

## Chapter 4. Educational Attainment

### 4.1 Educational System in Cambodia

The development of educational system in Cambodia after the independence in 1953 is classified by Mr. Nishino (2009) into the following stages:

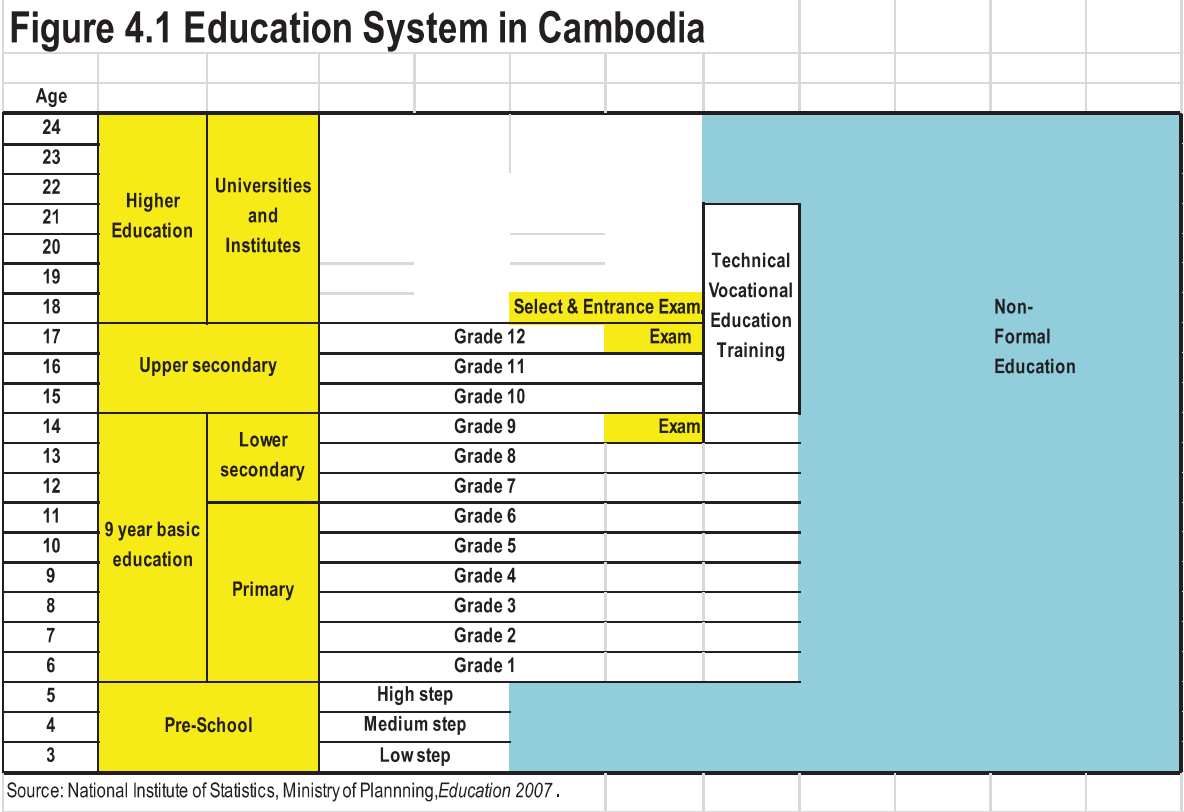
- 1) 1953-1970: Germination of new order of education system emerged from colonial rule by France: School system is 6 years for primary school - 4 years for lower secondary school - 2 years for upper secondary - 1 year for higher.
- 2) 1970-1975: Setback of national school system suffered by the civil war,
- 3) 1975-1979: Demise of national school system by the civil war,
- 4) 1979-1993: Rebuilding national school system
  - a) 1979-1986: 4 years -3 years -3 years
  - b) 1987-1995: 5 years -3 years -3 years
- 5) 1993- present: Reform of education system, 6 years -3 years -3 years school system in 1996

(Reference) : Nishino Setsuo, *Cambodian Education: Approaching from Diversified Aspects (Gendai Kanbojia kyouiku no syosou)*, Tokyo, Asian Cultures Research Institute, Toyo University, 2009, in Japanese).

Following the period of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the 1980s, education system has been gradually developed from pre-school to post-secondary educational levels and offered a variety of vocational and technical training programs. The system began with an optional three-year pre-school education then followed by necessary six-year primary and three-year lower-secondary schooling. The official age for entry into grade 1 is 6 years old, not a few children, however, attended from 7 years old in rural area. The first 9 years of schooling has been officially and constitutionally considered “formal basic education” since 1993. Article 68 of the Constitution, Kingdom of Cambodia, stresses that “the State shall provide free primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools, and the citizens shall receive education for at least nine years,” as the compulsory education (Dy, Sideth S, *Basic Education Development in Cambodia – Targets and Policies for Quality Improvement.*, 2003).

Although compulsory education system is stipulated in the Constitution, the school

attendance rate in lower secondary school is not so high, and the school dropout might not be low in rural area. New School Education Act enacted in 2007 so as to ensure free primary and secondary education (9 years of schooling) to all citizens. Government has been taken to expand school system to accomplish the aim, “Education for All” under the support by the international aids agencies (Nishino, 2009).



There are also non-formal education programs, which aim to supplement the formal one, for adults and out-of-school youth. Students who successfully complete nine years of formal basic education can either continue to upper secondary education or take primary vocational training course in the following three years on examination basis. Post-secondary education is composed of technical and vocational colleges from some two to three years in length of study. There are currently four-years of full-time study for most undergraduate courses, except some institutions are still adopting a five-to-seven-year basis, such as pharmacy, dentistry, and medicine programs. Postgraduate studies, mainly master’s degree programs, are prepared in some private and public institutions. The government’s priority objective is to create equal opportunities for school-age children of all parts of the country and all ethnic groups to attend schools so that they will have the chance to complete at least primary education and towards receiving the full nine years of basic education (Dy, 2003).

## 4.2 Educational Attainment of Population in Cambodia

### 4.2.1 Educational Attainment of Population in Cambodia

Educational attainment can be measured for populations defined in several types of limited age. In order to measure educational attainment in Cambodia, three types of populations: population aged 7 years old and over, population aged 15 years old and over, and population aged 25 years old and over can be used. The age of 7 years old is the normal age completed the first grade of primary school in Cambodia. The age of 15 years old is the normal age when lower secondary education commences. And, the age of 25 years is the age when regular school education almost ends.

Age	Total Population	Persons by Educational Attainment						
		None (Illiterate & No Education)	Primary Not Completed	Primary Completed	Lower Secondary	Secondary/ Diploma	Beyond Secondary	Other
7 & over	12,753,622	2,896,158	4,149,409	2,985,343	2,133,587	329,096	254,416	5,263
15 & over	10,355,192	2,328,434	2,671,971	2,633,011	2,132,848	329,096	254,416	5,263
25 & over	7,183,247	1,996,787	2,030,755	1,570,283	1,221,608	158,788	200,230	4,642
7 & over	100.0	22.7	32.5	23.4	16.7	2.6	2.0	0.0
15 & over	100.0	22.5	25.8	25.4	20.6	3.2	2.5	0.1
25 & over	100.0	27.8	28.3	21.9	17.0	2.2	2.8	0.1

\*Total Population includes number of the persons not reported in literacy status and in educational attainment.

Table 4.1 shows educational attainment for three types of populations in the limited ages as of 2013. Populations aged 7 & over and 15 & over indicate the largest proportion in the group of “primary not completed”, the second largest in the group of “primary completed”, and the third largest in the group of “none” among the educational attainment groups. Second largest proportion for population aged 25 & over was “none,” since some of them were suffered by the civil war under the Khmer Rouge. Accordingly, it can be said that more than half of population in Cambodia show the level under primary completed.

### 4.2.2 Change of Educational Attainment of Population aged 25 and over

Table 4.2 shows that persons aged 25 and over improved their educational attainment of population with lower secondary and beyond secondary. The proportion of those who has no educational attainment at all has decreased from 38.1% in 1998, 29.8% in 2008 to 27.8% in 2013. Also, the proportion of those who did not complete primary education

has decreased from 35.6%, 34.2 % to 28.3% for 1998-2013. While, all of the levels including primary, secondary and above have risen the proportions of educational attainment. Accordingly, it can be said that Cambodian educational attainment improved remarkably for 1998-2013. However, about 80% of population aged 25 & over completed only primary or below primary. It should be noted that the level of educational attainment for working age population is still low.

**Table 4.2 Population Aged 25 and over by Educational Attainment, 1998, 2008, 2013**

	1998	2008	2013	1998	2008	2013
Population Aged 25 and over	4,449,903	5,893,398	7,183,247	100.0	100.0	100.0
None (Illiterate & No Education)	1,695,033	1,753,359	1,996,787	38.1	29.8	27.8
Primary not Completed	1,581,979	2,017,301	2,030,755	35.6	34.2	28.3
Primary	690,401	1,143,621	1,570,283	15.5	19.4	21.9
Lower Secondary	329,131	801,007	1,221,608	7.4	13.6	17.0
Secondary/Diploma	112,677	66,314	170,510	2.5	1.1	2.4
Beyond Secondary	21,612	106,502	188,509	0.5	1.8	2.6

Note: Population aged 25 and over includes persons who didn't reply literacy status and educational level.

### 4.3 Comparison in Educational Attainment among ASEAN Countries

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2 indicate the educational level of population aged 25 and over in ASEAN countries. Cambodia has the second lowest proportion of “higher education” among ASEAN countries, while Cambodia has the second highest of the proportion with no education due to the historical setting in Cambodia. The educational gender gap is found in every country except the Philippines. The higher educational attainment for females than those for males is indicated in the Philippines. Big gender gap of educational level is observed particularly in Cambodia and Lao PDR. Cambodian government should make further efforts to expand access to basic education and to improve equitable access to education between males and females as stated in the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals.

**Table 4.3 Proportion of Population Aged 25 and over by Educational Attainment and Sex in ASEAN Countries, Latest Year**

Sex and Educational Level	Cambodia 2013	Brunei (a) 1991	Indonesia 2011	Lao PDR 2005	Malaysia 2010	Myanmar (b) 1991	Singapore 2010	Philippines 2008	Thailand 2010	Vietnam 2009
<b>Both Sexes</b>										
None	27.8	-	8.0	32.8	8.8	-	-	3.4	3.5	6.7
Primary not completed	28.3	-	17.6	21.6	-	35.0	16.4	-	35.2	-
Primary	21.9	26.7	30.0	22.6	23.0	52.9	7.4	31.7	21.8	28.3
Secondary	19.4	61.0	36.6	13.2	51.8	8.5	29.7	35.1	25.4	52.9
Higher	2.6	12.2	7.9	9.8	16.4	3.5	46.5	29.7	12.7	12.1
<b>Males</b>										
None	18.3	-	4.6	21.0	5.6	-	-	3.2	3.0	4.2
Primary not completed	26.4	-	16.2	22.5	-	-	12.8	-	32.1	-
Primary	25.5	22.1	30.0	26.3	23.0	-	7.3	33.0	22.5	24.6
Secondary	25.8	64.8	41.0	16.5	54.2	-	29.1	35.3	28.7	56.9
Higher	3.8	13.0	8.2	13.8	17.0	-	50.8	28.4	12.1	14.3
<b>Females</b>										
None	35.9	-	11.4	44.2	12.0	-	-	3.5	4.0	8.9
Primary not completed	29.8	-	18.9	20.8	-	-	19.8	-	37.9	-
Primary	18.8	31.4	29.9	19.2	23.0	-	7.5	30.5	21.3	31.6
Secondary	13.9	57.2	32.3	9.9	49.4	-	30.3	34.9	22.3	49.3
Higher	1.6	11.4	7.5	5.9	15.7	-	42.4	30.9	13.3	10.1

Note (a) For persons aged 20-59 not attending school. Primary includes Primary and below. (b) Primary not completed includes less Primary.

Source: UNESCO <http://www.uis.unesco.org/> (for Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam).

United Nations Statistics Division <http://unstats.un.org/> (for Brunei and Myanmar)/

(1) Cambodia Inter-Censal population Survey, 2013. (2) Results from the Population Census 2005, Lao PDR.

(3) Census of Population 2010, Singapore.

