates and opening up Southern markets. What followed was a complete erosion of livelihoods, massive health and education problems and stalled economic growth (Messkoub, 1992, in Wuyts, Mackintosh and Hewitt, 1992). Taking more progressive steps forward, the same IFIs introduced, in 2002, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) that focused on participation, accountability, and local ownership. Unfortunately, it did little more than place the onus of responsibility on the state while still lending a guiding hand in the process (Waites, 2000). While the term ownership was used, partnership may have been a more apt definition. What is yet to be seen is whether a developing or reconstructing state can effectively lead development initiatives. Corruption is

still rife in many sectors of developing countries' government, as there exists little accountability or opposition. Although local ownership is what is being called for by many civil society and grass-roots organizations, the effectiveness in implementation and evaluation is yet to be realized.

The crux of the ownership principle focuses on the importance of building on the existing, and new, leadership, participation and commitment of Cambodia's government and people. The central idea is that the local country drives development and the donors are limited to roles of assistance and support. Time, effort and patience are required to ensure effective ownership, as engaging local and national leaders can take longer than an outside imposition, while a strong ground presence is crucial in order to effectively build trust, credibility and consensus among the local population. The main idea surrounding ownership is that a community should invest in what they believe will benefit them so that once the foreign presence has disappeared they will maintain, defend and expand the project. Abandonment of projects seen as useless or costly has been the norm in the developing world over the past few decades. Although local ownership of reconstruction and development comes with many uncertainties, there is no question that the results will be more in line with the expectations of the local communities. (Nastios, 2005)

The immediate post war climate in Cambodia was heavily dependant on external assistance, from a range of donors and NGOs, dedicated to emergency relief and reconstruction. Although aid throughout the decade was substantial, little to no progress was made within the education sector. By the turn of the new millennium, the RGC decided to increasingly take matters into their own hands as the disappointing sector performance was in need of vital life support (ADB, 2008: 1). Their focus centered on effective policy-led reform, a clear indication that they wished to take ownership of the sector. The EFA 2000 Assessment highlighted the fact that "the lack of clear education policy reform priorities and a proliferation of the discreet and often unconnected donor projects were contributing to policy fragmentation and undermining development impact" (ADB, 2003: 1).[xiii] With the introduction of the MoEYS Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) 2001-2006, the Government took it's first steps to taking ownership of the reconstruction of the sector. The next progressive step forward came with the adoption of the Sectorwide Approach (SWAP) in 2003, in conjunction with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), where the sectors' lackluster performance of the 1990s was acknowledged and they vowed to move from "donorship to ownership and partnership" (ADB, 2003: 2).[xiv]

Since the implementation of these strategies, the signs of increasing ownership are promising. The RGC and MoEYS have shown strong leadership and ownership of the programs in a number of ways. The participation, and subsequent local ownership, of domestic stakeholders has resulted in them taking more responsibility for both priority setting and the overall development

of the program (ADB, 2003: 3). "A key feature of the EFA planning and monitoring process will be to extend the stakeholder consultative process to strengthen involvement of other Government Ministries, NGOs and civil society drawing on a comprehensive grassroots operational research program." (MoEYS, 2002: 1) It is believed that this approach will effectively integrate education policies, strategies and priorities.

While external assistance is still a mainstay in Cambodia, MoEYS approved a set of Partnership Principles, which all donors must support. All major donors have committed to this, illustrating the Governments due diligence within the ownership principle. MoEYS continues to take up the ownership mantle by conducting monthly consultative meetings that brings all major stakeholders together to negotiate effective strategies and open up space for dialogue. This process has received praise from the Prime Minister, and other ministries, as policy development has been positive and the growing macroeconomic stability within the country has increased confidence across the board (ADB, 2003: 3). However, as much as these strategies have improved overall sector performance, can it really be viewed as 'owned' by the RGC and MoEYS? The importance of partnership should not overlooked within this principle, but can Cambodia's initiative and insistence on moving from away from donorship be seen as a move to ownership, or just a mere reshuffling of the deck?

The issue of ownership within Cambodia's reconstruction and development effort has seen positive improvements since the turn of the millennium. It is evident that the institutional strength within the country is increasing (MoEYS[b], 2005: 32). However, there consistently appears to be reluctance on the part of external agencies to grant Cambodia this task. This reluctance is not new to a post-conflict environment, but Cambodia presents a particularly challenging example as all vestiges of past governments were destroyed and the country was forced to completely rebuild. Although progress has been made, more needs to be accomplished for them to realize this principle.

Presently, Cambodia's strategy is to strengthen partnerships with donors and community members alike. Promoting partnerships can translate to more accountable and effective changes on the ground (WB, 2002). Although their partnership agreements can be seen as a stepping-stone to future ownership, in the meantime it is providing the country with time to build local capacities and engage local stakeholders in the process.

By signing on to EFA 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) does not automatically imply ownership but, often times, the opposite. Money will continue to come from the outside but any problems that occur will place the onus of responsibility squarely on the local leadership (Waites, 2000). Without agreeing to frameworks of action and other such long-term goals, there are no funds to work with. Although they take the initiative, their success is still

very much dependant on external assistance. While they aim to own some of the policy making decisions, Cambodia has not even managed to do this universally as the ADB asked the Government to agree to a number of target and reforms laid out in their development loan covenant (ADB, 2003: 3).

The RGC has, basically, formulated certain rules of partnership. As empowering as it is for the local environment, realistically it boils down to little other than a comprehensive guideline for effective aid delivery and increased partnership, which is not necessarily negative. Attempts to increase their ownership role have been present but external donors must have confidence in their abilities to own the reconstruction or development effort. It appears as though Cambodia is climbing the latter towards effective ownership but at this juncture, they will have to settle for reinforced mutual trust and confidence.

An example of how external assistance is still being played out within Cambodia can be seen through the May 2007 approved Fast Track Initiative. To best help Cambodia achieve it's goal of universal primary education, $57.4 million was approved by the ADB but questions lurk as to what capacity they have for effective implementation (ADB, 2008: 1). This initiative has resulted in a student-centered approach that has, unfortunately, been characterized by classroom overcrowding, poor teacher quality, inadequate salaries being subsidized by increased informal payments, and leaving many communes and districts still without lower and upper secondary schools (ADB, 2008).

The major thrust of this criticism accentuates two main issues. First, a country like Cambodia cannot realistically reach the same goals other developing countries can. The targets set forth within their education system need to be applicable to them, their labor force and within the constraint of local resources. Putting Cambodia on a Fast Track Initiative was an attempt to boost them up but it's desired effects do not seem to have been realized. If Cambodia is to own it's reconstruction and development, they need to decide what is achievable in the short, medium and long term. Second, while extremely poor countries like Cambodia are sprinting to the MDG finish line, other more pressing issues are being left behind. For example, while enrollment rates are climbing, dropout rates are doing the same. As of 2007-2008, just over half of students enrolled in primary education stayed the course. Meanwhile, if Cambodia increases ownership they would be wise to look at the new demand created for lower secondary education. While this has not been a policy priority, over seventy percent of children aged 12-14, living outside urban areas, are not enrolled in lower secondary education (ADB, 2008: 1). Cambodia's ownership future should present a clearer picture of need within the country, particular of those people living outside urban areas.

5.1.2 Principle 2: Capacity Building

The overarching goal of capacity building within this context is to strengthen local institutions, transfer technical skills and promote appropriate

policies, both economic and social. There still exists a strong emphasis on the positive effects of economic growth so the need to develop strong local institutions to promote this growth is essential. The notion that weak institutions stall economic and social development, through misguided policies, is used as a realization of the importance of establishing capable institutions. The transferring of technical knowledge and skills allows both individuals and institutions to obtain long-term abilities to formulate and implement effective policies that ensure the delivery of vital public services. There is also a trace of human capital development within the framework by illustrating that building infrastructure, like universities to educate the population, is not the end game. Opportunities for graduates to excel and become future political or business leaders of their country must be vitally linked to educational attainment otherwise it is just another wasted resource. What is clear is that the right government policies highlight successful development efforts. (Nastios, 2005)

Countless examples have shown how vital capacity building is for the longevity and sustainability of the reconstruction effort, local institution building and human capital investment. Supporting development, combating poverty, strengthening local institutions and organizations has become regular development assistance etiquette in a post-war environment (van der Borgh, 2005: 257). Through this, there are two ways in which donors view capacity building. The first is as an end in itself, meaning that strengthening capacities is a jumping off point that trickles into, and enhances, other aspects of reconstruction or development. Second is as a means of fostering a stronger civil society as well as expanding the democratic process. Local needs are met through participation and empowerment of targeted groups that, in turn, strengthens institutional capacity and governance in general (van der Borgh, 2005: 257). [xv]

Throughout the various documents and strategical/policy related literature released by the RGC and MoEYS, capacity building has been a core area of focus. With the disintegration of all machineries of government during the war years, it is a positive sign that the increasing capacity of people within the borders is of primary importance to the government. Capacity building within this context focuses on three levels: institutional, sectoral and at the community level.

Institutionally, capacity building has come under the microscope as Cambodia continues its process of decentralization. One positive experience from Cambodia has been the use of interministerial capacity building. As one of the focuses of ESSP, building this capacity between ministries, like education and finance, is seen as important for financial planning and management guidelines in order to ensure agreement of all parties involved.

Another institutional capacity building measure that has experienced some success is that of monitoring. The process of decentralization appears to have produced programs that extend monitoring and management to the various

provinces, districts and schools. By in large, this transition has been relatively smooth yet still lacks some centralized coordination. Quality is still the major issue facing the sector in Cambodia and institutional capacity building is aiding this, but needs to be more organized (MoEYS[a], 2005: 6).

At the sectoral level, the main gap rests with the quality of teachers and their training. Improvements have been made in the form of more results-based monitoring and evaluation but there still appears to be a deficiency of quality, dedicated teachers (Tan, 2008). As with much of the other aspects of the crisis, remote areas have been hurt the most by this. While capacity development has improved certain educational indicators, there is still a serious lack of quality teachers in the rural areas (Tan, 2008). There is little incentive to promote the presence of these professionals in remote rural areas, where they are arguably needed most. More focus needs to be paid to areas where student progress has not been fulfilled and, in turn, address the qualitative issues that are resulting in poor educational attainment (MoEYS, 2002: 16).

In addition, more monitoring of in class dynamics and instruction will be crucial to ensure continuous improvement of quality education. Increasing infrastructure, although financially demanding, would go a long way in reducing the negative aspects now associated with Cambodian education, like overcrowding, reduced instructional time, double shifting and reduced competencies (MoEYS, 2002: 16). As much as some teachers are to blame for the reduced quality of education, even in a decentralized system, instruction and leadership needs to be disseminated from the top. If institutional capacity is still weak, then it should not seem unrealistic to expect sectoral capacity to be akin. Teachers need to be treated, trained and evaluated like professionals because it is within their control to improve classroom dynamics and help individuals who may struggle. Education needs to be seen as a process whereby what is put in increases what is taken out of the experience. This is one area where teachers need to take the mantle and demonstrate the need for patience, determination and diligence in creating positive educational outcomes, regardless of what certain indicators might imply.

At the community level, capacity appears to be quite strong within the country. Commune councils have been effective in monitoring and recording births and deaths, registration of children, their names and identities. They have the capacity to track children who have missed vaccines and to ensure that no child is missed (MoEYS, 2002: 23). Obviously, there is room for improvement but this is the level at which dropout rates, and reasons for it, need to be addressed and discussed.

As the community is consistently engaged with the problems and issues facing their organization and operation, they can prove to be more useful in a number of ways. First, in terms of targeting of marginalized groups and other poor people, the communes should be more knowledgeable with what, and to whom, these programs should accrue to. Of course the engrained system of

patronage in Cambodia could easily render this exercise useless, but hopefully the increased focus on accountability will help keep this process transparent. Second, more attention needs to be paid to youth who are out of school, at risk or over-age. They should not be viewed as beyond the scope of help within the community and sector. The bottom line is that the extent to which these community-based programs are developed and respected will go a long way to improving access and quality, ensuring positive influences on EFA, out of school/at risk youth and adult education (MoEYS, 2002: 17).

5.1.3 Principle 3: Sustainability

The issue of the sustainability of programs is one that has been ushered to the forefront of many contemporary development initiatives. The overarching goal is to design programs that have long-term, positive impacts beyond the conclusion of a project. This is closely linked to the first two principles of ownership and capacity building, as it is the locals who must take ownership of the project through the technical skills transfer offered to them. Sustainability is a very crucial aspect of development, particularly in a conflict context. USAID contends that, "if proper sustainable structures are in place, then the project will endure despite the surrounding conflict" (Nastios, 2005: 10).

A country's resources are not infinite therefore development agencies should endorse symmetry between economic and social development as well as between democracy and governance. However, one issue that has been overlooked is transparency. Through this, sustainability needs to be actively engaged and put at the core of development (Nastios, 2005).

Sustainability does not appear to be a main area of focus for the RGC and MoEYS. Naturally they have long-term visions, but how can these visions be met if increased ownership, capacity and external finances are not part of the equation? In addition, by laying out a twenty-year plan, the required flexibility within the sector is denounced in favor of increased operational rigidities. To some extent these are needed to help build capacity and increase ownership yet they also limit the progress of the sector.

There appears to be a lack of acknowledgement of the importance of sustainability within the RGC and MoEYS. Throughout much of the literature supplied by MoEYS, very little points to the issue of sustainability. There is mention, in the ESSP, of the need for the sustainability of core teaching materials (MoEYS[b], 2005: 18). This is not an issue to be overlooked but the education sector is greater than just a textbook. The issue of sustainability is one that affects the environment where learning is taking place, the teachers, salaries, upkeep of buildings, and the like.

In a society like Cambodia, still dictated by traditional values and intense poverty, the whole idea of sustainability might not be within their realm

of possibilities. The majority of the population is not in a position to worry about the far future. They are survivalists and their cultural/religious heritage is one built on karma or "a fatalistic outlook founded in their belief that all is predestined" (Paeng-Meth, 1991: 446). In a sense, their lack of control is what carries them and strengthens their beliefs in what is destined to be (Paeng-Meth, 1991: 446). At the upper crust of society, sustainability may be of paramount concern but how does this concept translate to the majority of its citizens who live in absolute poverty? Not to discount the ability of people to comprehend the concept but how can you translate it into words or actions that they can carry with them? The sustainability of the education sector must come from these people and their families, as they are the ones who will populate the sector for years to come, not the policy makers or external donors. More needs to be done in the context of prevailing attitudes and knowledge within the country, not just the sector.

In a way they have addressed the sustainability issue, but through the prose of increased capacity, once again illustrating the interconnectedness of all principles (MoEYS, 2002). By focusing on capacity building, particularly in a decentralized system, sustainability is touched upon but not overtly stated. As it stands now, sustainability is taking a back seat to the drive towards 2015 and the realization of the MDGs. If Cambodia achieves universal enrollment, what are their strategies for sustaining those levels? Little is said about these concerns but much is said about how they wish to proceed, without explicitly extorting means through which this will be accomplished.

Although sustainability within the country is improving, it is still very much donor dependant. If funds and personnel were withdrawn today, would Cambodia be able to keep its head above water? As much as donors extort the virtues of sustainability, it seems to have missed its mark in Cambodia. Even now, as enrollments continue to rise, so do dropout rates. This issue is one that goes beyond the financial realm and into the minds of all Cambodians.

It is acknowledged that by increasing ownership and capacity building that sustainability will follow suite. Yet neither the RGC, nor MoEYS has explicitly laid this out, in either their policies or methods of implementation. More attention to detail needs to be observed in the area of sustainability. The financial dependence on external assistance might be masking the efforts needed for increased sector sustainability. If ownership and capacity building are their way of producing a sustainable environment, then the links between the principles needs to be significantly clearer and stronger.

However, Cambodia is in somewhat of an opportune moment within its reconstruction and development effort to now start focusing more on sustainability. For example, one major issue concerning the educational crisis relates to teachers, their training and salaries. Currently, primary and secondary teachers are generally of poor quality, their salaries are insufficient and their training is fragmented and underperforming (Duggan, 1996). While they work

to ameliorate this area, improvements can be attained hand in hand with sustainable practices. If teachers are trained properly, according to implemented desires and performance criteria, then their quality and ability to educate students will be enhanced, creating a more conducive learning environment. If this happens, more parents will keep their children in school as the necessarily knowledge will be gained through the classroom.

More importantly, financial sustainability is essential to guarantee adequate salaries in order to attract professionalism and eliminate informal payments of students and parents. This may be the most crucial aspect of educational sustainability within the country. Cutting corners will only exacerbate the existing problem. If Cambodia hopes to achieve their desired goal of universal primary enrollment by 2015, sustainable practices, particularly amongst teachers and their training, is of utmost importance.

For universal primary education is to be sustainable, improved access to post-primary education is key. If transition rates to secondary school fall substantially, upper primary numbers will also decrease as it becomes evident that for the majority, there will be no progression to higher levels of education. (Lewin, 2005: 410) This is of major concern because much focus and resources are being put into primary education without the realization that transition to post-primary education will experience bigger cohorts. Therefore, while funding primary education is top priority at the moment, the need to increase secondary absorptive capacity will become increasingly important. Having said that, a tapering of finances to primary education, as 2015 approaches, should be considered, as the larger cohorts will demand greater access and quality from post-primary institutions going forward. Presently, increased access and participation at the secondary level is unattainable with the current cost structures. Therefore, greater participation will only be possible if the costs of secondary education fall, more in line with current household income. (Lewin, 2005: 411)

5.1.4 Principle 4: Governance/Accountability

Accountability is one area that has received much attention over the past decades in development discourse. The lack of accountability cannot only completely hinder a development or reconstructive scheme but it can financially and socially decimate an entire country. Advocating the need to place accountability and transparency into systems and establish clear and effective checks and balances to defend against corruption is paramount. The focus is to not only fight corruption at the higher levels of government but also promote transparency at the project level. This touches on issues of governance and the need for effective and legitimate governance structures that encourage accountability but also guard against it. Enhancing democratic governance structures is the primary way many aid organizations approaches this issue yet little is explicitly said about checks and balances. The rule of law is singled out

as the key to accountability but many fragile or weak states lack this central feature of democracy. If corruption has the opportunity to take root, either by the agency or local government, legitimacy is compromised and little can be done for local populations. Fragile states with weak political institutions are most likely to be mismanaged. The responsibility then needs to be placed on the donor, or facilitating agency, to work closer in partnership with local government to not only ensure legitimacy but also strengthen the institution itself. When accountability is secured, stabilization will not be far behind (Nastios, 2005).
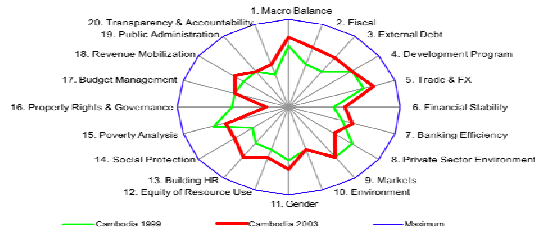
Governance and accountability are two of the most pressing issues facing Cambodia's reconstruction and development. Currently corruption is rampant and in 1995 Finance Minister Keat Chhon estimated that the state was losing up to $100 million a year to corruption (WB, 2002: 26). As systematic as corruption appears to be, it has skyrocketed in Cambodia since the transition to a free market economy (WB, 2002: 25). This not only spells trouble for the education sector but also for their partnership agreements and future desires of ownership.

According to the WB, governance is one of the weakest aspects of the country. When compared to other countries, within Asia and beyond, Cambodia has significant deficiencies. Through this, the World Bank's international development assistance allocation dipped from $70 million in 2002 to $45 million in 2004 (WB, 2007: 4).[xvi] Cited as the cause of this decreased assistance is weak capacity, prevailing systems of patronage, weak legal protection for the poor, the private sector blocked by high levels of intervention and unofficial charges. As stated in the World Bank's document, the goal is to close the accountability loop to ensure that the Cambodian people can hold both government and donors accountable for actions taken (WB, 2007).[xvii] Without this, little can be done to either improve the lives of those at the margins of society, increase ownership and ensure effective utilization of resources, both financial and other.

The fight against corruption and the establishment of legitimate and accountable government structures is key for the reduction of poverty within the country. Admittedly, Cambodia controls very few parameters of success. However, governance and accountability is one they can, and ought, to control. According to the WB, Cambodia's governance scores remained relatively unchanged between 1999 and 2003 (WB, 2007: see figure 4).[xviii] The RGC has subsequently elected to approach the governance and accountability issue through a set of holistic measures designed to get to the root cause of the problem (WB, 2007). However the enforcement of codes, rules and regulations should be of primary importance as the key issue is eliminating corruption going forward, not necessarily fixing what has already been done.

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Figure 4

Figure 1: Cambodia's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) Scores (A) 1999 and 2003

WB group in Cambodia
(http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCAMBODIA/Resources/4-WBinCambodia.pdf.)

The emphasis on good governance and accountability is an imperative principle that will affect more than just the education sector. Poverty in Cambodia is a serious problem and the negative effects trickle into many of the sectors of society, particularly education. According to MoEYS, poverty has remained relatively unchanged since 1997 with over 90% of the poor living in rural areas (MoEYS, 2002: 5). Of course the improvement of this principle will not guarantee poverty alleviation but it can help. In addition, vulnerability has been seen as a strong access barrier to education (MoEYS, 2002: 7). A 1999 MoEYS survey indicated that the proportion of people never attending school from a vulnerable community was 50%, as opposed to the national average of 45% (MoEYS, 2002: 5). While this does not seem like a huge discrepancy, it is when considering how much of the society lives in a vulnerable position.

Cambodia has been characterized by an extensive system of patronage over the years that have limited its ability to positively affect change in the education sector. The first step in the right direction is to enact an anti-corruption law. This need has been advocated by the ADB as a key element in the future of their partnerships (ADB, 2007: 18). However, it will take even more effort as the culture of corruption and mistrust of government officials is well engrained throughout society.

Cambodia's pro-poor initiative has been a very positive step in the right direction. It has caused enrollment numbers to increase, almost across the board. Abolition of start of year parental contributions for grades 1-6 increased enrollments 12 percent while a similar initiative for lower secondary saw a 20 percent increase (MoEYS, 2002: 14).[xix] While these improvements represent phenomenal progress, the pro-poor initiative needs to be presented as more than just a financial issue. Most poor people, and most vulnerable for that matter, in Cambodia live in rural areas where high levels of security are lacking, income potential is limited because of missing human capital and the opportunity costs of education over productive labor is one that is of utmost concern. More clarity needs to be provided as to how this program understands poverty, vulnerability

and how the initiative can positively affect a families earning potential and stability in the future. In addition, it is somewhat unclear how this pro-poor strategy selects its targets and what can be done to widen the scope of those included there within. As 90 percent of the poor live rurally, has this strategy been effective in attracting these people and allowing them to understand the benefits of education to both them and the country? How is this pro-poor strategy addressing the issue of rising dropout rates, particularly amongst the most poor and vulnerable population? In order to have increased effectiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability of the strategy, these issues need to be looked into and explicitly addressed.

5.2 Social Aspects Of Education Crisis[xx]

Violent conflict has many detrimental effects on a society that cannot be understated. However, in certain situations the legacy of war can continue to permeate a society long after the means of violence have disappeared. In many ways, the end of violent conflict means the beginning of the process of reconstruction. However, the legacy of war, characterized by high levels lawlessness, corruption, insecurity, social upheaval and gender inequality continue to act as a counter prevailing force against the efforts of reconstruction. What will be argued is that the legacy of war is powerful and can be seen as a time when fighting subsides and reconstruction begins but much of the structure of the war years stays intact, acting negatively on an already fragile and unstable society.
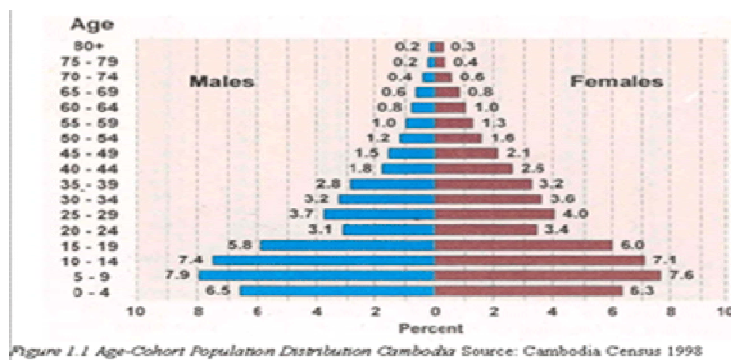
5.2.1 Legacy of War

Psychologically, many of the scars that have permeated Cambodian society for over thirty years are still represented in one of the only remaining schools, still standing from that time, in central Phnom Penh. The infamous Tuol Sleng Prison (also known as S-21), a former high school, was the site where tens of thousands of people were tortured and executed. The school stands today as a part of the legacy of war that ravaged the country and the once fruitful promise of universal education. As many Cambodians try to forget the vestiges of the past, their collective memory of that time continues to be fed by the countless number of tourists, photographers and journalists who are still trying to comprehend what happened to such a historically relevant ancient land.[xxi]

One of the pressing issues facing Cambodians is the failure of outsiders to fully comprehend their collective memory as the past events happened to the Khmer, and few others (Takei, 1998). Through this, the legacy of war floats above the city, country and minds of Cambodians like a dense fog waiting to be burned away by the rising sun. Scars of torture and lost loved ones take years to mend, but they inevitably do. However, the atrocities committed during this time will forever be tied to the current population, as the door to the past remains open through the existence of places like S-21 and the Choeung Ek

Genocidal Center. "For the Cambodian people, these memorials play an uncertain political role, given that little in the way of formal justice or a public culture of remembrance has been achieved so far" (Williams, 2004**:** 234) As difficult as it may be for many Cambodians, their collective memory also serves as a basis for a common identity. Scholars label Cambodia as a 'primordial' example of collective memory because it has deep historical roots as well as more modern ones taken from recent experiences (Takei, 1998). As many Cambodians try to forget, too many others are attempting to learn, making the legacy of the war as real and powerful as it was thirty years ago.

The legacy of war in Cambodia has been particularly strong and long lasting for a number of reasons. Chief among these is the huge amounts of life lost during the Khmer Rouge era. As census statistics are not available for the pre-war years, and much of the population was stripped of documentation during the war years, it is hard to get a clear picture on how much life was actually lost. What is clear is that Cambodia has a very unusual demographic distribution as is illustrated through the 1998 census (see figure 5).[xxii] Half of the population is under twenty years whereas very few are over forty years of age. Males are represented slightly more in the under twenty category while women represent the majority in the over forty grouping. This is due to the enormous loss of life during the nineteen seventies war years, especially of men. Population growth is much larger in rural areas where over 90% of people live.

Figure 5

Figure 1.1 Age-Cohort Population Distribution Cambodia Source: Cambodia Census 1998

Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
(http://www.moeys.gov.kh/Includes/Contents/Education/EducationAll/Education%20for%20All%20National%20Plan%202003-2015.pdf. Pp. 6)

However, the issue facing Cambodia's war legacy isn't so much the total number of people who died but more the loss of massive amounts of human resources. It has been said that almost every family in Cambodia lost someone during the Khmer Rouge years. This has had a number of strong effects on society, particularly on the education sector as the Khmer Rouge completely tore it down. (Clayton, 1998) This not only left the education sector

in tatters but also represented a huge loss of productive capacity, which is needed to combat poverty and to develop. As the population distribution dictates, the age dependency ratio in Cambodia is extremely high which puts added pressures on many poor families.

Another very pertinent facet of the legacy of war is that of insecurity, particularly of children in rural areas. In Cambodia, this means the threat of landmines and unexploded ordinances (UXO) that are littered along the countryside, in agricultural fields and around temples. Cambodia has a long history of landmine problems and is considered one of the worst affected countries in the world (UNICEF, 2004: 1). The intense fighting of multiple factions starting from 1970 was characterized by heavy landmine use in almost all regions of the country. According to the National Level One survey from June 2002, 2.7 million tons of landmines were dropped between 1965 and 1973.[xxiii] Over the next two decades, over 10 million landmines were planted in Cambodia.[xxiv] Currently, it is estimated that between 4-6 million landmines exist in Cambodia and cover and area of 4,466 km^2. It is estimated that fewer than 50% of villages are contaminated leaving about 45% of the population at high risk.[xxv] According to UNICEF, children account for about half of all landmine victims, particularly around Pailin, near the Thai border (UNICEF, 2004: 1).

This is not an ideal environment for children to be attending school in. Their security is even more at risk if they are expected to work in the fields instead of attending school, or in addition to school. Uncertain security is one of the main reasons why girls are held back from school. When violence erupts or security is uncertain, the traditional thinking in Cambodia is one of staying home and working in the house. When the security situation ceases to improve, girls are permanently held out of school (MoEYS, 2002). This has definitely been a factor in the education crisis in Cambodia. In order to break out of the crisis, improvements in security, especially in the rural areas will need to be given great consideration. While demining activities are in full swing in much of the country, the outlying rural areas are not at the top of the list.

The landmine situation in Cambodia, and the lack of comprehensive clearance, has been an issue taken up at local levels. "Throughout rural areas in Cambodia where there is heavy landmine contamination, a sizeable number of villagers deliberately enter suspect areas and undertake mine-clearance activities using the simplest of farming tools." (Bottomley, 2003: 823) This accentuates the need to confront this lingering war legacy but also illustrates the impact local communities can have. Often viewed as passive, villagers are becoming active agents in dealing with their local situations on their terms (Bottomley, 2003). Their continued survival depends on contaminated land resulting in increased participation without formal training. While it is suggested that villagers wait for trained experts to complete the process, or be trained themselves, their actions indicate that the timely delivery of these

resources has yet to be realized and security is still a serious issue (Bottomley, 2003).

5.2.2 Gender

*"While men are gold, women are cloth"*
–Khmer saying[xxvi]

In addition to the huge loss of productive capacity, household dependency is another legacy of war that is currently affecting poverty and education in Cambodia. This has taken on a gender dimension in the following ways. First, in the absence of a male in the house, the female adult must assume a much greater level of responsibility. In addition to household chores, the head of the house must also find ways to be economically productive. Through this, it has been said that women in Cambodia have a triple-burden. Second, in societies where traditions are still important, education can take a backseat to more pressing matters of household productivity in situations of poverty (Stark-Merklein, 2005: 1). What has been observed in much of the statistics of Cambodia, because of this, is a downward trend of female participation in higher levels of education (see figure 6).[xxvii] The numbers do show improvements in most categories but there are still a lot of children out of school and a majority of them are girls.[xxviii] The focus on primary enrollment as part of the universal goals has skewed the emphasis on higher levels of education and resulted in many girls dropping out of school to help out at home.

One factor that has been shown to exacerbate this trend is when the female head of house is also uneducated. This has two negative effects. First, their priorities dictate that work in and around the house is much more productive than school is. When a woman is uneducated, the emphasis placed on education for girls is generally much lower than for that of boys. Also, young girls need role models to show them the benefits of education. When their mothers are not educated, they are not necessarily exposed to an educated life. However, in the presence of a female role model in education, girls' participation is much higher (Lewin, 2005). This realization was one of the main reasons why countries like Cambodia have started focusing on both vocational and non-formal education (MoEYS, 202: 13). The expectation is that if poor people can realize the benefits of education, then they will increasingly push for those benefits for their children. The pressing issue of a large, traditional rural agricultural society complicates the matter as access to consistent, quality education is much more difficult to come by (Lewin, 2005: 410).

Lastly, as Lewin (2005) states, achieving gender equity will increasingly depend on actions taken beyond the primary level. While both Dakar and MDG targets place gender equity at the core of their initiatives, it is becoming increasingly clear that this cannot be achieved without significant action at the secondary level. Generally, gender gaps in participation rates widen as the level

of education increases (Lewin, 2005). With that in mind, secondary education needs to be accorded significantly more attention now, as opposed to after 2015, as the gap of participation may continue to grow if proper attention is not given to this issue (Lewin, 2005: 410). This reinforces the view that, although primary education is the top priority, it should not be used to sanction less action at the higher levels, as they will need to absorb more students, particularly girls, in the future.

Figure 6
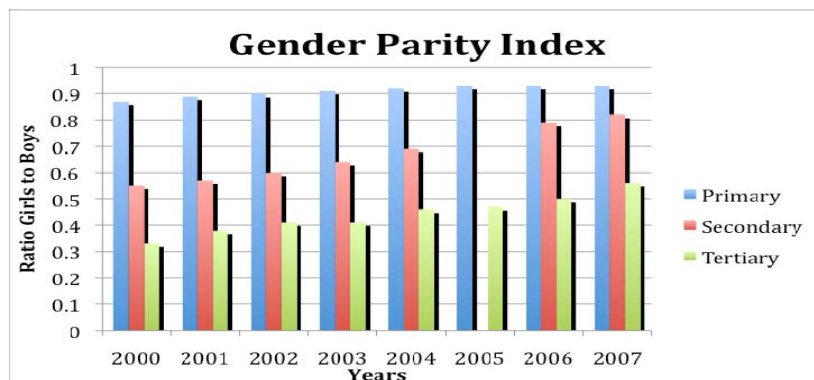
*NB: No statistics avaiable for 2005 secondary
United Nations STATS
(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia)

5.2.3 Tradition

Tradition, and the role of traditional values, continues to have significant resonance across Cambodia. While the importance of traditions may be hidden in the larger urban centers, it is very much alive in the rural areas. This presents a volatile situation where you have a modern market economy operating amongst a traditional population with a socialist past (Ayers, 2000). The traditional view of education in Cambodia emphasized the importance of values, morals and shaping individuals for a better lifestyle through teaching knowledge and good manners. The more modern view of education in Cambodia now focused on training, instruction and the development of human capital for economic development (Tan, 2008). These two views do not necessarily promote one another, yet to what degree do traditions limit the success of modern education?

The response is very complex and, to some extent, beyond the scope of this research. Having said that, it can be seen that traditions in Cambodia limit the modernization of education by not placing it as a top priority. While education is seen, by some, as the path to a richer and better life, others view it as infringing on the role of the family, on the importance of religion and on the traditional way of life that has sustained Cambodia for centuries (Tan, 2008). What is certainly true is that the current system in Cambodia does not leave

much room for traditions to operate. While the goals of increased economic development and modernization are at the core of Cambodia's future, little in education actually promotes the traditional lifestyle. If Cambodia is to achieve high levels of economic growth, it will have to come from outside the agriculture sector, which has characterized the country and constitutes the central livelihood activity of the majority of citizens.

One formidable characteristic of tradition in Cambodia can be seen through the existence of close-knit communities. However since the process of modernization has taken hold, this crucial dynamic has broken down. "Community structures are broken and social cohesion has been replaced by deep mistrust at all levels of society" (Tan, 2008: 563). While this may not initially appear to cause problem within the sector, it actually has profound implications. *Sammaki*, or solidarity and community spirit, once held communities together through a system based on trust and working together, something that the traditional education system promoted and enhanced (Tan, 2008). Under an environment of mistrust, exacerbated by increased attention to individuality, education becomes viewed as an individuals' achievement as opposed to that of the community. While traditional structures emphasized the community and its prosperity, modern ones promote the individual and their opulence. Perhaps this can be seen as merely a rough period of transition or, conversely, the erosion of traditional social and community networks in favor of economic gains. What is clear is that the future of education in Cambodia must do two things. First is to incorporate tradition in to the curriculum to not only keep it alive but also teach it as historical legacy. Second, education must not operate as a rigid structure. If knowledge gained is not translatable within the country then more people, particularly poor, will become increasingly alienated and future enrollment, and dropout, numbers will remain a significant issue.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Cambodia has flown under the radar of development studies due in large part to their geographical position between two regional powers, Thailand and Vietnam. As unfortunate as this is, the education crisis in Cambodia has evolved through a number of pertinent internal factors. It has been acknowledged that the crisis has a qualitative and quantitative dimension however little has been said about the roots of these deficiencies. This research has attempted to connect the crisis with both the legacy of war and the reconstruction effort. While each aspect has been accorded its own analysis, the interrelation of reconstruction principles and the legacy of war should not be overlooked.

In addition to the massive loss of life and decreased security, the legacy of war has increasingly taken on a gender and tradition dimension. It has been observed that fewer girls are reaching upper primary and lower secondary

levels yet the reasons for this have rarely been uncovered. This research has attempted to explain that girls' participation in education is closely related to security, household requirements, traditional roles and the lack of educational role models, both at school and at home. While many women over the age forty were raised in an environment of increased fighting, coupled with weak training and unqualified teachers, there is little positive evidence within the country about how education can be beneficial to young girls (Lewin, 2005, Stark-Merklein, 2005). Furthermore, as the massive loss of life during the war years affected the male population more, many women find themselves consumed by a triple burden. As female education is not as highly valued, and the traditional roles they are meant to perform increase, girls are more often taken out of school before the benefits can be realized (Lewin, 2005, Stark-Merklein, 2005). This is problematic not only for education indicators but also for their employment opportunities in the future. While Cambodia continues to modernize, the emphasis on educational attainment will become more pertinent for job opportunities. However, the modernization process is being stalled by the continuing attention paid to agriculture. Traditional gender roles are exacerbating this as many young, out of school, girls are replicating the life cycle of their living parents, who probably were not afforded the same educational opportunities they were. This is not to say that modernization is the correct path for Cambodia, but seeing as that is their goal, it should be facilitated as much as possible for the future of the country. To increase girl's re-entry into the formal education system, narrow targeting will be essential as the RGC and MoEYS current target them broadly, grouping them with minorities and disadvantaged youth (EFA, 2002).

Traditionally, education in Cambodia was seen as an honest route to better the human condition and played a prominent role in the shaping of individuals for a better lifestyle (Tan, 2008). Yet Cambodia has adopted a 'westernized' education system, tightly connected to their modernization push. What is important to realize is that these two forces, tradition and modernity, need not be enemies. It is possible for them to coexist; it is just a matter of finding the right formula. While many believe that the current education system does not cater to the realities in the country, this may change once the sector has had enough time to grow. However as Cambodia is still very traditional, there is a need to place policies in a more relevant context. Moreover, as the country continues its agricultural production, the use of contemporary education will become more applicable to future job opportunities in a more modernized society.

Generally, the legacy of war has contributed to the educational crisis in a number of ways. Demographically, Cambodia is in a position where a disproportionate percent of the population is under 20 years of age. In order for this demographic gift to be utilized effectively, education must be the propeller. In Cambodia, where many of people live below poverty, education may be the only constructive way forward.

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Having said that, the education sector itself has a role to play in the proliferation of knowledge and opportunity within the country. By not adequately addressing both qualitative and quantitative deficiencies, education will be relegated to an option, not a requisite. Teacher training is of utmost importance as teachers are the individuals who can have a direct effect on the quality of a learning environment. Exploitation and poor quality teaching are not proper lessons for any child to get from education, regardless of location or level of understanding. The school environment needs to be one that positively harnesses and hones the minds of the youth. Increased accountability and transparency at this level will continue to cause enrollment numbers to rise. Furthermore, it is also important for the sector, and those operating it, to be cognoscente of the issue of dropouts and repetition and not solely consumed by reaching targets and indicators.

The reconstruction effort has also played a large role in creating and perpetuating the education crisis. Concerning the principles discussed, moving from donorship to ownership and partnership has been a central aim of the RGC and MoEYS. Presently, the emphasis on ownership has been temporarily relegated in favor of increased partnership. As many donors and external agencies do not appear to be sufficiently satisfied with progress in the country to this point, their lack of coordination has not helped the situation. What is clear is that, while Cambodia does not own much of the reconstruction effort, their partnerships appear to be blossoming. However for the situation to improve, Cambodia needs to find ways to avoid being so reliant on donors and aid as this has also deepened the crisis by focusing primarily on areas and regions outside those that need the most help. By owning their reconstruction, increased autonomy will mean better education service delivery in poverty stricken rural areas (Nastios, 2005). It has yet to be seen whether Cambodia can fully own its reconstruction effort. If not they will continue to be regarded as passive bystanders and not active agents

Capacity building has been a particularly pertinent area of focus, increasingly so under decentralization. While much of the RGC and MoEYS literature denotes capacity building as one of the keys to the future of education, it is unclear how this has translated to improvements on the ground. Capacity building needs to be strengthened at all levels discussed. Cambodia is at a crossroads of sorts at the moment. While institutional capacity still remains relatively weak, it is hard to imagine it improving significantly enough to make a positive impact on the current deficiencies. More emphasis needs to be placed on improving community level capacity, as well as that within the sector, in order for targets to be reached while ensuring decreased levels of dropout and repetition.

Sustainability is emerging as a core principle, related to both ownership and capacity building. In order for sustainability to be ensured, higher levels of ownership, promoting improved capacity, will be crucial. However for over

forty percent of the population, who live in poverty, planning for the future is a difficult task. Ensuring a sustainable education system will go a long way in setting the example for the rest of society. When individuals have the ability to plan beyond the present, the benefits of education should increasingly come into view. Leadership and policies need to be disseminated from the top while keeping in mind the limited earning potential of a large portion of the population. For the education system to flourish and be sustainable, capacity needs to be strengthened. It is imperative that Cambodia can illustrate their commitment to this principle by readjusting their focus and including more sustainable policies in the sector. A constructive way to do this would be to start with teacher training. Making sure the supply of teachers continues, and is of high quality, will go a long way in achieving a sustainable sector.

Accountability and governance are issues that have continued to plague Cambodia for years. While the government claims to be losing millions from corrupt practices, the issue goes deeper than that. Patronage has been systematically built into much of the society and it is having a detrimental affect on the education sector. Through this, there exists serious mistrust between citizens and government. While many choose to overlook this fact, accepting it as part of the societal culture, others use it as reasons for taking their children out of school (Tan, 2008). Increased transparency at all levels can go a long way in erasing the corrupt practices that have characterized much of the country. However, one of the most pressing issues concerns the exploitation happening within classrooms. Informal payments, for additional answers to tests, are not the way forward in any country (Tan, 2008). The RGC and MoEYS have a role to play here in both stopping these practices and developing sufficient personnel to turn the culture around. In terms of governance, restoring a proper and accountable rule of law, applicable to all levels of society, is absolutely essential. The anti-corruption law that has been tabled must be passed to ensure transparency at all levels.

Notes

i From class 4202, essay submitted 31/3/09

ii Addison, Chowdhury & Murshed, in Junne & Verkoren, (2005) "Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges."

iii Brynen, in Junne & Verkoren, (2005) "Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges."

iv From class 4217, essay submitted 31/3/09

v Degu, in Junne & Verkoren, (2005) "Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges."

vi Degu, in Junne & Verkoren, (2005) "Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges."

vii Additional Citations: Al-Samarrai and Bennell, 2003; Appleton, 2001; Knight and Sabot, 1990; Wood and Mayer, 1999; Wood and Ridao-Cano, 1996.

viii October 1978 speech by Pol Pot

ix http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/

x http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/

xi Also see Appendix 7

xii Also see Appendix 6

xiii www.adb.org/Education/cam-swap.pdf

xiv www.adb.org/Education/cam-swap.pdf

xv van der Borgh, in Junne & Verkoren, (2005) "Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges."

xvi WB group in Cambodia (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCAMBODIA/Resources/4-WBinCambodia.pdf.)

xvii WB group in Cambodia (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCAMBODIA/Resources/4-WBinCambodia.pdf.)

[xviii] WB group in Cambodia
(http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCAMBODIA/Resources/4-WBinCambodia.pdf.)

[xix] Increased enrollment from 2.35 million to 2.68 million

[xx] See Appendix 8 for interrelated social causes of Educational crisis

[xxi] Based on information gained at Tuol Sleng (S-21) and Cheoung Ek Genocidal Center, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, January 20, 2006. Also based on observations made during time in Cambodia, January/Febuary, 2006.

[xxii] Also see Appendix 10

[xxiii] Bangkok Regional Conference, PowerPoint slide #3,6,7,8

[xxiv] Film: Year Zero (www.yearzerodoc.com)

[xxv] Bangkok Regional Conference, PowerPoint slide #3,6,7,8

[xxvi] It should be noted that many of the Khmer sayings have alternated meanings. In this instance, it can also be seen as meaning that women are more fragile and therefore need more protection. While gold is a hard mineral, cloth is soft, fragile and sensitive to dirt. Additionally cloth is effective in protecting gold once wrapped around it. (CSD NRSP, 2002: 36)

[xxvii] Also see Appendix 3,4,5 & 6

Appendix 1

Primary Completion Rate

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Boys	46.3	53	56.6	64.1	69.4	79.4	86.8	87.1	85.4
Girls	35.5	41.2	45.5	54.7	61.3	72.4	83.4	86.1	84.7
Average	40.9	47.2	51.1	59.5	65.4	75.9	85.1	86.6	85.1
Gender Gap	10.8	11.8	11.1	9.4	8.1	7	3.4	1	0.7
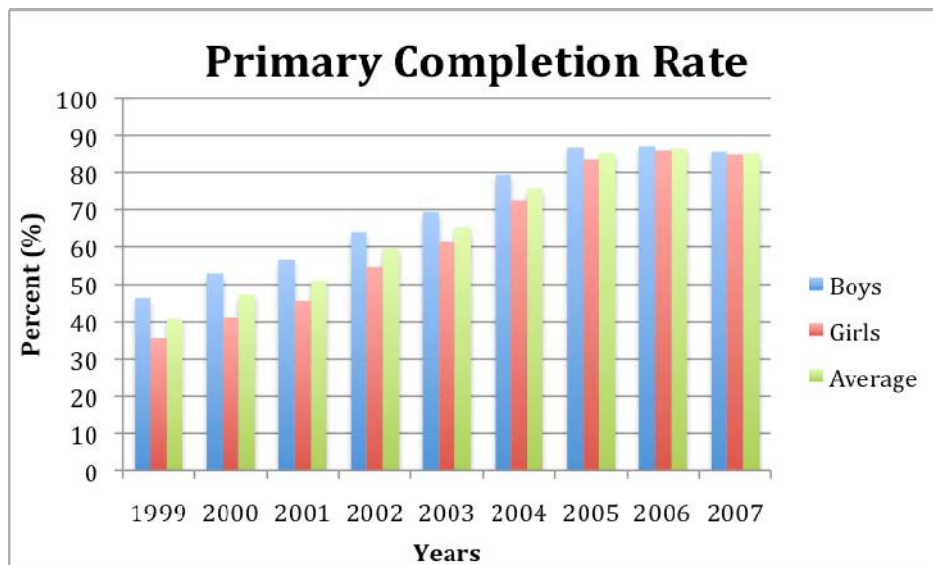
United Nations STATS

(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia+datamart[MDG])

Appendix 2

Gender Parity Index in primary level enrollment

1991	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
0.81	0.87	0.87	0.89	0.90	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.93

Gender Parity Index in secondary level enrollment*

1991	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007
0.43	0.53	0.55	0.57	0.60	0.64	0.69	0.79	0.82

Gender Parity Index in tertiary level enrollment

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
0.33	0.38	0.41	0.41	0.46	0.47	0.50	0.56

*NB: No statistics avaiable for 2005

United Nations STATS

(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia+datamart[MDG])

Appendix 3

Total Net Enrollment Ratio in Primary Education (%)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2006	2007
Boys	87.1	91.2	87.6	89.4	90.9	91.3
Girls	79.3	83.6	81.4	83.9	89	87.4
Average	83.3	87.4	84.5	86.7	89.9	89.4
Gender Gap	7.8	7.6	6.2	5.5	1.9	3.9

United Nations STATS

(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia+datamart[MDG])

Appendix 4

Total Net Enrollment in Secondary Education (%)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Boys	21	20	21	22	28	31	30	26
Girls	12	11	12	13	17	20	22	22
Average	16.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	22.5	25.5	26	24
Gender Gap	9	9	9	9	11	11	8	4

Appendix 5

Total Gross Enrollment in Tertiary Education (%)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Boys	3	3	4	4	4	5	6
Girls	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
Average	2	2	2.5	3	3	3.5	4.5
Gender Gap	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
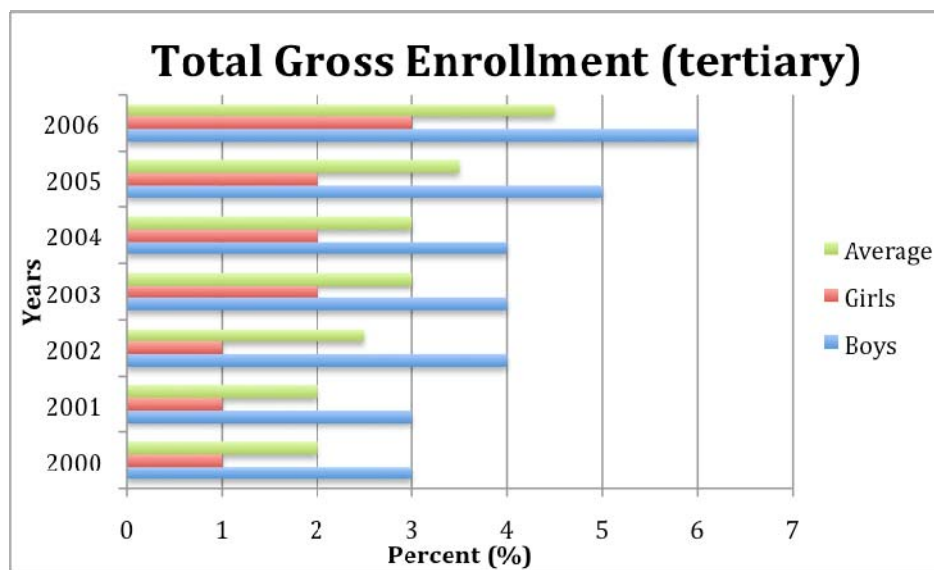
World Bank

Appendix 6

Children Out of Primary School (thousands)

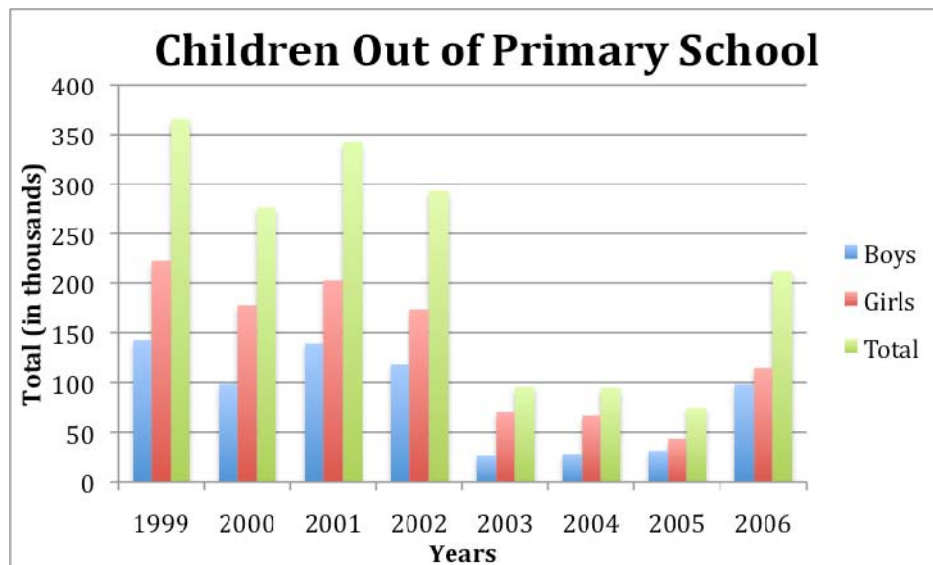|	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Boys	142.7	98.4	139.4	119	26	28.5	31.5	98.3
Girls	223	178.2	202.6	174	69.8	66.4	43.6	114.4
Total	365.7	276.6	342	293	95.8	94.9	75.1	212.7

World Bank
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAP
ACIFICEXT/CAMBODIAEXTN/0,,menuPK:293881~pagePK:141132~piPK:
141109~theSitePK:293856,00.html

55

Appendix 7

Percentage of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Boys	51.9	55.9	65.0	54.2	52.4	55.5	53.5	53.3
Girls	45.0	52.9	62.0	55.9	54.7	58.3	56.7	55.8
Average	48.6	54.6	63.6	55.0	53.5	56.8	55.0	54.5
Gender Gap	6.9	3.0	3.0	-1.7	-2.3	-2.8	-3.2	-2.5

United Nations STATS

(http://data.un.org/Search.aspx?q=cambodia+datamart[MDG])

Appendix 8

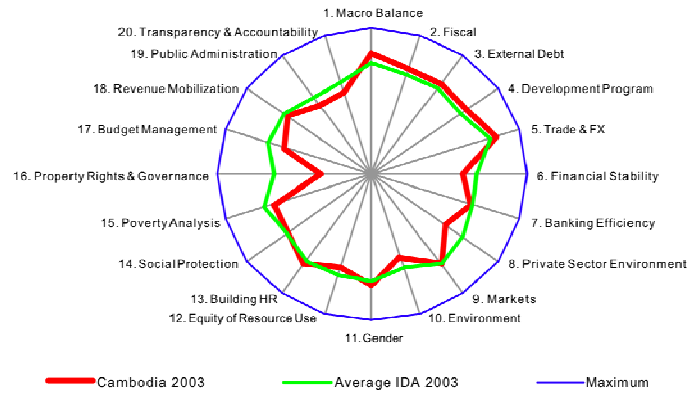Interrelated Social Causes of Educational Crisis
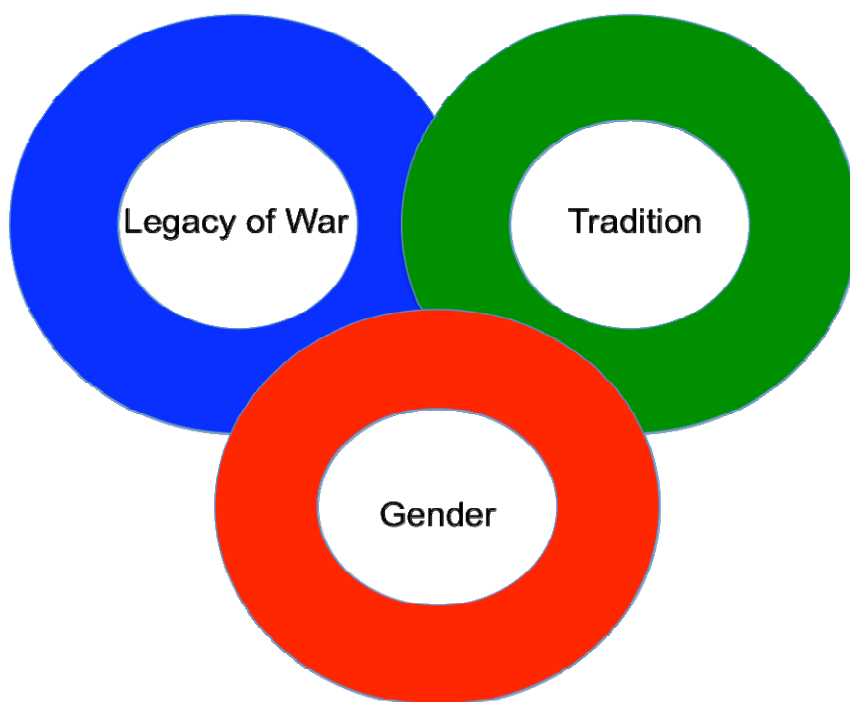
Matrix of Social Aspects of Education Crisis

Clark, T (2009)

Appendix 9

(B) Cambodia compared to other countries receiving IDA funds, 2003

WB group in Cambodia
(http://www.siteresources.**worldbank**.org/INT**CAMBODIA**/.../4-WBin**Cambodia**.pdf*)*

Appendix 10

Map of Cambodia

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