

# EVALUATION REPORT

July 2014

## UNICEF's Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality 2003-2012

COUNTRY CASE STUDY ■ ■ **Cambodia** ■

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## **UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY (2003-2012)**

### **COUNTRY CASE STUDY: CAMBODIA**

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July 2014

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## PREFACE

Over the past decade, UNICEF has placed increased emphasis on upstream support to national policy, capacity and partnerships to underpin and sustain scaled-up programme delivery. UNICEF's work in the education sector has followed this approach, giving increased attention to upstream activities of this kind. Have these efforts been successful? This evaluation set out to provide an answer to this question by examining UNICEF's upstream work in basic education and gender equality in the period 2003 to 2012.

At the global level, UNICEF's upstream education work entails engagement with governments and partner organizations to set the education policy agenda and leverage the resources required to achieve the goals of the Education For All (EFA) initiative and the Millennium Development Goals relating to education (MDGs 2 and 3). At the national level, UNICEF contributes to development of sector policies, strategies and programmes, and facilitates the national dialogue on education policy and priorities. UNICEF also works with government and partners to mobilize funding sources within a sector-wide national programme framework and to strengthen capacities ensure proper allocation and management of budgets.

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine UNICEF's upstream work in education and assess the extent to which UNICEF has engaged strategically in education sector policy articulation and advocacy. It also assessed how far upstream engagement efforts have supported better policy and practice in the education sector and helped to strengthen systems across the sector. The evaluation was executed in three phases: (i) an in-depth desk review of key concepts, trends and issues around 'upstream work' in education, as well as a review of documents from 14 UNICEF Country Offices; (ii) field-based case studies in Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia, and Zimbabwe; and, (iii) a survey among UNICEF Country Office staff, key partners and professionals responsible for education programmes.

The evaluation found that there was a definite, yet gradual, shift towards upstream work within UNICEF Cambodia during the evaluation period. UNICEF took a lead position in donor coordination within the education sector, influenced national level education policies and legislative frameworks, and made an identifiable contribution to building the capacity of MoEYS for education management. While directly lobbying the government at the education policy level UNICEF pursued a complementary strategy of supporting best-practice pilots, and used the evidence of their impact to lobby the government to adopt programmes such as bilingual education and early childhood education at national level. The evaluation identified a number of challenges, among them the fact that UNICEF's upstream work has not been able to translate into commitments for increased education funding from the government. A lack of relevant methodological tools to monitor and evaluate the impact of upstream work in education was also identified, as well as the missed opportunity in UNICEF Cambodia to foster organizational learning such that successes realized in education upstream work thus far can be



translated across other social sectors. The evaluation proffered recommendations to address these, and other challenges that were identified.

The evaluation was ably conducted by Mokoro Limited. On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to express my appreciation to Alta Folscher for her leadership of the evaluation and to the Mokoro case study team for Cambodia consisting of Masooda Bano (Case Study Leader), and Anna Haas (Evaluator). Prak Polla enriched the evaluation team with his extensive knowledge of critical education sector issues and national perspectives, as well as making connections with key institutions and interlocutors in Cambodia. We are also grateful to colleagues from UNICEF Cambodia and their government partners provided invaluable support during field visits. As always, their inputs and cooperation are appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Evaluation Office for their work on this challenging evaluation. Kathleen Letshabo developed and managed the evaluation throughout, bringing her own expertise in education to bear; Tina Tordjman-Nebe also provided technical support in the early stages of the evaluation; and Celeste Lebowitz and Dalma Rivero provided strong administrative support throughout.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank	<b>ECCE</b>	Early Childhood Care and Education
<b>AOP</b>	Annual Operational Plan	<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>AusAID</b>	Australian Agency for International Development	<b>ELDS</b>	Early Learning Development Standards
<b>BE</b>	Bilingual Education	<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>BEGE</b>	Basic Education and Gender Equality	<b>ESWG</b>	Education Sector Working Group
<b>CBE</b>	Community Based Education	<b>ESP</b>	Education Strategic Plan
<b>CBS</b>	Community Based Schooling	<b>ESSP</b>	Education Sector Strategy Plan
<b>CCS</b>	Country Case Study	<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>CD</b>	Capacity Development	<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>CDC</b>	Council for the Development of Cambodia	<b>FTI</b>	(EFA) FastTrack Initiative
<b>CDPF</b>	Capacity Development Partnership Fund	<b>GoC</b>	Government of Cambodia
<b>CFS</b>	Child-Friendly School	<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>CO</b>	Country Office	<b>HBP</b>	Home-Based Programme
<b>CPD</b>	Country Programme Document	<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>CPS</b>	Community Pre-School	<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>CSMC</b>	Community School Management Committee	<b>IIEP</b>	International Institute for Educational Planning
<b>D&amp;D</b>	Decentralisation and Deconcentration	<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)	<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>EBEP</b>	Expanded Basic Education Programme	<b>JTWG</b>	Joint Technical Working Group
<b>ECC</b>	Education Coordination Committee	<b>KAPE</b>	Kampuchea Action for Primary Education
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development	<b>KRA</b>	Key Results Area
<b>ECCD</b>	Early Childhood Care and Development	<b>LSS</b>	Lower Secondary School



<b>MoEYS</b>	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport	<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation	<b>SPS</b>	State Pre-School
<b>MEF</b>	Ministry of Economic and Finance	<b>SWAp</b>	Sector Wide Approach
<b>MTR</b>	Mid Term Review	<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistant/Assistance
<b>NEP</b>	NGO Education Partnership	<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>NFE</b>	Non-Formal Education	<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>PAC</b>	Policy, Advocacy and Communication section	<b>USS</b>	Upper Secondary School
<b>PED</b>	Provincial Education Directorate	<b>UWE</b>	Upstream Work in Education
<b>POE</b>	Provincial Office of Education	<b>VSO</b>	Voluntary Service Overseas / VSO volunteer
<b>RO</b>	Regional Office	<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>SAT</b>	Sida Advisory Team	<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>SE</b>	Supervising Entity		



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

E.1 This study maps the upstream work carried out towards advancement of basic education and gender equality in UNICEF Cambodia, as part of a global evaluation. Cambodia was one of the four countries selected for in-depth study; the other three being Afghanistan, Brazil and Zimbabwe. Cambodia was selected because of its low-income status, its large UNICEF education programme, and its undertaking of an education sector SWAp since 2000.

E.2 The focus of evaluation was UNICEF's contribution to "upstream" work in education in the ten-year period, from 2003 to 2012. The objective was to assess the extent to which UNICEF engages strategically in education sector policy articulation and advocacy at the global and regional levels. The evaluation was also tasked with determining the extent to which upstream engagement efforts translate into desired transformations in education sector policy and practice and national system strengthening at country level.

E.3 The findings in this report draw on analysis of UNICEF country documents, government policies and education frameworks, and nearly three weeks of in-country fieldwork during which meetings were held with all major stakeholders in the education sector, namely, UNICEF Cambodia staff, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), other development partners, international NGOs and local NGOs.

E.4 While the focus was on mapping the shift towards upstream work in education between 2003–2012 across the activities carried out under the UNICEF education portfolio, in order to map the actual details of this shift focus was kept on three mini-case studies, focusing on UNICEF's work in: 1) Bilingual Education (BE); 2) Early Childhood Education (ECE); and 3) Capacity Development (CD) for education

management. These three mini-cases were selected because they represent the diversity of the UNICEF education portfolio and help illustrate the multiple routes taken by the UNICEF Cambodia education team to increase impact of its upstream work.

## MAIN FINDINGS

E.5 Cambodia has made impressive gains in education since the end in 1979 of the Khmer Rouge regime, which had systematically destroyed the education infrastructure and deliberately targeted the education workforce. Primary enrolment indicators have dramatically improved and gender gaps have been bridged. The education infrastructure has been rebuilt and the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to manage education has been visibly improved. Government commitment to rebuilding the education sector has indeed been important to ensure this progress, but development partners have also played a critical part in the process. The education sector continues to be heavily supported by donors and among the development partners UNICEF has been one of the most influential players.

E.6 The study team finds that there was indeed a definite, yet gradual, shift towards upstream work within UNICEF Cambodia during the evaluation period (2003–2012). UNICEF has taken a lead position in donor coordination within the education sector and has been able to influence national level education policies and legislative frameworks, has had its good practice pilots accepted by MoEYS for nationwide replication, and has made an identifiable contribution to building the capacity of MoEYS for education management.

E.7 As noted by many earlier studies on capacity development in the Cambodia education sector, UNICEF, like other development



partners, could have been more effective in this area as much capacity development work was not systematic or at institutional development level. However, this report notes that the design of the newly launched Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), which is implemented by UNICEF, makes visible efforts to address the gaps identified in earlier capacity development efforts made by development partners in the education sector in Cambodia – it attempts to pool donor resources to support a sector-wide capacity development plan instead of supporting independent capacity development projects. Thus, there is clearly learning within UNICEF Cambodia team on how to undertake upstream work in the area of capacity development more effectively in future.

E.8 Case studies on bilingual education and early childhood education, on the other hand, highlight how, while directly lobbying the government at the education policy level through the MoEYS and increasingly also through the Ministry of Finance, the UNICEF education team has consciously pursued the complementary strategy of continued support to best-practice pilots on the ground and has used the evidence of their impact to lobby the government to adopt them at national level.

E.9 This report shows that the factors that have helped UNICEF carry out this upstream work effectively do not necessarily trace back to policies or guidelines shared from the UNICEF HQ or regional office. The main drivers and facilitators of this shift seem to be a general shift of approach within the major development partners at the global level towards focusing on having high level policy impact – a shift which was also visible in their in-country offices – technical expertise and lobbying efforts of the senior UNICEF education staff, reliability of funding flows due to a steady partnership with Sida, visible presence on the ground by trialling best practice pilots in schools, and having zonal offices.

## CHALLENGES TO UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

E.10 There are however a number of challenges for UNICEF upstream work.

E.11 First, while the design of CDPF attempts to avoid weaknesses of earlier capacity development initiatives, it still remains a donor-managed rather than government-managed initiative. Thus, outlining a clear plan for transition of management of the fund to the government within a concrete timescale would be important.

E.12 Second, UNICEF's own institutional capacity to manage upstream work remains unpredictable given the important role played by individual education officials in bringing it to this stage.

E.13 Third, while UNICEF has had relative success in having its best practice models accepted at national level, the expansion and replication of these models remains heavily reliant on UNICEF funding. This poses a major challenge to ensuring sustainability of these initiatives and puts the very effectiveness of upstream work into question.

E.14 Fourth, as Cambodia aims to enter middle-income status and plans to join ASEAN in 2030, the aid flows to Cambodia are likely to gradually decrease. This is expected to make the lending agencies, mainly the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, more influential in terms of providing cash injections. Declining aid flows could negatively impact on UNICEF's ability to undertake upstream work as currently its ability to disburse aid for education sector activities has been critical to influencing the government. This further highlights the critical need to undertake upstream work through focusing on technical support instead of providing cash incentives.

E.15 Finally, it is worth noting that while there is evidence that the UNICEF Cambodia office has in general made an effort to move



towards upstream work, its impact in the education sector has been more visible than in other sectors. This makes a cross-sector comparative study of upstream work in UNICEF Cambodia potentially quite useful because given the varying levels of success by different sectors within UNICEF Cambodia office in undertaking upstream work, studying reasons for these different levels of performance can help further specify the factors that either hinder or restrict UNICEF's ability to undertake upstream work. Methodologically, studying within-case variations (i.e. variations across sectors within one UNICEF office) can be as illuminating in pinning down the factors that lead to success or failure of upstream efforts as cross-case variations (i.e. variations in performance across countries)—the latter being the approach of the current evaluation. The benefit of looking at within case variation is that in such a methodological approach, the external environment is the same. This enables the evaluation design to focus more specifically on sector specific or UNICEF specific issues in understanding the different levels of performance on upstream work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

E.16 The recommendations focus on enhancing the upstream impact in future.

### **Recommendation 1: Minimize the use of financial incentives for undertaking upstream work**

E.17 The most critical issue for UNICEF Cambodia is to ensure that the reforms brought about in the education sector due to its upstream work become sustainable. Acquiring this sustainability requires making the government commit its own resources to the reform process and expansion of best practice pilots. The success of UNICEF's existing lobbying at high level has partly been due to the strength of its technical staff but it has equally been reliant on UNICEF acting as a major disburser of aid flows. To increase the impact of its upstream work, UNICEF needs to move away from using financial incentives to influence government policies to using other means of securing

upstream impact, such as focusing on technical support and gathering evidence of impact of its proposed interventions. UNICEF should be able to confidently lobby for innovative models with solid evidence on the effectiveness of the models. Evidence generation and documentation should be the key to link the work at the two levels.

### **Recommendation 2: Develop a clear plan for shifting management of the CDPF to the government**

E.18 The establishment of the CDFP as a joint fund, which brings together EU, SIDA and UNICEF resources to better coordinate and streamline the institutional level capacity development work within the education sector in Cambodia, is a positive development. However, there is need to develop a clearer work plan and timetable as to when the management of CDPF will be handed over to the government. It is understandable why the three agencies supporting the CDPF want to keep its management in UNICEF hands in the initial period. But, in order to strength government systems, it is important to ensure that this arrangement does not become permanent.

### **Recommendation 3: Develop better tools to measure impact of upstream work**

E.19 There is recognition within the UNICEF Cambodia team that it does not have the relevant methodological tools to monitor and evaluate the impact of its upstream work in education. This is an area where the team expects to benefit from and be guided by the expertise available at UNICEF Headquarters. Given that the Cambodia office has been relatively effective in undertaking upstream work, it could be argued that it should consider taking the lead in approaching the regional advisor and the relevant units within the Headquarter with demands and ideas for developing such monitoring tools for upstream work.

E.20 The tools designed to measure the impact of upstream work need to be tailored to specific interventions as different interventions impact at different levels and incur different



costs. Thus, better monitoring tools need to be developed by the joint efforts of country teams, regional advisors, and UNICEF Headquarters to define more clearly what is meant by upstream work, what activities constitute the core of upstream work and what are viewed to be at the periphery, and what impact is secured at what cost. Only then can it be effectively assessed whether an intervention has had the desired impact and whether the outcome justifies the cost of undertaking that specific aspect of upstream work.

**Recommendation 4: Facilitate cross-sector learning on upstream work**

E.21 While the education team in UNICEF Cambodia has been relatively effective in pushing forward the upstream agenda – though as noted above, it has yet to ensure the sustainability of many of its achievements – the other sectors have not had similar success in undertaking upstream work. There is need for more joint efforts across the different sector teams within UNICEF offices to undertake upstream work across the social sectors. There needs to be emphasis on facilitation within organizational learning with opportunities being provided so that the sector teams which are more effective in undertaking upstream work can guide other sector teams on how to become more effective in their upstream activities.

**Recommendation 5: Undertake a cost-benefit analysis of UNICEF leadership of the donor coordination platforms for advancing its upstream work in education**

E.22 Finally, the Cambodia case study highlights the need for understanding how taking a leadership role in the donor coordination platforms such as ESWG can help advance UNICEF's own upstream agenda. In the case of Cambodia, many development partners recognised UNICEF's contributions to upstream work not by referring to UNICEF's success in having its programmes or policy recommendations adopted by the government. Instead, most gave examples of effectiveness of UNICEF's upstream work in reference to how UNICEF had equally importantly helped them lobby the government through the platform of the ESWG. During the course of the fieldwork, all the references made to UNICEF leadership of the ESWG were positive. However, this coordination role places an additional burden on the UNICEF team. A more detailed study on the specific benefits and costs of taking on the leadership of donor coordination platforms for UNICEF's upstream work is desirable. Such an analysis ideally also needs to map in more detail the specific leadership strategies that are most effective in promoting UNICEF's upstream work in education.



This case study looks at upstream work carried out by UNICEF Cambodia in the education sector in 2003 to 2012, and asks whether UNICEF was effective. The study identifies a stronger push for upstream work, and credits UNICEF for its active in coordinating sector wide forums, as well as facilitating high level access to the MoEYS for international and civil society partners.



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

This report presents one of four country case studies for the evaluation of UNICEF's upstream engagement in education commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office and undertaken by Mokoro Limited. Chapter 1 provides a brief description of the global evaluation. Chapter 2, describes the Cambodia country context and provides an overview of the upstream work in education undertaken over a period of three country programme documents (CPD) in 2003 to 2012.

Chapter 3 reports on the findings of the study. It looks at the relevance of UNICEF's upstream engagement in education and gender equality and the results of its work – to the extent that records were available and results reported. Within the results section three mini-case studies are considered in order to examine the follow-through from programme intentions to results. Chapter 3 also addresses the internal and external coherence of UNICEF's upstream engagement; factors uncovered in explaining the results of upstream work, and an assessment of the likely sustainability of the results of upstream work. Chapter 4 presents conclusions about upstream work in Cambodia, and overall recommendations emerging from the Cambodia case.

#### Evaluation purpose and scope

Terms of Reference for the evaluation describe the purpose of the evaluation as examining

*"...UNICEF's contribution in "upstream" work in education, to assess the extent to which UNICEF engages strategically in education sector policy articulation and advocacy at the global and regional levels. The evaluation will*

*also determine the extent to which upstream engagement efforts translate to desired transformations in education sector policy and practice, and national systemic strengthening in programme countries." (p5)*

The terms of reference require the evaluation to examine UNICEF's upstream work at the global, regional and country level, in all four BEGE key result areas (KRAs) of school readiness (KRA1), equitable access (KRA2), education quality (KRA3), and education in emergencies (KRA4). The evaluation looked at UNICEF engagement funded through regular and other resources. In addition, it judged the degree to which UNICEF's engagement produced desired results, using OECD DAC criteria of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, and an additional criterion of coherence. The evaluation did not set out to investigate the impact of UNICEF's upstream engagement on education outcomes, but rather assessed whether the engagement was translating to desired change in education sector policy and practice, and the strengthening of national education systems.

Within this overall scope of the evaluation, six evaluation themes were identified. A protracted evaluation scoping arrived at these themes, believed to be areas in which UNICEF required systematic learning to enhance its effectiveness on upstream work in the education sector, some of which would hopefully apply to other sectors in which the organization works. Hence, the evaluation examined whether there was a shared definition of upstream work within UNICEF; the capacity of UNICEF and its national partners for upstream work; how UNICEF was positioned for upstream work; how well UNICEF utilized external partnerships for its upstream work; UNICEF-wide collaboration;



and, upstream work in education in post conflict and emergency situations.

### Defining upstream engagement

Following a desk study of global literature on upstream work in education as well as a comprehensive review of UNICEF documentation of upstream work in 14 country programmes, the evaluation formalised the definition of upstream engagement in education so as to provide clear parameters for identifying UNICEF activities and results that should be included; Hence an operational definition of UNICEF's upstream work that was proffered by the evaluation team reads as follows:

*"UNICEF activities which were intended to have or had a system-wide, sustainable impact on the national capacities of public sector duty bearers in the education sector for fulfilling children's rights, directly or indirectly."*

The foundation Theory of Change presents a typology of UNICEF activities and results in terms of national capacities of public sector duty bearers to unpack this definition. Directly or indirectly means that the evaluation included instances where the organisation engaged directly with strengthening national capacities, as well as indirectly, such as through its engagement in the sector at supra-national level or national level through partnerships.

### Evaluation instruments

The key task for the evaluation was to assess the extent to which UNICEF's upstream work between 2003 and 2012 had system-wide, sustainable impacts on education sector laws, regulations, policies and standards and/or affected the systemic capacity of the sector, and whether these impacts were relevant, and achieved effectively, efficiently, and coherently.

The results of upstream work are elusive and therefore hard to measure. While upstream work may coincide with changes in measurable

education outcomes such as net enrolment rates, proving causality between these outcomes and upstream work is made difficult by many exogenous variables. That however does that changes in education outcome are not measurable, or that links of causality cannot be argued convincingly. The evaluation methodology sought to identify and measure these interim results, through three related instruments, a theory of change, contribution analysis and an evaluation framework.

*Evaluation theory of change:* Theories of change are models of the micro-linkages or causal path from programme to ultimate outcome, that can be empirically tested (Weiss 1995). The foundation theory of change for the evaluation is provided in Figure 1.1. Annex 5 provides the theory of change interpreted for Cambodia.

The theory of change includes a categorisation of UNICEF inputs (column 2), actions and outputs (column 3), as well as risks and assumptions. The theory of change applies outcome mapping to enable the measurement of intermediate outcomes through evidence of changes in behaviour, actions and relationships of actors and governments. To systematise this evidence, the evaluation used a typology of the impacts of policy and advocacy work set out in Jones (2011), to consider five types of upstream impact (column 5). That there is an obvious hierarchy between these dimensions of impact is useful, as it allowed the evaluation to rank the effectiveness of different UNICEF upstream interventions.

*Contribution analysis:* Contribution analysis infers causality from the application of a reasoned theory of change verified by evidence. The influence of other factors, exogenous to the programme, is also weighed and considered. This method of analysis was used to assess the degree to which UNICEF inputs (funding, capacities, approaches, strategies, policies) and outputs *contributed* to the achievement of the *intermediate outcomes as evidenced by upstream impact*, through the links or pathways identified in the theory of change.



*The Evaluation Framework:* This framework turned the theory of change into a set of evaluation questions, linked to the evaluation criteria, and defensible judgement criteria, which were to be applied transparently to argue evaluation findings and conclusions. It also set out valid evidence and evidence sources. The evaluation framework questions incorporated the six UNICEF evaluation themes. Annex 6, a matrix of summary findings and conclusions, is structured according to the evaluation framework.

## Evaluation process

The overall evaluation occurred in two phases at the global, regional and country level.

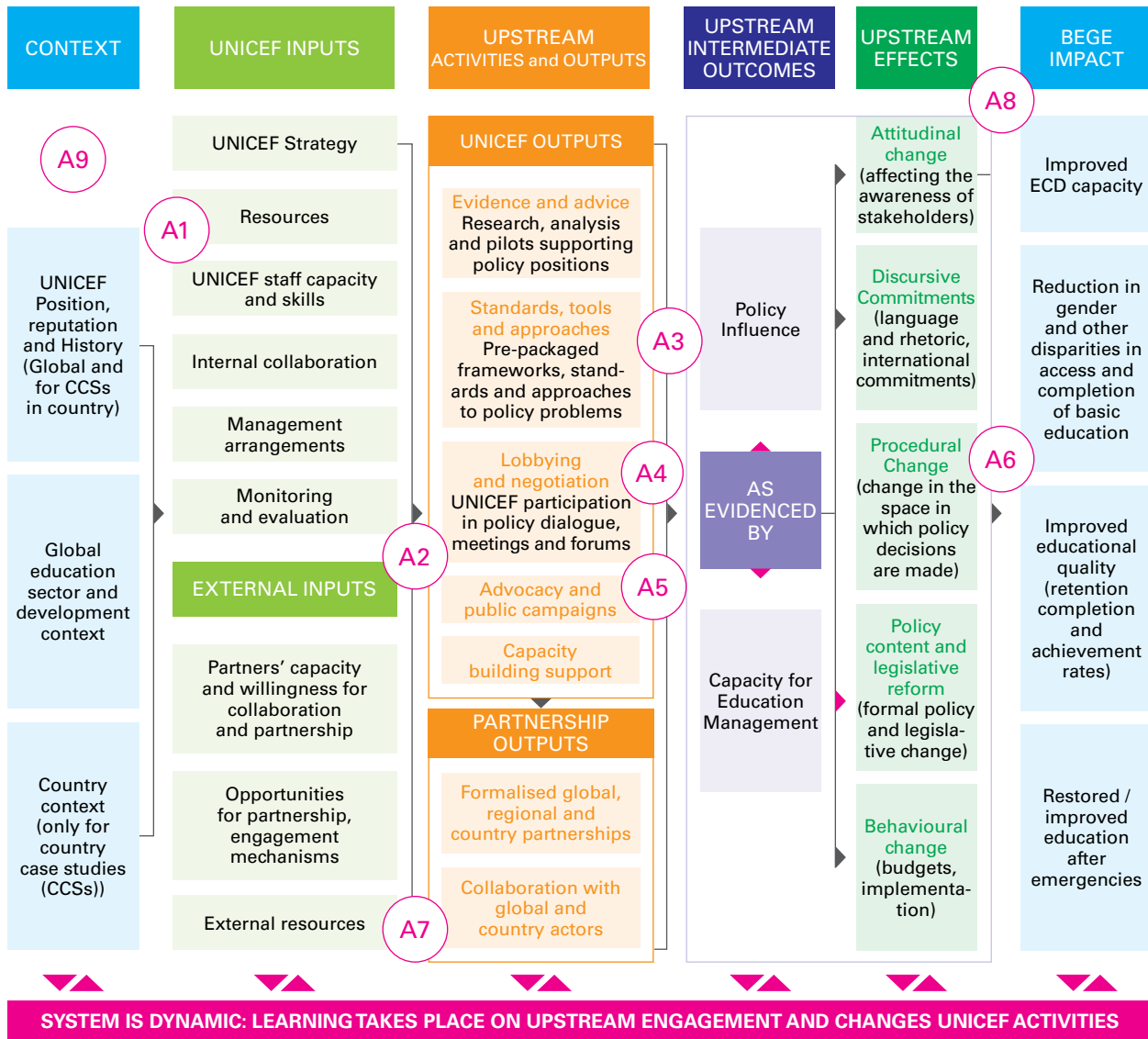
- In the inception phase a desk-based a review of UNICEF upstream engagement was undertaken in 14 countries across the seven UNICEF regions, as well as at UNICEF headquarters to understand education upstream work from a global perspective.
- In the field-based data collection phase four country case studies were undertaken in Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe. Data was also collected at the regional and global levels.

Data collection in case study countries at the field level was built around the selection of two to three mini-case studies per country, utilizing document reviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and harvesting of quantitative data from secondary sources. The application of these instruments was country-specific. It is described in Annex 1, which provides detailed account of the methodology for Cambodia.

Cambodia was selected as a country case study from a larger pool of 14 desk review countries, based on initial criteria proffered by the commissioners of the evaluation, and later refined by the evaluation team. Using material collected in the desk review, primary data and secondary data, country case studies provided key evidence on UNICEF's upstream work in the education portfolio at the country level. They afforded the evaluation team the opportunity to examine not only the extent to which UNICEF at a country level has shifted to upstream work, but also how well it has undertaken upstream work and under which circumstances its interventions contributed to the upstream results observed.



**FIGURE 1.1** Foundation Theory of Change



**Key assumptions / risks**

- A1** The mix of UNICEF inputs is suited to produce quality outputs leading to policy influence, capacity building and upstream impact cost effectively/efficiently.
- A2** If UNICEF has these inputs in place, it will be able to produce some of the outputs. However, it has to go into partnership with boundary partners and education public sector actors to achieve other outputs and the upstream impact. These inputs are in combination sufficient to allow partnerships to occur.
- A3** UNICEF's outputs are sufficiently relevant to its partners and countries to sustain partnership, achieve upstream impacts.
- A4** These UNICEF and partnership outputs, either individually or in combinations, will result in policy influence and capacity for education management.
- A5** UNICEF's approach and outputs internally and with partners are sufficiently coherent to lead to upstream impact.
- A6** UNICEF's outputs are sufficiently relevant to the country context for its policy influence and capacity building to sustainably deliver BEGE impacts.
- A7** UNICEF reacts to changes in the environment and feedback from its engagement to strengthen its inputs and outputs sufficiently to adapt to dynamic situations.
- A8** Public sector duty bearers want BEGE impacts and are willing to change.
- A9** The context is conducive to effective upstream engagement.



## CHAPTER 2

# COUNTRY CONTEXT AND UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

## 2.1 THE CAMBODIA NATIONAL CONTEXT

Given the state of the Cambodian education sector in 1979, where education infrastructure was deliberately destroyed and the education workforce consciously targeted by the Khmer Rouge regime,<sup>1</sup> Cambodia has made impressive progress in achieving BEGE targets set by the government in consultation with the development partners. Primary enrolment rates have steadily improved and gender gaps have been bridged. In 2011/2013, the overall net enrolment ratio at the primary level was 97%, with no difference by gender (MoEYS, 2013h). Education infrastructure has been rebuilt and the education workforce has expanded. Today, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) oversees 11,000 schools and employs 110,000 public servants, making it the one of the most important ministries in the country. Most institutional reform pilots are trialled through this ministry. For instance, MoEYS has been a pilot ministry for the Programme-Based Budgeting and the Medium-Term Budget Strategic Plan. It is now the pilot for implementation of the government decentralization programme. This post-1979 rebuilding of the education sector in Cambodia can broadly be grouped in three distinct phases: post-emergency (1979 to mid 1980s); gradual stability (mid 1980s to mid 2000); and the move towards sector-wide reform (2000 to date). In this journey, UNICEF has been one of the most important development partners for the MoEYS.

UNICEF started operations in Cambodia in 1952 (UNICEF, 1996). This cooperation was interrupted under the rule of the Khmer Rouge (1975–78) and was resumed in 1979 when UNICEF became the lead agency for UN support in the 1979–81 emergency period. UNICEF's presence in Cambodia during the emergency period when the new government was not even acknowledged by the international community and no other UN body was operating on the ground laid the foundation for a very stable partnership where UNICEF feels that it finds the MoEYS's 'door wide open.'<sup>2</sup>

UNICEF's education portfolio in Cambodia since 1979 in fact bears close resemblance to the development of the MoEYS. During 1979–81, UNICEF worked closely with the MoEYS to provide emergency supplies and vehicles, and help build school buildings and focus on basic education provision. "Cooperation between UNICEF, the Government and UNHCR prepared the ground for the return of children from the border to local schools" (UNICEF, 1996). By the mid-1980s the support had moved towards more institutional development, though mostly in project mode. UNICEF, for instance, supported the ministry to rebuild the printing and distribution department, renovate schools and teacher training colleges, establish cluster schools, and publish student and teacher basic competencies in Khmer and mathematics (UNICEF, 1996).

Starting in the 1990s, there is evidence of growing consciousness within UNICEF of the need to focus more on capacity development

<sup>1</sup> During its rule, the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979) killed many teachers and destroyed the education infrastructure in its bid to create pure young minds that accepted the regime's ideology.

<sup>2</sup> Reference made during a briefing meeting with the UNICEF education team.



instead of service delivery. The UNICEF Plan of Operations, 1996–2000 (UNICEF, 1996), notes: “The UNICEF support can be summarized as capacity-building.” It also noted that the operational plan was the result of a joint exercise by the Government and UNICEF, “carried out through analysis of the changing situation of children and women, the factors affecting it and the means of improving it, and successive steps like periodic programme review, strategy meeting and a series of mutual consultations.” Thus, it is fair to suggest that by the mid-1990s, UNICEF was conscious of the emerging aid effectiveness priorities such as the need for joint planning with the government, and adjusting interventions in response to the changing contexts and lessons learnt from previous experiences. UNICEF support to some capacity development programmes within MoEYS, the results of which are today easily traceable, such as the support to the Education Management Information System (EMIS) within the Department of Planning, started during this period.

As in case of MoEYS, UNICEF’s move towards providing more systematic sector-wide support to the education sector started in 2000, and not surprisingly UNICEF was one of the core development partners helping MoEYS make this shift. The other development partners who are documented to have played an important role in introducing the SWAp-like arrangement in 2000 were the EU, Sida, and the ADB. Since then the sector has had a clear and comprehensive policy framework that assists MoEYS and development partners in identifying national priorities in a collaborative manner. These costed frameworks are critical for linking domestic and external resources to sector policy priorities. Most development partners, however, continue to provide support through a variety of modalities and approaches instead of pooling resources.

At the MoEYS level, this move towards a SWAp has seen steady improvement in education planning. Since 2000, MoEYS has been regularly developing Education Sector Strategy Plans (ESSPs) and in more recent years has also

moved to development of Annual Operational Plans (AOPs). The capacity of senior managers within the planning department has also visibly improved. During the field visit, some of the most common examples quoted of this were: MoEYS staff rather than a TA now produce the first drafts of ESSPs and the AOPs, the EMIS unit now runs the Annual School Census and carries out analysis without any external support, and the young officials within the Planning Department have increased competence and increased confidence in negotiating with the development partners.

Many respondents noted that in their negotiations the MoEYS officials increasingly assert that development partners must remember that it is government who must be in the lead. At the level of the development partners, while the SWAp type arrangement has not led to development of joint projects, especially in capacity development as expected of the aid effectiveness agenda (Purcell et al, 2010; Seel, 2012), development partners are conscious of this challenge and recognize the importance of addressing it. Some argue that they have moved recently towards joint funding based on this realization – the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), discussed in Mini Case Study 3 in Chapter 3, which is jointly funded by UNICEF, Sida and EU being an important example.

In terms of UNICEF’s own approach, though not explicitly referred to as ‘upstream work’, there is ample evidence to illustrate a clear shift towards focusing on national-level policy influence and institutional as opposed to individual development during this period. Even when supporting best practice pilots on the ground, such as Child Friendly School (CFS) or Bilingual Education (BE) pilots, starting in 2000 there has been a conscious effort to undertake heavy lobbying to get those pilots accepted as national-level models and frameworks. As shown in the three mini-case studies presented in Chapter 3, this trend has been systematically consolidated over the study evaluation period (2003–2012).



From 2000 onwards, there has also been the emergence of effective sector wide coordination platforms and here again UNICEF has played a major role. The two most important platforms are the Joint-Technical Working Group on Education (JTWG-ED) and the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) – the former provides a policy dialogue platform between government and donor agencies, and the latter is a development partners' forum alone. Both these platforms bring together development partners working in education. One of the most important tasks led by the JTWG is the annual sector performance review, carried out jointly by the government and development partners. UNICEF has been playing a lead role in coordinating these platforms as it is co-chair of the ESWG. Most importantly it often sponsors<sup>3</sup> the education sector retreats, which were acknowledged by all development partners as a major contribution towards lobbying MoEYS effectively. In interviews with development partners, INGOs, and NGOs many acknowledged that without UNICEF it would have been difficult to have this high level of access to MoEYS.

The education sector in Cambodia has thus shown impressive improvement in BEGE indicators (Annex 3) and state capacity for education management. However, there are clear challenges for the MoEYS as well as for UNICEF. While access indicators have improved, school retention rates are less impressive and regional disparities are significant. Completion rates for lower secondary are particularly low. The high repetition rates due to poor quality of education make it unviable for many children and their families to continue in the higher grades. These challenges are most pronounced in the rural areas and remote regions especially for those from ethnic minority communities. In the 2008/2009 academic year, close to 50% of the children in remote areas admitted to grade one were over the age of six, compared to 29% in urban areas (UNICEF, 2009). The progress made

in Early Childhood Development also remains confined mainly to urban centres.

An additional challenge is MoEYS's continued heavy reliance on donor funds. In 2012 the volume of ODA for education amounted to \$88.2 million (CDC, 2013). Though the aid effectiveness indicators for MoEYS are better than for the other ministries (Purcell et al, 2010) and the appointment of a former Secretary of State from the Finance Ministry as the new Minister of Education after this year's elections is being seen as a very positive development by all the development partners, they are also very conscious of and worried about the steady decline in the share of the national budget devoted to the education sector. The share of the recurrent budget to education has declined from 19.2% in 2007 to 15.9% in 2012 (WB, 2013). This is worrying because it puts government commitment into question. Further, it raises a major sustainability issue for many donor-initiated activities, including those supported by UNICEF.

Cambodia is positioning itself to join the ASEAN economic block by 2030 and is keen to move into middle-income status. This ambition, recognized by the government as well as the donors, has implications for the continuity of aid flows to Cambodia beyond the five-to-ten-year framework. Unless the government increases its financial commitment to the education sector to make up for the potential loss it might suffer in aid flows with a move towards middle-income status, the sustainability of many donor-supported interventions will be put into question. During the fieldwork it was noted by a number of development partners that this changing aid context will pose additional challenges to UNICEF in coming years in terms of retaining its standing, given that Cambodia will then have to rely more heavily on lending agencies, such as the ADB and WB, as opposed to aid agencies.

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<sup>3</sup> UNICEF funds the cost of participation of the government officials, while the development partners cover their own costs.



## 2.2 UPSTREAM WORK BY UNICEF IN CAMBODIA

This section describes how UNICEF Cambodia has defined its upstream work, how such work has featured in the education portfolio, and measures taken to prioritise upstream work in education.

In each of the three country programmes covered by the evaluation period, education has been a major component. Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the three country programmes and the relative size of the education sub-programme. The Basic Education component has had either the largest (2006–2010) or the second largest (2001–2005, 2011–2015) budget, representing about one-fifth to one-third of the total programme budget.

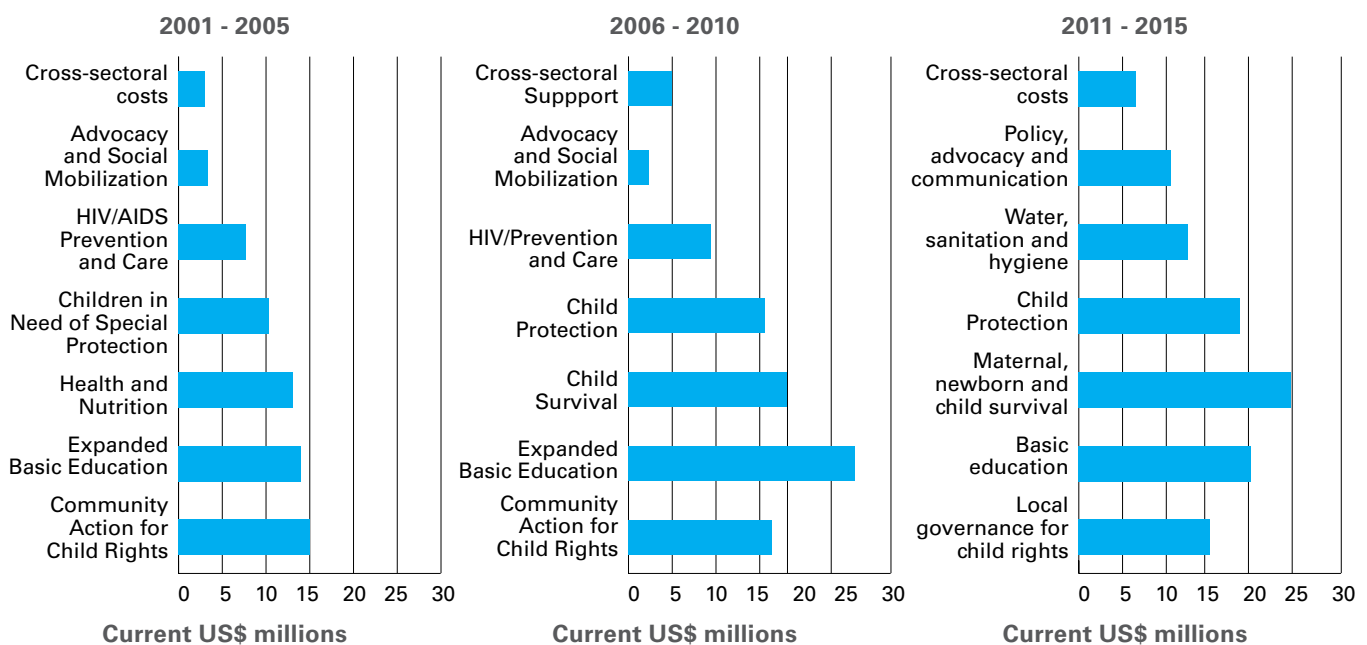
### UNICEF’s definition of upstream work

UNICEF has been active in upstream work in Cambodia’s education sector for more than a

decade. After a series of short-term programmes suited to responding to emergency situations arising from almost three decades of armed conflict and turmoil in Cambodia, the regular five-year programme from 1996 to 2000 focused on moving from emergency aid and reconstruction to development and child rights. With the next country programme starting in 2001, the upstream approach of working was further strengthened. The move was not limited to the education section but was the overarching direction for the UNICEF Cambodia office as a whole. The UNICEF 2001–2005 country programme stated that:

Alliances and coordination with strategic partners, donors, financial institutions and NGOs will be strengthened, and new partnerships with civil society organisations will be established. Supporting national programmes of strategic importance, will allow UNICEF to leverage resources, influence stakeholders and create alliances and partnerships around common good policies and plans. (UNICEF, 2001)

**FIGURE 2.1** Budgets and components of UNICEF Cambodia’s Country Programmes, 2001–2015



Sources: UNICEF, 2001; UNICEF, 2006b; UNICEF, 2010a



The following Country Programme Document (CPD), covering the 2006–2010 period, includes a more elaborated definition of what upstream work means for UNICEF in Cambodia. The definition is here framed around, and gives strong emphasis to, the linking of work at the provincial to the national level through what it calls a two-tier system:

The Country Programme will continue to be implemented through a two-tier system at national and provincial levels. At the national level, UNICEF will help to build the capacity of counterparts; formulation of policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks; implementation of national programmes; and advocacy to high-level decision makers, other donors and the public. In selected provinces, UNICEF will support capacity building of counterparts; intensive implementation of policies, programmes, legislation and regulatory frameworks; delivery of selected social services; social mobilization; decentralized planning; and trials of innovative models. This two-tier system will encourage an iterative process. That is, implementation of the existing national policies, programmes, legislation and regulatory frameworks will be supported with particular intensity in selected priority provinces together with the trial of innovative approaches and models. Experiences gained in the field will in turn inform and encourage further improvement of policies and legislation. (UNICEF, 2006b)

While capacity development is already mentioned as an important aspect in the 2006–2010 CPD, the current country programme gives an even stronger emphasis to this aspect of UNICEF's upstream work:

The programme seeks to strengthen service delivery primarily through leverage of policy and partnerships focused on achievement of agreed results, demonstrating how systems work for children, facilitating participation

and empowerment, and nurturing national ownership and mutual accountability. Support to capacity development, based on analyses of capacity gaps, will be central to the programme: people's capacity to articulate and claim their rights; national and subnational government capacity to respect, protect and fulfil rights; and civil society's capacity to facilitate enhanced participation and accountability. (UNICEF, 2010a)

The following sections consider each of the three education programme periods in more concrete detail and highlight how upstream work in education appears in UNICEF documentation.

### The 2001–2005 Country Programme: 'Start-up phase for the upstream work'

The start-up phase of UNICEF's upstream work in education in Cambodia is anchored in the preparation of the country's first Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2001–2005) and the Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP 2001–2005).<sup>4</sup> Documents reviewed and interviews conducted for the evaluation reveal that the 2000–2003 period was a time of great intensity in the education sector. The Minister of Education embarked on major reform efforts and as part of this requested a more coherent engagement from development partners and from NGOs. UNICEF was in the forefront of this endeavour.

The education reform process and the accompanying SWAp are strongly reflected in UNICEF's country programme for 2001–2005. The education component of the country programme was implemented through the MoEYS/UNICEF/Sida Expanded Basic Education Programme (EBEP).

The EBEP supported the national capacity building process for developing the SWAp. In conjunction with the efforts for improved education sector planning and donor coordination, UNICEF supported several pro-poor policies for increased access to basic education and

<sup>4</sup> In addition, Cambodia and its partners also developed a National Education for All Action Plan in 2003, which outlined a number of goals to achieve education for all Cambodian children by 2015.



reduction of gender disparities in school participation. The start-up phase of UNICEF's upstream work in the sector focused on the following work areas and support from UNICEF (UNICEF, 2003; UNICEF, 2004; UNICEF, 2005):

- **Donor coordination:** UNICEF played an active role in the Education Sector Working Group and it represented donors at the Appraisal of the ESP/ESSP. UNICEF funded the position of a Donor Coordination Advisor who facilitated coordinated responses from donors on education reform at the time of ESP and ESSP reviews.
- **Facilitation of NGO participation in the education SWAp:** UNICEF supported the creation and development of a consortium of over 50 education-related NGOs under the name of the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) in order to build a wider alliance for the Education SWAp.
- **Capacity building for better education planning and monitoring:** UNICEF supported a wide range of activities to improve planning capacity at national, provincial, district and cluster levels.
- **Development of an Education Act:** UNICEF support to the development of an over-arching and enabling Education Law focused on capacity building in the MoEYS Legislation Unit to ensure that the drafting process would be in line with and facilitate further education reforms.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** UNICEF supported the training of gender trainers from the provincial level, who in turn are responsible for training education staff in gender awareness. UNICEF also supported the training of a core group of curriculum writers to ensure that the revised curriculum would be gender-sensitive and gender-balanced.
- **New curriculum policy:** UNICEF provided technical assistance for the formulation of the new curriculum policy which was approved by the Ministry in 2004.

- **Child-Friendly School Initiative:** UNICEF supported the expanded implementation of the Child-Friendly School Initiative (CFS). CFS trainers from the Provincial Offices of Education (POE) were trained to train school directors and teachers in child-centred pedagogy and in creating child-friendly classroom and school environments. Guidelines and manual for the CFS were also developed with support from UNICEF.
- **Pilot testing of Early Childhood activities:** UNICEF supported the development and pilot-testing of various Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiatives, including school readiness in Grade 1, community pre-schools and home-based education.

### The 2006–2010 Country Programme: 'Upstream consolidation phase'

Building on the gains achieved in the education sector reform under the 2001–2005 programme of cooperation, the second phase of MoEYS/UNICEF/Sida's Expanded Basic Education Programme (EBEP II 2006–2010) focused on consolidation of the achievements from the first phase. It had the following three sub-components (MoEYS, 2005c):

**Project 1: Capacity-Building for Sector-Wide Reform and Decentralisation,** including support to human resources capacity and institutional development in the education sector.

**Project 2: Improving Equitable Access and Quality of Basic Education,** including contributions towards achieving universal primary education with equitable access and quality improvement mainly through the Child-Friendly School (CFS) strategy.

**Project 3: Expanded Learning Opportunities for Disadvantaged Children and Youth,** supporting equitable access for children who are particularly disadvantaged such as over-aged, disabled, ethnic minorities and children having difficulty in accessing early childhood care, particularly in rural and remote areas.



To a large extent, the areas and types of upstream activities during EBEP II were the same as during the first phase. A review of programme reports highlights the following main upstream activities over the 2006–2010 period (UNICEF, 2006a; UNICEF, 2007; UNICEF, 2008; SAT, 2007; SAT, 2008; SAT, 2010):

- **Continued efforts to strengthen donor coordination:** EBEP II continued to assume a catalytic function in moving from donorship to partnership in the education sector and played a key role in the development of the second Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and Education Sector Support Programme, e.g. through organizing seminars for building common understanding and consensus about SWAp between donor representatives and senior level Ministry officials and by providing constant technical support to the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG). UNICEF took over the role of ESWG Chair from UNESCO for the first time in 2008. Since then the position has rotated between the two agencies.
- **Strengthened legal and policy frameworks:** UNICEF provided technical support for the development of the Education Law and a number of core policies and action plans for the education sector, including the Life Skills Education Policy, the Child-Friendly School Policy, the Inclusive Education Policy and the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan. After a four-year drafting process within MoEYS, the Education Law was passed by the National Assembly and Senate and was officially promulgated in 2007.
- **Capacity development for better education sector planning:** UNICEF provided technical support to core MoEYS departments, including planning and statistics, financial management and human resource management. It assisted in the development of medium-term capacity-building plans by all technical and administrative departments under MoEYS. UNICEF also supported major training activities for thousands of education staff at decentralized

levels in areas such as basic research design and data analysis; database management; generation and interpretation of education statistics and indicators; programme budgeting management; financial auditing; gender sensitization and mainstreaming; and school leadership and management.

- **Mainstreaming and scaling-up of child-friendly schools:** UNICEF continued to support the piloting and expansion of the Child-Friendly Schools. This included the development of operational manuals for school directors and teachers to implement the CFS and integration of the CFS approach in the pre-service teacher training curriculum in all 18 teacher training colleges. At the national level, UNICEF provided technical support for the drafting of the CFS Policy and its operational plan.
- **Pilot innovations to reach disadvantaged children:** EBEP II supported several pilot interventions to address the specific educational needs of disadvantaged populations. Pilot projects over 2006–2010 included 1) community-based and home-based ECD programmes; 2) life skills for HIV/AIDS projects; 3) multi-grade teaching in remote areas; 4) bilingual education for ethnic minority children; and 5) accelerated classes for over-aged children. These pilots have been an important part of UNICEF's upstream work in Cambodia as the UNICEF education team systematically lobbied the government to ensure that it adopts these pilots into national policy frameworks.

### The 2011–2015 Country Programme: Stronger focus on equity and capacity development

The strategic direction of UNICEF's 2011–2015 Country Programme points to an even stronger emphasis on upstream work through improved service delivery for children through 'leverage of policy and partnerships focused on achievement of agreed results'. The same core set of upstream activities are present in the current programme.



The following three main result areas were agreed for the still ongoing Basic Education Programme (UNICEF, 2010a):

- **Intermediate Result 1: Early childhood education (ECE) professionals at national and sub-national levels are able to plan, coordinate and guide the provision of high quality ECE programmes.** Building on successful pilots, this component supports scaling-up of early learning for girls and boys aged below six years, including children with disabilities and ethnic minorities, and their transition to primary schooling.
- **Intermediate Result 2: Strengthened capacities at national and sub-national levels to deliver inclusive basic education services.** This component addresses survival through primary school and transition into lower secondary school, increasing chances of all children to complete the full nine-year cycle of basic education. Further support to the CFS master plan is provided to government training and monitoring teams at district level to create support networks and environments conducive to teacher development, with increased focus on community engagement.
- **Intermediate Result 3: Strengthened capacities at national and sub-national levels to plan and manage implementation of the ESP.** This component supports institutional and individual capacity development for strategic and evidence-based planning at national and sub-national levels, including local governance, with a view to long-term sustainability of the education system built on equity.

### Measures taken to prioritise upstream work

There are few signs that the UNICEF office in Cambodia has developed separate or specific measures or indicators to plan and monitor its upstream work in education. Rather, the approach taken over the evaluation period has been to ensure the priority of upstream work

through the regular planning and monitoring processes. Key instruments have included:

- Sida Advisory Team (SAT): to ensure the quality of Sida's major support to UNICEF Cambodia's education programme, Sida contracted UNESCO-IIEP in 2001 to serve in an advisory role. The SAT Team came to play an important monitoring function over nearly a decade, from 2001 to 2010. Its annual review missions and its recommendations provided a forum for internal and external debate on upstream issues.
- In recent years, annual sector retreats, quarterly review meetings and annual staff appraisals have been the Education Chief's main tools for ensuring the quality of UNICEF's upstream work.
- Several respondents mention that the 2003 and 2008 mid-term reviews and the drafting of the country programme documents have been instrumental for refining and adjusting the country office overall approach to upstream work. This is also evident in several of the internal documents that were reviewed, where strategic findings in mid-term reviews and stated directions in the CPD are referred to.
- Staffing: interviews with the senior management and some annual education reports reveal that recruitment of the right staff at the right time has been essential for UNICEF's upstream work in education. This was the case when UNICEF in 2001 established a new international position in the education section to work on donor coordination and education sector planning. A more recent example is the thorough selection process undertaken to ensure that the right staff were recruited to take forward the work with the capacity development partnership fund. On a less positive note, there have also been occasions where delays in recruitment have hampered UNICEF's upstream work in the sector. This was the case with the postponed recruitment of staff to work on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in 2002 and 2003.



## CHAPTER 3

### EVALUATION FINDINGS

#### 3.1 THE RELEVANCE OF UNICEF'S APPROACH TO UPSTREAM WORK

In moving from its initial shift to gradual consolidation of its upstream work during the 2003–2012 period, UNICEF's Cambodia education programme has managed to stay relevant not only to UNICEF's internal mandate but also to national needs and government priorities. However, at times there has been a clash between government priorities and UNICEF's internal mandate, such as on the issue of ECE or bilingual education, and here UNICEF has chosen to follow the latter. UNICEF has normally been successful in gradually making these internal priorities also be reflected in the MoEYS agenda. However, the continued reliance of such interventions on UNICEF money does raise additional challenges to their sustainability as opposed to those areas of work which are MoEYS's own priorities.

As outlined in Chapter 2, UNICEF work in Cambodia since 1979 has in general matched the changing needs of the country as it gradually moved from the post-emergency phase to a state of relative stability. Upstream work carried out by UNICEF Cambodia during the evaluation period (2002–2013), as illustrated in the case studies, similarly shows good awareness of the national educational needs and government capacity gaps to meet them. UNICEF upstream work has also been synchronised with the efforts of the other development partners. As noted in an interview with the Programme Director of one of the INGOs which is a close partner of UNICEF, it is clear that it is not just the major donors but also INGOs that had started to move towards having more systematic impact from the early 2000s: '....[the] organization has been moving away from a project

approach to working towards bringing about systemic reforms. We do not want to work on small projects, especially impact of three years project is very small. Instead we want to work systematically on selected themes with bigger impact groups. We have had this approach for the last 10 years.'

During this period, UNICEF has invested in a wide-ranging set of activities within the education sector in Cambodia. These interventions have in particular been aimed at access, quality and capacity development for education management and have closely reflected the priorities outlined in the government ESSP and ESPs. The current focus of UNICEF capacity development work at provincial and district level as opposed to national level, for instance, also closely reflects its responsiveness to government priorities, given that one of these is decentralization, and the capacity of MoEYS planning officials at the national level is now quite developed.

However, given that government ESSPs often list a large number of priorities, making it easy for all donor agencies to claim that their interventions are relevant, other kinds of evidence are in fact more revealing of UNICEF's awareness and responsiveness to national needs rather than explicit government priorities. This is best reflected in UNICEF's support to bilingual education in Cambodia, which has gone on to become one of the core priority areas for UNICEF's education team. As access indicators for BEGE improved, UNICEF realized that the remaining gaps though small in terms of national average were highly concentrated in certain regions, especially the remote mountain regions with tribal and ethnic minorities (de Vries, 2013). Working in partnership with CARE, UNICEF took a lead role in lobbying



the government to recognize these regional differences and to allow higher school operating budgets in these deprived areas, and to adopt the bilingual education model, which was showing visible success in enrolling children from ethnic minorities.

Similarly, given the importance of ECE to UNICEF's internal mandate and the continued challenges to quality of education in Cambodia, UNICEF has prioritized its commitment to ECE, even when it is not the core government priority. UNICEF is the main donor supporting the ECE department. It has helped the department develop a lower-cost model for ECE provision and is funding teachers' salaries for this community-based ECE model. The latter, however, remains a controversial approach to undertaking upstream work as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Apart from the relevance of the thematic focus of its work, there is also evidence that UNICEF has constantly tried to reorganize its team structure to best meet the needs of the education sector. Between mid and late 2000, UNICEF placed its staff with government education departments in six provinces to build capacity within those provinces. However, recognizing the marginalized nature of some remote provinces which were not included in the six focus provinces, UNICEF decided to move to a zonal structure under which it opened its own field offices in five zones and the teams based in these zones helped cover the entire country. This shift towards zonal offices and country-wide coverage is today recognized by most development partners as UNICEF's key distinctive advantage in upstream work.<sup>5</sup> UNICEF can get quick access to information and stay tuned to realities on the ground which helps all development partners verify information from the field and lobby the government more effectively.

UNICEF has also shown good awareness of the coordination needs of the donor community in order to facilitate effective government lobbying. It has therefore taken on the role of co-Chair of the ESWG, and the education sector treats its sponsors very seriously. This leadership in donor coordination was recognized by all development partners and INGOs as a very critical part of UNICEF's work in the education sector in Cambodia.

### 3.2 THE RESULTS OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK

UNICEF Cambodia, as in case of other UNICEF offices covered in this evaluation, has not put in place an explicit monitoring and evaluation framework for systematically measuring the impact of its upstream work. However, the shift in government policies and practices in areas which have been the priority focus of UNICEF upstream work helps map some of its impact. This section illustrates the results of UNICEF upstream work in education by looking at three mini-case studies within the education sector. The first mini-case study examines the role UNICEF has played in making bilingual education a national policy issue and bringing government attention to inter-regional differences in basic education. The second mini-case study looks at UNICEF's role in helping the government adopt national policy for ECE and expand ECE provision on the ground. The third mini-case study examines UNICEF's contributions to capacity building for education management and the potential of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) to address earlier gaps in capacity development. These mini-case studies were selected because they capture the diversity of UNICEF Cambodia's education portfolio and help map the different routes adopted by the UNICEF Cambodia team to increase the impact of upstream work in.

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<sup>5</sup> After the current mid-term review, UNICEF has, however, decided to reduce the number of zonal offices from five to three because of the high costs of maintaining these offices. However, it still intends to cover the entire country even when operating from three zonal offices.



### Mini-Case Study 1: Putting Bilingual Education on the Map

While Cambodia has made impressive progress on BEGE indicators, the more remote provinces and minority ethnic communities continue to lag behind. In the 2008/2009 school year, nearly half of children in remote areas admitted to grade one were over the age of six, compared to 29% in urban areas (UNICEF, 2009). Meanwhile, preschool education and other early education opportunities remain out of reach for most children, especially those outside of urban centres. The five provinces of northeastern Cambodia, Mondulhiri, Kratie, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng and Preah Vihear, which house ethnic minorities, show lower primary enrolment and completion rates compared to the national average. Mother-tongue-based education is seen as a key strategy for reaching ethnolinguistic minority groups with much-needed education services. The move towards government acceptance of the bilingual education model to enhance education access in these communities, despite its strong initial reservations concerning such proposals, is an important example of the great importance placed on upstream work by the Cambodia education team in the evaluation period, and of its impact.

There are different groups of ethnic minorities in Cambodia, which is also the case for other countries in the Southeast Asia region. In Cambodia the prominent groups include indigenous ethnic minorities concentrated in the highlands, Cham, Chinese, Vietnamese, etc. Khmer, Cambodia's national language, is typically the only language of instruction in public schools, but many children in the north-east provinces do not speak or understand it.

Starting in the mid-1990s, bilingual literacy programmes had been initiated in Cambodia but mainly for adults. In 2002, CARE launched the Highland Children's Education Project (HCEP), which was a primary level bilingual education programme. Under this pilot, six schools were opened in 2003 to introduce primary education teaching in two ethnic minority community languages (Tampuan and Kreung) in the

province of Ratanakiri. Essential components of this model are the establishment of community school management committees (CSMCs), the adoption of an alternative school calendar compatible with local farming activities, and the recruitment, training and employment of local language speakers as teachers. Central to the HCEP is the idea of *community schools*—schools where the community is largely responsible for governance and day-to-day operations. The schools provide students with formal primary education. The model has shown visible success in increasing enrolment and improving education quality-related outcomes in the difficult-to-reach ethnic minority communities in the highlands (Benson, 2011). The model argues for teaching children in their mother tongue in the primary grades, gradually increasing the proportion of teaching in the Khmer language.

CARE started this work on bilingual education initially with support from AusAID but soon UNICEF became the key donor for the pilot. Discussion with CARE staff shows that UNICEF staff took an active interest in this pilot because of its perceived ability to reach the really disadvantaged communities in Cambodia and ensure equity of access and improved educational outcomes. UNICEF not only financed the pilot but also took an active interest in the technical developments of the model. However, the most important role that UNICEF played in the development of this model was to ensure that it was endorsed by the national government. As the Director of CARE explained, given the sensitive nature of bilingual education with the government not very keen to encourage it on a wide scale for political considerations, CARE was comfortable working with the government on developing the model without asking for national level policy endorsement. However, he noted that UNICEF in contrast was very clear from the start that the government had to be lobbied to develop a policy framework for bilingual education and that the model needed to be formally endorsed and accepted by the government so that all the ethnic minorities could benefit from it.



UNICEF supported the lobbying process by ensuring that bilingual education was included in the ESP development process. It made bilingual education part of the CFS policy and master plan. It supported capacity development and system strengthening for bilingual education through the sub-committee on special education. UNICEF also provided teacher training on teaching methodologies and upgrading and provided community bilingual education teachers' salaries. It provided a monitoring budget for central departments and a District Training and Monitoring Team (DTMT) to provide on-going support to all bilingual education schools and teachers. It facilitated community participation in bilingual education through setting up school boards or school support committees. Since all these activities were linked with active lobbying of the government to adopt the bilingual education model, they had a clear upstream impact even though seen on their own these activities appear to be downstream.

By 2007, there were clear developments in terms of government acceptance of bilingual education. In 2007, implementation of bilingual education by MoEYS started in Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, followed by Stung Treng in 2008. The *Guidelines on Implementation of Education for Indigenous Children in Highland Provinces*, signed by the Minister of Education on 26 August 2010, was a critical development and it outlined a set of activities designed to expand bilingual education (MoEYS, 2010c). The CARE-supported model of community ownership of bilingual education is fully adopted in the *Guidelines*, which give communities the responsibility for developing and protecting the community and school from loss of local language and traditions, and to prevent "irregularities" which would hinder effective functioning of the school (Benson, 2011).

In 2011, external evaluation of the implementation of bilingual education by MoEYS was carried out and a master plan was developed for 2012–2015. It is the first long-term plan on bilingual education expansion and was developed based on the 2010 guidelines and recommendations made in the 2011 bilingual education evaluation.

In 2012, implementation of bilingual education began in Kratie and Preah Vihear. Earlier this year, a Prakas (highest policy document that a Minister can sign) on *Identification of Language for Learners of Khmer Nationality with Ethnic Minority Origin* was approved and endorsed.

The 2011 evaluation of the status of bilingual education in Cambodia further notes:

That the Cambodian government has now adopted bilingual schooling as part of the state system, and has committed human and financial resources to its expansion in five key provinces with minority populations, represents a true accomplishment of policy and practice, and one that is being watched with interest internationally, in the Southeast Asia region and beyond. (Benson, 2011, p. 7)

In order to understand the effectiveness of this approach to upstream work where models on the ground are developed to lobby government to initiate nation-wide reform, it is important to record that UNICEF have had similar success in the adoption of the CFS model at the national level. In 2000/2001 the CFS initiative was piloted in a few schools across the country by Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE) with support from UNICEF. In 2007, the National CFS policy and Master Plan for primary schools was approved. In 2008, the CFS was launched nationwide. In 2012, a revised CFS policy for basic education (for primary and lower secondary schools, grades 1–9) was approved. The focus on CFS had in turn followed from the earlier UNICEF work on Cluster Schools. In 1996, the MoEYS had issued a Cluster Schools Policy to be implemented nationwide; the model was later replaced by CFS. As one of the UNICEF education team members highlighted, 'With all our pilots and models on the ground, we first allowed them to develop gradually paying close attention to perfecting them. Once the model starts maturing we start to actively engage the government and lobby it for national level policy endorsement and implementation. Once they see the success on the ground, it is much more likely that they will agree to the proposed reform or intervention.'



UNICEF's role in growing acceptance of bilingual education in Cambodia is thus a clear example of how it has been heavily focused on upstream work and aims to have national level influence for its interventions. However, the challenge of pushing priorities which are not the natural priorities of the government, even if those priorities are important to UNICEF's internal mandate, is clear: despite progress in winning state support for bilingual education, the sustainability of the programme is highly questionable. The salaries of the bilingual education teachers and the cost of extensive training and to support network provided to are all financed by UNICEF. Until the government takes over the financial costs of running the programme, the real impact of UNICEF Cambodia upstream work in the area of bilingual education remains open to question.

### Mini-Case Study 2: The case of Early Childhood Education

This section presents evidence on how UNICEF's engagement with Early Childhood Education (ECE) has influenced the capacity of the public sector to provide ECE services at scale in Cambodia. It is based on interviews with the major stakeholders in Phnom Penh, a one-day field visit to one state pre-school and one community pre-school, and a review of relevant documentation.

#### **The context for UNICEF's work with ECE in Cambodia**

In recent years, access to Early Childhood Education has increased from a low base in Cambodia. In 2005/06, just below 14% of children between the ages of three and five had access to early childhood education facilities. In 2011/12, the enrolment rate in ECE had risen to 29% (GoC, 2013a). While the demand for ECE is growing, children from the poorest families, from ethnic minority groups and with disabilities remain largely excluded from ECE. At the same time, the provision of private pre-schooling for middle class families in urban areas is expanding.

Early childhood development opportunities are provided in four types of programmes, including state pre-schools (SPS), community pre-schools (CPS), home-based programmes (HBP) and through private providers.

Building on lessons learnt in the 1996–2000 Country Programme period, UNICEF identified the expansion of ECE opportunities as a priority for the 2001–2005 programme (UNICEF, 2001). The acknowledgement and awareness from policy makers and families of the critical role of the early years of a child's life for the formation of intelligence, personality and social behaviour was at the time identified as very limited. UNICEF saw a role for itself in promoting not only the importance of early childhood development in general, but also in stressing that it is about more than meeting the 'academic needs' of young children. The role of play for enjoyment and the psychosocial development of the young child in pre-schools were limited. Another important reason for UNICEF to give higher priority to ECE was school readiness. It was deemed necessary to expand the provision of ECE to more children in order to increase the proportion of children starting primary education on time.

#### **Early ECE upstream activities behind the establishing of the Community Pre-School as a form of ECE provision**

The origins of the upstream focus of UNICEF's ECE activities are difficult to trace, but two events in 2003 and 2004 are mentioned by UNICEF staff as important 'milestones' of more system-wide efforts and effects of UNICEF's ECE support. The first milestone goes back to UNICEF's mid-term review of its own country programme in 2003. At the time, UNICEF's so-called Seth Koma programme supported a system of volunteer child care at local level. The mid-term review recommended a shift from volunteer child care to ECE provision at commune level and that UNICEF should start providing financial incentives to teachers. UNICEF sees these incentives to ECE teachers at the commune level as an important starting point for more coherent



support from the Education Section to ECE. It also triggered a stronger focus on strengthening the capacity of communes and the Ministry of Education to plan for ECE.

The other milestone, mentioned by UNICEF staff as well as one senior Ministry official, was a situational review of Commune Council activities, conducted in 2004. UNICEF conducted the review together with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Women Affairs, and an output of the review was a recognition of the need for structured community-based ECE. It was agreed to converge 700 child-care classes into Community Pre-Schools, under the responsibility of the three Ministries. At this stage, UNICEF also started to promote a stronger coordinating role for the Ministry of Education in the provision of ECE. Over the 2004–2006 period, UNICEF continued to pilot the CPS with Commune Councils, conducted training for relevant staff and supported the Ministry of Education in the development of a curriculum for the CPS and teacher guides. As a result of these efforts, the government of Cambodia endorsed the CPS as one model for delivering ECE services in the country in 2006.

#### **UNICEF's role in influencing national ECE policy and capacity for delivering ECE**

UNICEF used its work with the CPS model in six provinces and its interaction with the Commune Councils as a way into a more structured collaboration with the Ministry of Education. However, a few interviewees and UNICEF's mid-term review pointed out that in 2003 the Ministry's attention to ECE was still very limited. Early childhood development (ECD) was not a high priority in the education reforms under the ESP/ESSP, very limited national resources were devoted to the subsector, the ECD department was weak and only a small minority of children had access to ECE services.

In this rather challenging context, UNICEF's strategy was to gradually strengthen the capacity of the new ECD department by providing financial and technical support

for policy development and for strengthening the national governance structure for all types of ECE programmes, including state pre-schools, community pre-schools and home-based programmes. In 2004, UNICEF was also able to fill a long-awaited vacancy for ECE in the office in Phnom Penh. The enhanced staffing on the UNICEF side contributed to a closer relationship with the ECD department.

Over the coming years, UNICEF came to play an important role in advocating for the Ministry of Education's role in leading and coordinating Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) vis-à-vis other Ministries and key actors. UNICEF continued to work with the CPS model at sub-national levels, at the same time as it took a number of initiatives for influencing the overall policy direction of ECE at the national level:

- **Support to Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS):** To guide and frame the expansion of all types of ECE provision in Cambodia, UNICEF provided substantial support for the development of ELDS over the 2006–2009 period. The standards included a set of comprehensive national indicators which helped to guide the development of curriculum, material and teacher training for all ECE programmes in Cambodia. Through these standards, UNICEF helped to expand the notion of what ECE entailed and was able to promote a holistic view of young children's early development which went beyond 'the learning of the alphabet'. By 2009, ELDS covering physical and health development, moral and cultural development, social and emotional development, awareness and thinking and language development had been developed for 3, 4, and 5 year olds. Based on the ELDS, UNICEF supported the revision of the SPS and CPS, teacher training on the revised curriculum, material development for the home-based programme and some tools for monitoring of the use of the standards.



- **Knowledge generation for ECE:** UNICEF has supported two studies on the effects on children's cognitive development of participating in the different types of ECE programmes offered in Cambodia (Miyahara, 2007; Rao and Pearson, 2007). The findings from these studies have been used by the ECD department and by UNICEF to advocate for the importance of expanding different types of ECE provision and for improving the quality of the home-based programmes and the community-based pre-schools.
  - **Influencing the Fast Track Initiative and the Global Partnership for Education to invest in ECE:** A large number of stakeholders mentioned that UNICEF contributed to the identification and prioritisation of the areas and activities to be funded by FTI in 2007 and the recent Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grant in 2013. This included a pledge from UNICEF for FTI support to ECE at a joint World Bank and donor partner mission to prepare the EFA-FTI Catalytic fund programme in September 2007. As a result, the FTI programme gave high priority to the expansion of the CPS in targeted provinces. Similarly, UNICEF contributed to the programme formulation of the recent GPE grant allocated in 2013, of which half the \$38 million will be used for expanding ECE provision and for quality improvements.
  - **Advocacy and technical assistance for the development and adoption of the national ECCD Policy and Action Plan:** From 2008 onwards, UNICEF played a key role in supporting the development of the inter-sectoral Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy and the formulation of the related ECCD National Action Plan. In recent years, efforts have also been made by UNICEF to advocate for the establishing of a national ECCD committee. The committee, which should serve as a coordination platform for the 11 Ministries with ECCE responsibilities, was finally approved through a Royal Decree in April 2013. Interviewees at the Ministry of Education expressed appreciation for UNICEF's efforts and recognised the challenges due to the large number of actors involved. As one senior government official put it: *'UNICEF helped a lot with the passing of the ECCD policy by the national government. In passing the policy, 11 ministries were involved and UNICEF played an important role in bringing them together'*. One central element in UNICEF's support was the provision of an international consultant who supported the work of an inter-sectoral working group for the development of the national policy. This inter-sectoral working group reviewed several drafts of the ECCD policy before it was presented to the Council of Ministers in early 2010 (GoC, 2010).
  - **Piloting of inclusive pre-schools:** As part of the current country programme's focus on equity, UNICEF pays more attention to the integration of vulnerable groups in ECE activities. Special emphasis is given to children from ethnic minority groups and children with disabilities. Pilot programmes have been developed in partnership with CARE and Handicap International and programming has been rolled out in state pre-schools and community pre-schools in targeted areas. Quality improvement efforts include teacher training, curriculum, materials and monitoring. According to UNICEF's own reporting, the cooperation with NGOs is strengthening capacities at the local and provincial levels, while at the same time coordinating efforts at the national level on bilingual education and inclusive education as key strategies for improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged children.
- Overall, UNICEF's investments and activities point to a strong influence on some aspects of Cambodia's national ECE agenda. Most notably, UNICEF's efforts have contributed to the endorsement of the community-based schools and the home-based programme as two officially recognised models for delivering ECE services in Cambodia. Without UNICEF's efforts in these areas, it is unlikely that these types of provision would have been mainstreamed in



Cambodia. It is also clear that UNICEF's promotion of a holistic approach to young children's development has taken root and is reflected in the government's National ECCD Policy and Action Plan. It is obviously difficult to determine whether this holistic approach would have been as present in Cambodia's policy discourse in the absence of UNICEF's contributions. What can be said is that UNICEF's technical assistance for the development of ELDS standards, curriculum and teacher training has contributed to greater awareness among key stakeholders of the importance of a holistic approach to children's development. There are also some indications that UNICEF's support to the ECD department has contributed to strengthening the ability of the Ministry of Education to champion the coordination of ECE policy development and programming. The strongest sign of this is the role the ECD department played in shepherding the adoption of the national ECCD Policy in 2010 (UNICEF, 2011b).

There are at the same time areas where UNICEF's efforts in influencing Cambodia's ECE agenda have had limited effect. This is especially the case with regard to the government's own financial commitment to ECE. While the government has manifested its commitment to addressing early childhood development needs in a number of national policies and plans, its own financial commitment to the area continues to be very limited. In 2010, ECE received only 0.5% of the Ministry of Education's Program Budget (SAT, 2010). A few of the interviews conducted for this case study show that while the government is aware of the importance of ECD, other areas of the education system are seen as more important in terms of the government's own budget priorities. In the words of one senior official: *'When the planner or decision-maker develops a plan, he has to prioritize. If he has lots of funds then gender, bilingual education, ECE, all become important. But we don't have those funds so we have to prioritize the primary and secondary which are the main priority areas for us. Even some developed countries started ECE only recently.'*

The context for UNICEF programming in the area of ECE has been, and continues to be, complex, with a large number of Ministries responsible for different parts of the implementation of the National Action Plan. The heavy reliance on external funding is accompanied by weak multi-year budgeting and planning of national and external resources for ECE provision. The National Action Plan aims to address budgeting (and costing) weaknesses across the 11 Ministries involved and indicates that the government over the 2013–2015 period will increase its support for ECCD in phases. A recent positive sign is also the issuing and dissemination of guidelines for local budget planning of the Commune Councils for the delivery of social services. To ensure long-term sustainability, it would seem important for UNICEF to give high priority to the financing issues involved in the national scale-up of ECE in the coming years.

### Mini-Case Study 3: Capacity Development for Education Management

In the Education Strategic Plan 2009–2013, MOEYS has defined 'institutional and capacity development for education staff for decentralization' as one of the three main policy priorities, the other two being equitable access and improving quality of education services. UNICEF Cambodia's launch of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) in 2011 is thus arguably a suitable response to the government-stated priorities for the sector. A multi-donor fund managed by UNICEF and financed by the European Union (EU) (€7,450,000), the Government of Sweden (SEK 21,000,000) and UNICEF (\$1,500,000), CDPF has a total budget of US\$14.1 million. The principles of the Fund are ownership, alignment, harmonisation and simplicity. It aims to support capacity development at four levels:

- 1) sector institutional capacity in planning and managing policy and regulatory reforms for improved sector performance, coordination and outcomes;



- 2) central MoEYS capacity in planning and management processes for improved sector performance and system modernisation;
- 3) organisational capacities at provincial and district level for improved service delivery in line with the Royal Government's reforms in public finance management and decentralisation and deconcentration (D&D); and,
- 4) school management and education service delivery through increased community involvement and governance arrangements.

In order to understand the importance of this new Fund in tracing UNICEF moves towards upstream work, it is important to look at the establishment of the Fund both as an output and as an input to upstream work in education.

The focus on capacity development, as noted in Chapter 2, becomes visible in the UNICEF Cambodia country programme documents starting in the 1990s (UNICEF, 1996). While UNICEF was undertaking capacity development work at a number of levels within MoEYS, in terms of capacity development for managing the education sector, this section will document developments in two main areas of UNICEF focus: support to EMIS, and the increasing capacity for sector-wide planning and coordination. A number of measures help assess the increased capacity of the MoEYS staff in the two units (Education Planning and EMIS). First, the actual outputs produced by the two units, such as ESSP, AOPs, and the Annual School Census (ASC) results, provide evidence of the increased capacity of the staff in the two units. The quality of the ESSPs, ESPs and AOPs has shown steady improvement over the three Country Programme periods. Further, all development partners assert that the first drafts of these documents are now produced by MoEYS's own staff rather than a TA.

It was repeatedly mentioned in the interviews, by the donors but also by the Secretary of State, MoEYS, H.E Nath Bunroeun, that in the past the first draft of these documents used to be in English because a TA would have written it; now the first draft appears in Khmer and is later translated into English because these documents are now drafted by MoEYS officials. Similarly, in the case of EMIS all donors greatly appreciated its capacity to run the ASC on time, produce timely results, carry out a reasonably good level of analysis, and present disaggregated data on a number of dimensions.<sup>6</sup> Some of the EMIS reports shared with the evaluation team did demonstrate good staff capacity. Interviews with officials within these two units also helped verify their capacity as they were clear about their roles, could explain the processes quite well, and also helped trace the growth of their units over the evaluation period.

UNICEF has not been the sole development partner supporting EMIS or the planning department, but its contributions to both these units have been quite distinct and instrumental to their systematic strengthening. UNICEF is the main donor to have supported capacity development training for EMIS staff; it is also the main donor to have provided the IT infrastructure needed by EMIS and ensured its upkeep. Under the CDPF, UNICEF is continuing to provide TA support to EMIS to help staff capacity at sub-national level. Similarly, in case of the planning department, many other development partners have also organized capacity development training for the staff in the planning unit; however, UNICEF contributions are again clearly identifiable and important. UNICEF has sponsored many of the planning department staff to receive training at UNESCO IIEP in Paris. The training received at the IIEP was repeatedly mentioned as having dramatically increased the capacity of the MOEYS staff even though it was also mentioned that many

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<sup>6</sup> At the time of the country visit, UNICEF and other development partners mentioned some concern about recent attempts by MoEYS to manipulate EMIS data to inflate primary completion figures. However, it was viewed to be a political rather than technical issue and the development partners were taking it up with the MoEYS. Again, the UNICEF Education Chief had played a key role in identifying this deliberate inflation of numbers (see de Vries, 2013).



of those trained at IIEP in the long term move on to more lucrative positions outside the Ministry.

There were also many references to the increased confidence of the staff within the planning department in their dealings with the donor agencies. It was repeatedly mentioned that MoEYS now asserts that it must be in the leadership position in shaping government priorities. Here again the role of UNICEF as the lead agency in coordinating the ESWG and the joint technical reviews and sponsoring the education sector retreats has been very important. The effective working of these platforms has in turn increased the capacity of MoEYS to coordinate the development partners better than previously. In the interview Secretary of State, MoEYS, H.E Nath Bunroeun, while highlighting the increased capacity of MoEYS to lead education sector planning and donor coordination, gave the example of a recent case where CDPF and ADB both offered a TA for a similar activity in the planning department but the Ministry asked them to coordinate with each other and provide only one TA. This example was also quoted by UNICEF staff and other development partners as evidence of the growing assertiveness of MoEYS in leading the planning process.

However, it is also clear that undertaking capacity development work for education management has not been without challenges. Most independent reviews of capacity development work in the education sector during the past decade (Purcell et al, 2010; Seel, 2012) have noted concerns about lack of coordination among donors, ad hoc training rather than institution-wide capacity development and workshop-based training where the learning is rarely put into practice on the job. The generous per diems given for these training workshops introduce perverse incentives whereby the government staff keenly attend these workshops for the money they can collect rather than genuine interest in learning.

As the Technical Advisor for Aid Effectiveness stated in 2010:

There is urgent need for an effective central coordination unit within the MoEYS to coordinate and consolidate capacity development and ensure participation of the staff and departments that depend on the application of the new skills. Such a unit would help shift training away from the micro-perspective of discrete skills acquisition and promote a holistic perspective which considers the needs of the micro-units in context of the large educational system and the resources at its disposal (quoted in Seel, 2012).

Similarly, the FTI mid-term review (Purcell et al, 2010) noted:

But lack of progress in capacity development has also been due to the proliferation of formats and demands by donors, of rules and procedures for procurement, disbursement, reporting, accounting and auditing; and the setting up of parallel systems.

UNICEF capacity development training over the years has also come under similarly heavy critiques. Some argue that UNICEF as an institution has set no targets or exit plans which can help monitor when it is time to stop doing more capacity development.

While these concerns are indeed valid, the establishment of CDPF is arguably a response to some of these critiques and a plan to fill the gaps in the earlier capacity development efforts. The design of CDPF therefore has some positive features and hosting it allows UNICEF to aim to undertake system-wide strengthening:

- It responds to one of the core MoEYS priorities, i.e. to improve education management capacity at sub-national level. As outlined in the 2009 Ordinance, decentralization is a core priority of the government and MoEYS is one of the pilot ministries. Thus, the support provided to MoEYS to enhance capacity at sub-national levels can potentially trickle to other sectors. While



endorsing this focus on capacity development at sub-national level, Seel, 2012 notes in a detailed review of capacity development work in the education sector:

Government places Institutional and Capacity Development of Education Staff for Decentralization among its top three priorities in. The context of government wide administrative, public services, D&D and financial reforms, further supports the strong rationale for accelerating capacity development efforts in the education sector. International experience of reform and decentralisation processes in line ministries/social sectors suggest that competencies related to 'change management' (including flexibility, ability to cope with uncertainty) are as critical as specific technical skills. Additionally, leadership and decision-making capacities will be more strongly required at the full range of levels in the system, not just at the centre. The changes in formal structures and lines of communication will also imply changes in ways of working, including the way that teams interact horizontally and opportunities that are provided for 'bottom-up' participation and meaningful consultation. (Seel, 2012, p 4)

- CDPF is an attempt towards matching donor support to the first education-sector wide capacity development plan. With the support of UNICEF, MoEYS has developed its own Master Plan for Capacity Development (MPCD) 2011–2015, against which the CDPF capacity development interventions are to be matched. This represents the first comprehensive, sector-wide plan for capacity development in education in Cambodia. CDPF is providing un-earmarked funding for implementation of key activities of the Capacity Development Plan as identified in the Annual Operational Plan (AOP). The overall goal of the Master Plan is: *A fully capable and coherent education sector supported by effective mechanisms for collaboration, functional systems for*

*planning and management and competent human resources, thereby enabling the implementation of the ESP.*

The Plan has 7 strategic outcomes:

1. Senior managers and directors at national and sub-national levels deliver the agreed sector goals and outcomes with strong coherent and coordinated work of POEs, DOEs, and Sub-National Administrations (SNAs).
  2. Strong systems and human capacity for analysis, planning, monitoring, review and evaluation at all levels.
  3. Legislation and sub-national reform supported and implemented in the education sector.
  4. Systems to manage, develop and incentivise human resources operating effectively, efficiently and equitably; and for effective administration, ICT and information management.
  5. Financial management and audit systems functioning efficiently.
  6. Good governance of all education programmes and effective education quality assurance.
  7. National Institute of Education (NIE) and relevant higher education institutions conducting education management training and providing relevant, high quality research and learning across the education sector.
- The other positive feature about the Fund is that it is an attempt towards pooled funding even though it has not succeeded in bringing all the development partners on board. In the interview with the Sida representative, it was explained that the three core partners in CDPF, i.e. EU, Sida and UNICEF, had approached all development partners to join this Fund and even now it is part of their workplan to keep engaging with other development partners to ensure that their capacity development inputs are



coordinated with the CDPF and the government Capacity Development Plan. As Seel, 2012 notes, 'The creation of the CDPF has for the first time enabled funding against plans of the MoEYS, rather than on a project basis and thus provides an opportunity to progress towards greater coherence and aid effectiveness.'

- CDPF is focusing on capacity development of domestic institutions in order to increase their capacity to carry out future capacity development work. Domestic institutions have a strong potential role to support capacity development in the education sector. Up until now, these institutions, such as the NIE, were underutilized. Under CDPF, the NIE has embarked on an institutional twinning programme with the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) on education planning in collaboration with the Department of Planning. It is hoped that building the capacity of such domestic institutions can have more systematic impact in improving sector wide capacity for education management.
- The Fund is advocating a holistic approach to capacity development by providing support to district-level staff of MoEYS to put into practice what they learn in training workshops. Under CDPF, UNICEF has engaged 10 VSOs to support the provincial government staff to reflect on what they learn in formal capacity development training workshops and then attempt to apply that learning to their daily work routines. As noted by the Education Officer at VSO, an important aspect of the work of these VSOs is to support MoEYS officials at sub-national level to put the learning from the trainings they receive into practice.
- The CDPF workplan had also developed some good monitoring indicators to measure the impact of CDPF activities. Some of these indicators could potentially also be used to assess the impact of upstream work more systematically.

- Finally, the CDPF is also supporting capacity building for better delivery of education by supporting NEP, a network of education NGOs which UNICEF helped establish after 2000.

Despite these positive features, the central weakness of CDPF, as noted by some partners, is that it is not being managed by MoEYS and thus is not using government systems. The CDPF is governed by a Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary of State and co-chaired by the EU and made up of senior managers in MoEYS, the directors of the Planning, Personnel and Finance Departments and a representative of the Swedish Embassy, but MoEYS does not manage it. To be fair to UNICEF, the interviews conducted by the evaluation team within MoEYS suggest that the Ministry did not feel it was ready to meet the requirements set out by EU and Sida and thus the decision to host the Fund at UNICEF was mutual. However, UNICEF needs to develop a clear plan for handing over the management of this Fund to MoEYS within a concrete time-frame. Also, the CDPF inputs are very TA-heavy. This is making some people argue that UNICEF is not looking for an exit strategy and runs the risk of overdoing the capacity development inputs.

These critiques are indeed very important. However, as this mini-case study has tried to illustrate, there has been a conscious move by the UNICEF Cambodia education team to refine its capacity development inputs. Even if the design of CDPF is not perfect, establishment of a pooled fund that supports a sector-wide capacity development plan is definitely an improvement over the workshop- and project-based capacity development interventions of the past; it is a positive step towards increasing the impact of UNICEF Cambodia's upstream work.

### 3.3 INTERNAL COHERENCE OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

This section presents findings on how the UNICEF Cambodia office has fostered internal coherence to advance UNICEF's upstream work



in education. To what extent is there a shared understanding of what constitutes upstream work among UNICEF's staff in Cambodia? Is there collaboration and coordination on upstream work across units and across different levels of the organization, including headquarters, the regional office and the country office? Do staff find that relevant advice, support and training have been provided for upstream work in education? These are the main questions addressed in this part of the Cambodia case study.

It should be noted that in addition to the standard DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, the criterion of coherence was added to the global evaluation framework. This reflects the assumption that to be successful in its upstream work, UNICEF's efforts need to be aligned externally with key partners, as well as internally.

### Common understanding of upstream work

The evaluation team finds that there is a strong common understanding of what upstream work in education entails among UNICEF Cambodia's current education staff and its senior management. To a great extent, this understanding matches the definition and upstream approach adopted in the 2011–2015 Country Programme Document; During group discussions and interviews with the evaluation team, the following main threads emerged:

- Staff understand all of their work to be 'upstream'. Different staff members say that the purpose of what they are doing is to strengthen the national education system to deliver better basic education services by influencing policies, practices and capacities. The indirect way of strengthening the system, through capacity development and by bringing good practices and evidence from the local levels to the policy table, is repeatedly mentioned as the core of what UNICEF is doing.

- The term 'upstream' is not used and is not found appropriate for UNICEF's work in Cambodia. One staff member said that the term probably works better in contexts where UNICEF is still heavily involved in downstream work, typically service delivery in conflict- or post-conflict-affected settings: *Upstream assumes downstream, but here we are not any longer defined as doing downstream.*
- The combination of different 'upstream measures' is seen as important for being able to influence the government's position. One staff member gave the example of UNICEF's recent efforts in paying more attention to inequalities in the education system: *The government can be very reluctant to change. But changes in policies and programmes in Cambodia come from what is happening on the ground. That is the culture in Cambodia. This is why we are working with partners to develop good programme design and then mainstreaming and national policy making. We need the three types of interventions and they complement each other. In this way, there is no escape for the government, even for difficult issues like ethnic minority groups. We are like a fish that swims against the water current.*

### Reorganisation of the country office

UNICEF's shift from working in six provinces to working in zone offices with a national coverage stands out as an important effort to make the organisational structure fit better with the focus on upstream work in the 2011–2015 Country Programme.

In the preparation of the 2011–2015 Country Programme, UNICEF Cambodia carried out a major reorganisation of the country office. The reorganisation included a shift in UNICEF's field presence from working in six targeted provinces (out of the country's 24 provinces) to instead working in five zone offices that covered the whole country. Several factors motivated this change in field presence. The 2008 mid-term



review of the 2006–2010 CPD had shown that pockets of acute poverty, vulnerability and disparity existed throughout the country with the situation often being more serious in provinces that were not targeted by UNICEF. The review recommended that it would make more sense for UNICEF to have national coverage. It also stressed that the long-standing presence of UNICEF in some provinces had led to a degree of substitution of individual national capacity rather than support for system strengthening. Through the new zone offices, UNICEF shifted its approach to one of ‘addressing the plight of vulnerable children on a nationwide basis, focusing on real geographic and other areas of disparity and leveraging productive partnerships to greater scale and effect’ (UNICEF, 2010a).

Interviews conducted for the evaluation reveal that the transfer from working with targeted support at the provincial level to working in zone offices was a major shift for the education section, in terms of content as well as in terms of working methods. The most fundamental change was for the education staff in the field. As shown in Table 3.1, the tasks of the education officers who were recruited to the zone offices (seven in total) were rather different from the tasks they used to have at the provincial level. In particular, at the zone level the role became more explicitly focused on strengthening education planning in the provinces and on developing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders. By contrast, the tasks at the provincial level included a more mixed set of duties and had a stronger focus on the delivery of direct activities and quantitative outputs.

The Education Chief played a crucial role in leading the transition of the Education Section to the new country programme in 2010 and 2011. The establishing of the education work from the zone offices was an intense process. The Education Chief made efforts to foster a good understanding of what the transition to

the zone offices meant. One respondent said that the process was not always easy and that it took several years for staff in the zone offices to be fully comfortable in their new roles. The challenge was ‘*to do away with capacity replacement and instead supporting the strengthening of the national system*’. In the transition process, quarterly review meetings and on-the-job training with regular feedback from the Education Chief proved useful for fostering a better and a shared understanding of the Education Section’s refined approach to upstream work.

### Collaboration across sector units

The evaluation team has found relatively little evidence of collaboration across UNICEF’s sector units for upstream work in education. Several interviewees said that over the years, such collaboration has on the whole been rather limited and when cross-sectoral work has taken place, it has not always been on upstream activities. The same message comes through in the examination of UNICEF’s annual reviews.

The only more substantial collaboration across sector units seems to be between the Seth Koma programme and the education section for the development of the community pre-school model and the home-based programmes. The Seth Koma programme, through its collaboration with the Commune Councils, is responsible for promoting and strengthening the role of the Councils in providing ECE facilities (and more broadly social services), while the education section provides technical expertise for the development of materials and teacher training for ECE.

A few interviewees also mentioned a recent effort by the Education Chief and the new Policy Advocacy and Communication (PAC) section in analysing the reasons for persistent under-spending of the education budget.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that the role and budget for the PAC section increased significantly in the 2011–2015 country programme. In the 2001–2005 country programme, the Advocacy and Communication component represented only 5% of the total budget. In 2011–2015, its share had increased to 10% (see Table A3.5 in Annex 3) Education Chief had played a key role in identifying this deliberate inflation of numbers (see de Vries, 2013).



**TABLE 3.1**

**Tasks for a national education officer working in one province in 2007 compared to the work in one zone office in 2012**

Tasks for a national education officer in one of the six provinces in 2007	Tasks for a national education officer in one of the zone offices in 2012
<p><b>1. Training activities</b></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical support and active participation in the training of the District Training and Monitoring Teams on CFS. 1720 primary school teachers and 692 school directors to be trained on CFS in August/September.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Education management, planning and monitoring:</b></p> <p>Output: POEs/PTMTs supported in formulating Annual Operational Plan (AOP) in line with ESP, national AOP and Education Congress Recommendations</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical inputs to each POE to analyse key education issues in their province</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Provision of Cash and Supply for Project Delivery</b></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure timely delivery of project supplies at schools</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Building partnerships with sectoral departments, sub-national government, and NGO/DP:</b></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify opportunities for improving partnership and synergies among development partners, government and NGO programmes</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Monitoring the implementation of CFS School Activities</b></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visit at least 10 primary schools per month and provide feedback to teachers and school directors on ongoing activities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Planning and regular review</b></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist the Province Working Group to organise and conduct regular monitoring of 295 primary schools twice yearly</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. Collaboration with Seth Koma on Community Preschool and Home Based Activities</b></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical support to the POE for improved quality of community preschools and home based programmes</li> </ul>	

Source: Adapted from two sets of anonymised annual tasks for UNICEF national education officer provided by the former Education Chief.

The PAC and the education section expressed the view that this collaboration had been successful and had helped to foster a closer relationship between UNICEF and the Ministries of Finance and Education, as well as within UNICEF.

One respondent also said that the reorganisation of UNICEF's field presence into zone offices has built a better foundation for closer collaboration across sectors in the field (because UNICEF staff from different sections now share the same office). It was however not clear, partly because



the evaluation team was not able to visit a zone office, to what extent this potential has been fully utilised. The same respondent said that cross-sectoral collaboration should not be an objective in itself and that a clear added value of working together has to be present from the outset.

At the same time, UNICEF's senior management expressed the view that closer collaboration across sectors will be high on the agenda for the coming years. The office is in the process of finalising the mid-term review of the current country programme and it was stressed that addressing inequities in social development will be further strengthened in the coming years. The senior management pointed out that a stronger focus on addressing inequities that cut across sectors (such as finance, child trafficking, disabilities, gender and ethnic minority groups) will not only require a closer relationship with the Ministry of Finance to influence budget priorities, but also a fostering of closer collaboration between UNICEF's sector units.

### Collaboration with HQ and the regional office

The education staff and the senior management in Cambodia gave several examples of collaboration on upstream work with the regional office and expressed a general satisfaction with the level and types of collaboration. On several occasions, the regional office has played a role in facilitating study tours and exchanges of experiences between education ministry staff from different countries in the region. For example, in 2009 the Philippines was identified by the regional office as a good destination for a visit by the Ministry on ECE and decentralisation. The regional office played a role in creating linkages and sharing contacts between the Philippines and Cambodia and then the trip was arranged bilaterally. The regional office is also reported to be useful in sharing information on events and trainings in the region. For example, they recently coordinated the logistics for a regional meeting in South Korea on ECCD policy issues. This was attended by the two

UNICEF staff working on ECE and the Deputy Representative, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Economy and Finance from Cambodia.

The education section has also found it useful to be able to draw upon and bring in the regional advisor for strategic meetings in the education sector, including joint sector reviews. One respondent with a long-standing experience of working for UNICEF in Cambodia pointed to an increased emphasis on education policy development in UNICEF's regional agenda. The respondent compared the content of the annual regional education meetings over time and said that in recent years, the discussions have been more focused on upstream issues. Equity in education and the role of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for UNICEF's work in the region were given as examples.

The direct engagement with HQ appears limited. However, a few respondents did not necessarily see this as a weakness. There seems to be a sense of pride in the independence of the country office and its ability to shape its own agenda. The decentralised structure of the organisation is seen as a key strength for staying relevant and being able to adjust the upstream work in relation to the rapidly changing Cambodian context. Nevertheless, the senior management points to the difficulties in attracting funding for upstream work and suggested that HQ and the regional office could potentially have a bigger role here. The need to tell the upstream story better was stressed, with capacity development as a relevant case. It was said that UNICEF spends substantial amounts on training each year but work is still needed to report better on the results of those training efforts. The remark was made that *'It is not enough to say how many people we have trained. We also need to tell the results of training (...). We fail to fund the talk and the challenge is evidence and measurement of upstream work'*.

A few respondents noted that UNICEF HQ has improved its offer of training for staff in recent years. It was mentioned that there are more opportunities to take part in online training



and that some staff a few years ago had participated in the World Bank Institute's course on education sector reform and financing. The challenges with monitoring results on capacity development were raised and it seemed that the office would welcome more advice in this area. At the same time, it was stressed by the senior management that the work load of staff is high and that the provision of general tools and guidelines might not work. It was stressed that any advice or support should be driven by specific demand from the country office.

### 3.4 EXTERNAL COHERENCE OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

#### Communication of upstream approach and policy positions

The evaluation team finds that the main stakeholders in the education sector in Cambodia are well aware of UNICEF's approach to upstream work and its policy positions. There is in particular widespread recognition of UNICEF's:

- Priority to donor coordination and the role it has taken in facilitating the SWAp process for more than a decade.
- Emphasis on strengthening education sector planning and EMIS through TA and training activities.
- Focus on equity in education access (with frequent mentioning of UNICEF's use of maps at high-level meetings to visualize geographical disparities).
- Promotion of Child Friendly Schools as an approach for quality improvements.
- High priority to Early Childhood Development.
- Approach of *'walking with the Ministry all the time'* as a distinctive UNICEF method to upstream work.

- Field presence and way of working with pilots and programmes at decentralised levels to raise awareness at the national level.

It is worth noting that this awareness does not always mean that stakeholders are in complete agreement with UNICEF's policy positions or ways of working. For instance, a few of the NGOs interviewed expressed that UNICEF nowadays is less present in the field and therefore less aware of the reality at local levels. Two NGOs said that UNICEF has *'lost the downstream'*.

A few respondents with experience of working with UNICEF over a number of years mentioned the importance of the Education Chief for communicating UNICEF's positions in different fora. It was noted that overall during the evaluation period, UNICEF has had strong Education Chiefs with a good mix of technical and social skills.

#### 3.4.1 Partner coordination

There are several signs of effective coordination and complementarity of UNICEF's upstream work with other education development partners. As discussed earlier in the report, UNICEF is able to position itself in the sector through its strong and long-standing presence in the country. A number of interviewees also stressed the neutral role of the UN in defending children's rights and the ability of UNICEF to bring evidence from the field to the policy table in Phnom Penh. Against UNICEF's unique positioning in the sector, signs of effective coordination include:

- Improved donor coordination: The structures for donor coordination have improved over time, with UNICEF playing a leading and pivotal role. Initially, the ESWG and the JTWG were organized on an ad-hoc basis. However, these groups were later institutionalized and there is broad agreement that these fora have led to a more harmonized donor voice and support. In addition, the annual National Education Congress



(bringing together education officials at central, provincial and district levels) and the ESSP annual reviews (bringing together donors and the government) were merged in 2006 into a joint review meeting. Similarly, UNICEF was instrumental in promoting this merger. UNICEF's regular support for a donor coordinator position in the Ministry was also mentioned as useful by several respondents.

- UNICEF has played an important role in advocating for and bringing NGOs into the coordination efforts in the sector. It supported the creation of the NGO Education Partnership (NEP) and promoted a seat for the NEP in the ESWG.
- Comprehensive approach to capacity development: One group of donors, including the EC, UNICEF and Sida, has together with the Ministry of Education launched an ambitious agenda for capacity development through the establishment of the Capacity Development Partnership Fund. As discussed earlier, this is a bold attempt to address capacity constraints in a more systematic way by not only supporting individual capacity development but also by strengthening organizational and institutional structures affecting the ability of the education system to deliver education services.
- UNICEF and UNESCO have developed a constructive way of working together in the ESWG, the JTWG and the annual Education Sector Retreats. This collaboration is greatly appreciated by both parties, as well as beyond them.

The only area where a few respondents described a weakness in coordination was in relation to the World Bank and the past year's preparation of a new grant from the Global Partnership for Education. Several Development Partners noted that the GPE process had been donor-driven and that the GPE had put a lot of pressure on the Ministry to come up with the next ESP. It was also noted that the World Bank

had worked in an untransparent way and had not shared critical information with or consulted with the ESWG during the preparation process.

### 3.5 FACTORS EXPLAINING THE RESULTS OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK

In explaining the success of UNICEF's impact, the context and role of individuals definitely stands out, but equally importantly it is possible to identify certain strategic aspects of UNICEF Cambodia's upstream work in education which are more widely replicable. This section will map the broader contextual factors that have facilitated upstream work in Cambodia before documenting the strategic aspects of this success.

There is no doubt that the context in which UNICEF Cambodia's upstream work developed had an important role to play in determining its success. The post-conflict situation and the particularly weak capacity of the education sector at the end of Khmer Rouge rule in 1979 made the government welcome the support of the donor community. As the first UN agency to respond to that need, UNICEF had a head start on other agencies. This led to the establishment of a long-term partnership with the government involving much shared trust and mutual respect. Even to date, there are frequent references to UNICEF's early presence in the country after 1979; as noted by one local UNICEF official, 'UNICEF is seen as a friend because a friend in need is a friend indeed.'

The external context again played an important role in the increasing systematization and movement towards upstream work by UNICEF Cambodia after 2000 – the aid effectiveness movement that started around the mid-2000s following the Paris Declaration arguably being one such external contextual factor. It is very clear from the responses of UNICEF staff that the shift towards upstream work resulted not from a vertical push from UNICEF Headquarters but from in-country developments with the core development agencies in country collectively moving towards wanting a more systematic



and sector-wide impact. UNICEF was indeed one of the main development partners behind the education sector SWAp in Cambodia initiated in 2000, but it was a joint effort with other major development partners in education, who on their own account were also recognizing the importance of upstream work.

However, while the context was important, it is clear the competence of the UNICEF Education Advisors or Specialists was critical to ensuring that the opportunities provided by the context for upstream work were taken advantage of. In Cambodia, one particular UNICEF Education Specialist, who had been appointed to Cambodia twice, was repeatedly mentioned in interviews across different stakeholders as being critical to establishing UNICEF influence in the education sector. He was argued to be technically very strong; his ability to work closely with the EMIS team to develop maps capturing regional disparities was noted by many as one example of his technical ability that helped all development partners lobby the government to prioritize the north eastern provinces which, with a higher proportion of ethnic minorities, were lagging behind in education. At the same time, he was said to be very good in designing and leading lobbying strategies to convince the government. Thus, both the technical expertise and the lobbying and strategic bargaining capabilities of UNICEF senior advisors can be critical to achieving impact through upstream work. The respondents noted that the current Education Specialist was also very competent.

Beyond the context and the individuals, however, the comprehensive set of strategies adopted, as outlined in the three mini-case studies, was central to undertaking upstream work. The dual emphasis on undertaking high level policy lobbying and playing a leading role in donor coordination while at the same time persistently supporting pilots and models on the ground to establish best practice examples which were then taken up with the government for national level adoption, proved very effective. The high-level policy dialogues and capacity development interventions at national level

helped maintain active contact with the MoEYS senior officials, while the pilots on the ground helped earn credibility with MoEYS and with the donor community.

Taking the donor coordination role seriously was also important to the success of upstream work. UNICEF is co-chair of the ESWG with UNESCO, the chair being rotated between the two agencies. Throughout the in-country fieldwork, there were repeated references made by many development partners and INGOs about how effective UNICEF has been in leading the lobbying process. It was mentioned that this role has been important in two critical ways. First, UNICEF staff played a critical role in developing consensus among the development partners on core priority issues, such as the focus on disadvantaged provinces, before taking them to the government. This ability to enable development partners to develop a common voice on key issues greatly increased the impact of UNICEF's own upstream interventions as it was able to put many of its own priority concerns on the collective agenda. Second, the UNICEF education team was argued to be very good in supporting other INGOs and development partners in lobbying government on education issues which were not directly in its area of priorities but which it found to be important. This was captured most effectively by the Education Director of one of the INGOs: *'A lot of tricky things UNICEF and Peter were asked to raise with the government because they could handle it well. Other donors have narrower niche areas. UNICEF has its niche but also dips in and out of the other areas to take up issues with government.'*

Developing good partnerships with NGOs with good ideas and technical capacity has been important in building effective pilots on the ground, improving UNICEF's capacity to lobby the government. At the same time, UNICEF's own presence on the ground especially through its zonal offices has been very important in giving it a distinctive advantage over other development partners. As was repeatedly noted in the interviews, UNICEF is



the only development partner with presence on the ground, which enables it to verify facts in the field when lobbying the government.

In addition, there was also a suggestion from UNICEF staff that upstream work normally does not cost very much, basically requiring education staff time to gather evidence and write reports. In this regard, it was pointed out that the previous education advisors had been good at building report writing time for senior education staff into the grant proposals, thus facilitating upstream work.

However, it is highly likely that these strategic interventions might not have gone very far if Sida had not become a core funder of the UNICEF education portfolio from 2000. As acknowledged in UNICEF's 2012 progress report to Sida,

The consistent and substantial Swedish funding in combination with regular technical reviews by the Sida Advisory Team and bilateral dialogue has enabled UNICEF to make substantial contributions to the developing education section in Cambodia. (UNICEF Cambodia, 2012b, p. 4).

Sida funding has helped UNICEF facilitate upstream work in two ways. First, the security of financial inflows for education sector work has helped the UNICEF education team stay focused on its core priorities rather than constantly shifting them to meet the priorities of different donors. Second, and equally importantly, having a large budget to directly subsidize MoEYS activities and provide material resources to many of its departments has been critical in helping UNICEF establish its clout with the government. The material support provided by UNICEF was repeatedly acknowledged in the interviews to be an important factor in shaping the nature of UNICEF's access to MoEYS. Even the Secretary of State, H.E. Nath Bunroeun, differentiated UNESCO and UNICEF by noting, *'UNESCO creates noise but has no money, UNICEF, however, comes with money.'* UNICEF, for example, tops up the salaries of the staff in the planning and EMIS departments, provides

computers, cars, etc. to some of the MoEYS departments, provides good per diems for trainings, and provides school support material.

This perhaps presents the biggest dilemma is in assessing the impact of UNICEF's results in upstream work. Given that UNICEF has been able to give many strong financial incentives at different tiers of MoEYS, and continues with that practice, the key question is: to what extent is the shift in MoEYS policies a result of effective UNICEF lobbying and to what extent is it the result of a strategic decision by MOEYS to play along as long as a donor is willing to provide strong financial incentives for it to stay engaged in the dialogue? The fact that the financial incentives are important in shaping the partnership was noticeable in all the meetings held in the different departments of MoEYS. Even those departments which had already received extensive technical and material support were keen to defend continued financial and material support from UNICEF. This thus poses the difficult question, namely, is UNICEF's lobbying power rooted in its technical authority based on the field evidence or on the nature of financial incentives it offers to the government?

### 3.6 THE SUSTAINABILITY OF UPSTREAM WORK

UNICEF's work in the education sector in Cambodia is increasingly focused on capacity development for better sector management and national level adoption of its best practice pilots on the ground. One of the main reasons for this focus is precisely linked to sustainability. UNICEF is well aware of its role in leveraging change, but also that for its efforts to be sustained over time, the key stakeholders have themselves to find ways to improve the internal efficiency of the education system and the good practice pilots have to become part of the national education programmes.

There is some evidence to suggest that capacity development within the planning department in MOEYS is relatively sustainable even



though several of the staff trained through foreign training courses such as those at UNESCO's International Institute for Education Planning in Paris have left the Ministry for better-paid jobs elsewhere. This is reflected in the enhanced capacity of the EMIS unit and the government's improved ability to lead education sector planning and donor coordination, which was acknowledged by all the development partners. However, in other areas, such as ECE or bilingual education, where UNICEF has tried to establish best practice models and has then lobbied government to issue national level policies to endorse them, sustainability of the UNICEF inputs is highly questionable.

It should be noted that adoption of policy guidelines at national level is a good sign of initial success of upstream work but it does not mean that it makes the intervention sustainable. At times, governments can find it easier to issue policies to appease donors as long as this helps secure continued aid flows. In Cambodia, this is potentially a high risk as the government has adopted many of the policies proposed by UNICEF and other donors, but the financial commitment is lacking. Thus, the government has issued national level guidelines on bilingual education, apparently as a result of heavy lobbying by UNICEF, but it has not made any financial commitment to it. This means that the model runs only as long as UNICEF continues to fund it. This puts the sustainability of UNICEF upstream work in the area of bilingual education into question. The same challenge is faced with ECE, where the expansion of the UNICEF-supported community-based ECE model is entirely dependent on UNICEF money. Even the active engagement of MoEYS with UNICEF over CDPF can partially be attributed to the financial resources that UNICEF is making available to MoEYS under CDPF.

UNICEF Cambodia's success in getting the government to adopt national level policies and endorse its best practice models at national level alongside its relative failure to get the government to commit its own resources to implementation of those policies and the expansion of

best practice pilots raises important questions concerning how to define the sustainability of upstream work. Sustainability of results from donor programmes beyond the donor funding cycle is viewed as a critical aspect of upstream work. Failure to secure government financial commitment to support the adoption of the policies and practices advanced through upstream work could mean that most of the activities were ultimately just service delivery or implementation as they did not lead to long-term systematic change even though policies were issued and national guidelines were adopted. There are thus arguably different levels of impact of upstream work. Having national level influence on policies and practices is indeed an important initial stage of upstream work, but the real test of the effectiveness of those efforts rests in obtaining government commitment to those reforms on a sustainable basis. It is in this area that UNICEF Cambodia's upstream work has yet to show tangible results in basic education and gender equality.

UNICEF Cambodia is trying to improve its capacity for upstream work by emphasizing the role of social policy advisors who try to link the different sectors within UNICEF to undertake cross-ministry lobbying. But there is little evidence that they are getting any systematic support from Headquarters for this. UNICEF office will welcome support from Headquarters on how to measure the impact of their upstream activities more effectively. The office is also increasingly able to recruit highly-qualified Cambodian staff to do more and more upstream work. As the turnover is higher among international staff, the recruitment of highly-qualified national staff is seen as an important strategy for sustaining necessary capacity in the country office.



There are strong indications that UNICEF Cambodia's focus on having high level policy engagement has sharpened over time, resulting in greater influence on education policy formulation and developing capacity for education sector management. However, the ultimate test of effectiveness of upstream work requires government commitment through introduction of national budget lines to finance an agreed set of priorities on a regular basis to achieve sustainability.



## CHAPTER 4

# CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

### 4.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This final chapter presents conclusions and lessons learned from this case study of UNICEF's upstream work in the education sector in Cambodia over the 2003–2012 period, for input to the global evaluation on the same theme.

UNICEF used its unique position in the post-conflict context to help the Cambodian government rebuild and in many ways transform the education sector. Its presence in the country during and immediately after the end of the conflict and prior to the arrival of other UN agencies and development partners played a critical role in enabling it to build a long-term and trusting relationship with the government. Further, the capacity of its senior education advisors during the evaluation period (2003–2012) was critical to identifying the opportunities for undertaking upstream work effectively and taking a leadership position among the development partners.

A number of other important factors also helped facilitate UNICEF's upstream work in basic education, most important of which were: formation of a reliable partnership with Sida that ensured continued aid flows, which enabled UNICEF to stay focused on core education priorities and more importantly to win influence with the government; active presence on the ground through supporting best practice pilots and maintaining field offices; and taking its role as co-chair of ESWG seriously.

The Cambodia case shows that focusing on upstream work since 2000 has enabled UNICEF to keep a central position in the sector. While UNICEF Cambodia's emphasis on influencing education policies and developing capacity for education sector management has been

present throughout the evaluation period, there are some strong indications that the focus on having high level policy influence has sharpened over time.

The case study points to several visible effects of UNICEF's upstream activities. Visible effects of UNICEF's efforts include the improved capacity within MoEYS to plan and monitor sector development, and donor coordination, as well as adoption of national level policies (Child Friendly School Policy in 2007, ECE Policy in 2010) or best practice models (bilingual education, community pre-schools) that can be traced to UNICEF lobbying efforts.

However, UNICEF Cambodia's upstream work continues to face serious challenges in terms of sustainability. The ultimate test of effectiveness of upstream work in the long term rests in the adoption of UNICEF-supported educational priorities by the national government and development of national budget lines to finance them on a regular basis; UNICEF Cambodia has yet to pass that test. Upstream work has indeed had visible impact on shaping the government education sector plans and policies but it is difficult to say whether it has genuinely been able to impact government education priorities given that the government has yet to make financial commitments to many of UNICEF's prioritized areas. To enhance the impact of upstream work, UNICEF Cambodia needs to ensure that the government makes financial commitments to areas which have been the focus of UNICEF's policy advocacy.

It is acknowledged here that the UNICEF office is very conscious of this challenge and defends its existing interventions on the grounds that to bring about systematic change takes a long time and in the initial period financial investments



by donors are essential if they are to make the government move from initial acceptance of an idea to its full adoption. The underlying logic of this argument is that once an activity is systematically strengthened within MoEYS, even though it is reliant on external funds it develops constituencies of supporters, such as the staff appointed to relevant departments, the communities and schools who benefit from the activity and the national or district level education managers involved in its implementation. There is indeed some weight to this reasoning but it is important to ensure that this explanation does not become an excuse for avoiding putting pressure on the government to amend its ways of working. The fear of losing influence with the government should not make a development partner shy away from putting pressure

on the government to introduce reforms where required. It is important for UNICEF to set clear timelines within which its priority upstream activities should win financial support from the government. As yet these targets are missing. Finally, UNICEF also needs to ensure that the capacity development work undertaken under CDPF leads to more system-level change than the individual and project level capacity development work that all development partners, including UNICEF, have undertaken in the past.

The performance of the BEGE programme in Cambodia against the DAC evaluation criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact* and *sustainability* as well as the additional criterion of coherence is summarised in Table 4.1.

**TABLE 4.1** Overview of Cambodia’s upstream work Programme against DAC Criteria

<p><b>Relevance</b></p>	<p>The gradual consolidation of its upstream work during the 2003–2012 period enabled UNICEF to stay relevant to the organisation’s internal mandate, national needs and government priorities. However, at times there has been a clash between government priorities and UNICEF’s, in which instances UNICEF has chosen to follow the latter. UNICEF has normally been successful in ensuring these internal priorities are after some time also reflected in the MoEYS agenda, but introduced priorities tend not to attract government resources.</p>
<p><b>Coherence</b></p>	<p>Internal: There is a strong common understanding of what upstream work in education entails among staff, but relatively little evidence of collaboration across UNICEF’s sector units for upstream work in education. There was satisfactory collaboration on upstream work with the regional office, and whilst the direct engagement with HQ appears limited, the decentralised structure is seen as a strength rather than a limitation.</p> <p>External: The main stakeholders in the education sector in Cambodia are well aware of UNICEF’s approach to upstream work and its policy positions, even if this awareness does not always equate with agreement. The importance of the Education Chief for communicating UNICEF’s position in coordination fora was noted.</p>
<p><b>Effectiveness</b></p>	<p>While UNICEF has had relative success in having its best practice models accepted at national level, the expansion and replication of these models remains heavily reliant on UNICEF funding. This poses a major challenge to ensuring sustainability of these initiatives and puts the very effectiveness of the upstream work into question. (para. E.13)</p> <p>Many development partners saw UNICEF’s effectiveness in terms of the help it provided in lobbying the government through its leadership of the ESWG. (para. E.22)</p>

**Table 4.1** (cont’d )

<b>Efficiency</b>	UNICEF Cambodia has undertaken upstream work in education with existing staff, and in an integrated manner with other work in its education portfolio. This points to efficiency, even if the team could not source hard financial data to measure efficiency (Annex 6, Evaluation Question 7.1)
<b>Impact</b>	Upstream work has had visible impact on shaping the government education sector plans and policies but it is difficult to say whether it has genuinely been able to impact government education priorities given that the government has yet to make financial commitments to many of UNICEF’s prioritized areas. To enhance the impact of upstream work, UNICEF Cambodia needs to ensure that the government makes financial commitments to areas that are the focus of upstream work. (para. 4.6)
<b>Sustainability</b>	Capacity development within the planning department in MOEYS led to the enhanced capacity of the EMIS unit and the government’s improved ability to lead education sector planning and donor coordination. However, despite notable success in getting the government to adopt national level policies and endorse its best practice models there has been relative failure to get the government to commit its own resources to implementation of those policies and best practice pilots, bringing into question their sustainability.

## 4.2 LESSONS LEARNED

A few general lessons can be identified from the Cambodia case study:

- The context and history of UNICEF presence in a country has bearing on its ability to carry out upstream work effectively.
- Having competent senior education advisors, who have the technical skills as well as the capacity to develop effective lobbying strategies, is critical for undertaking effective upstream work.
- While the context and individuals are indeed critical to shaping the impact of upstream work, strategic interventions, which are replicable across contexts, are equally important.
- Having boots on the ground is very critical to having boots under the table; trialing best practice pilots on the ground and having a prominent presence in the field has been important for successfully lobbying the government to adopt national-level policies around the issues concerned. The two efforts need to complement each other instead of being pursued in isolation. UNICEF should be able to confidently lobby for innovative models with solid evidence on the effectiveness of the models. Evidence generation and documentation are key to link the work at the two levels.
- Having the ability to disburse aid is important to winning clout with the government. This can make the upstream work more effective in the short term as the government can adopt policies or models in the hope of ensuring continued aid flows. However, as discussed in the section on sustainability, effective upstream work by definition implies long-term sustainability of the interventions through national resource allocations. Thus, there are different gradations of impact of upstream work and having policies adopted is just the beginning, not the end, of upstream work.
- Pursuing UNICEF’s corporate mandate can at times lead to a clash with government priorities, as has been documented in the cases of bilingual education and ECE. Sustainability of upstream work in these areas is thus even more challenging and the implications of this need to be considered carefully when setting priorities for upstream work as otherwise it can lead to wasted resources.



- Measuring the impact of upstream work in education is complicated and better tools need to be prepared to measure effectiveness of upstream work more systematically. The Cambodia case study shows that in this area the country offices expect UNICEF HQ to take the lead.

### 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations focus on enhancing the upstream impact in future.

#### **Recommendation 1: Minimize the use of financial incentives for undertaking upstream work**

The most critical issue for UNICEF Cambodia is to ensure that the reforms brought about in the education sector by its engagement in upstream work become sustainable. Acquiring this sustainability requires making the government commit its own resources to the reform process and expansion of best practice pilots. The success of UNICEF's existing lobbying at high level has partly been due to the strength of its technical staff but it has equally been reliant on UNICEF acting as a major disburser of aid flows. To increase the impact of upstream work, UNICEF needs to move away from using financial incentives to influence government policies to using other means of securing upstream impact.

#### **Recommendation 2: Develop a clear plan for shifting management of the CDPF to the government**

The establishment of the CDFP as a joint fund, which brings together EU, SIDA and UNICEF resources to better coordinate and streamline the institutional level capacity development work within the education sector in Cambodia, is a positive development. However, there is need to develop a clearer work plan and timetable as to when the management of CDPF will be handed over to the government. It is understandable why the three agencies supporting this CDPF want to keep its management in UNICEF hands in the initial period. But, in order to strength the government systems, it is

important to ensure that this arrangement does not become permanent.

#### **Recommendation 3: Develop better tools to measure impact of upstream work**

There is recognition within the UNICEF Cambodia team that it does not have the relevant methodological tools to monitor and evaluate the impact of upstream work. This is an area where the team expects to benefit and be guided by the expertise available at UNICEF Headquarters. Given that the Cambodia office has been relatively effective in undertaking upstream work, it could be argued that it should consider taking the lead in approaching the regional advisor and the relevant units within the Headquarter with demands and ideas for developing such monitoring tools for upstream work.

The tools designed to measure the impact of upstream work need to be tailored to specific interventions as different upstream interventions impact at different levels, and incur different costs. Thus, better monitoring tools need to be developed by the joint efforts of country teams, regional advisors, and the UNICEF Headquarter to define more clearly what is meant by 'upstream', what activities constitute the core of upstream work and what are viewed to be at the periphery, and what impact is secured at what cost. Only then can it be effectively assessed whether an intervention has had the desired upstream impact and whether the outcome justifies the cost of undertaking that specific aspect of upstream work.

#### **Recommendation 4: Facilitate cross-sector learning on upstream work**

While the education team in UNICEF Cambodia has been relatively effective in pushing forward the upstream agenda – though as noted above, it has yet to ensure sustainability of many of its achievements – the other sectors have not had similar success in undertaking upstream work. There is need for more joint efforts across the different sector teams within UNICEF offices to undertake upstream work across the social sectors. There needs to be emphasis



on facilitation within organizational learning whereby opportunities are provided so that the sector teams that are more effective in undertaking upstream work can guide other sector teams on how to become more effective in their upstream activities.

**Recommendation 5: Undertake a cost-benefit analysis of UNICEF leadership of the donor coordination platforms for advancing upstream work**

Finally, the Cambodia case study highlights the need for understanding how taking a leadership role in the donor coordination platforms such as ESWG can help advance UNICEF's own upstream agenda. In the case of Cambodia, many development partners recognised UNICEF's contributions to upstream work not

by referring to UNICEF's success in having its programmes or policy recommendations adopted by the government. Instead, most gave examples of effectiveness of UNICEF's upstream work in reference to how UNICEF had equally importantly helped them lobby the government through the platform of the ESWG. During the course of the fieldwork, all the references made to UNICEF leadership of the ESWG were positive. However, this coordination role places an additional burden on the UNICEF team. A more detailed study on the specific benefits and costs of taking on the leadership of donor coordination platforms for UNICEF's upstream work is desirable. Such an analysis ideally also needs to map in more detail the specific leadership strategies that are most effective in promoting UNICEF's upstream work.



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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY

The preparation for the Cambodia country study started soon after the evaluation team workshop was held in Oxford in late August 2013. Using the guidelines provided under the evaluation framework developed for the global study (explained in Chapter 1), a pre-departure country issues paper was prepared to document the historical context and map the key players within the education sector in Cambodia. During this preparatory period, active contact was maintained with the UNICEF contact in Cambodia, who provided access to core documents and helped set up an initial itinerary covering the core actors. An active e-mail discussion with the UNICEF contact after reading of the core documents led to identification of the three mini-case studies covered in this report. These cases were selected because they helped cover the diversity of UNICEF education portfolio in Cambodia and helped identify the multiple routes to upstream work adopted by it.

Due to a number of national holidays falling during the fieldwork period (29 September to 18 October 2013), the fieldwork was actually spread over close to three weeks instead of two which was the case for the other case studies, thus allowing for longer contact time in the field. In country, initially meetings were held with the core members of the UNICEF education team. These were followed by interviewed within different levels and departments of the MoEYS, other development partners, INGOs, and local NGOs. Most of these meetings were set up by UNICEF but UNICEF staff did not join the meetings, to allow for open discussion. Some meetings were also arranged directly with INGOs or local NGOs to get their independent assessment of UNICEF work. Conscious effort was made to cover those who could potentially give critical perspectives on UNICEF work in Cambodia.

A day was also spent in the field outside Phnom Penh visiting a state ECE school and a UNICEF-supported community pre-school. This field visit provided opportunity to directly interview the teachers, principal, members of the communities, and the district and provincial staff. During the interviews, the Evaluation Framework was used as the standard reference. However, each interview eventually got focused on the area of expertise of the specific respondent and their relationship with UNICEF. Notes were taken for all interviews in order to help the analysis later on.

Discussions with the in-country research assistant, who was a former employee of the Ministry and had extensive experience of working in the education sector with a number of development partners in Cambodia, also helped understand the local political sensitivities within which UNICEF and all development partners have to operate. During the second week, the UNICEF education team also organized a very useful set of presentations covering the developments between 2003–2012 for the selected mini-case studies. Based on the interviews and review of documents, evidence gaps were identified and further documents were secured from UNICEF, especially UNICEF annual plans and the previous mid-term reviews, which were duly shared. A debriefing was organized for the UNICEF education staff to share the initial findings of the report.

The core findings from the field were captured in the country matrix prepared prior to the second workshop where the findings were discussed and analysis refined. The details of the findings are presented in the report. Certain fact checks were also carried out with the UNICEF Education Specialist before the finalization of the report, for which her support is duly acknowledged.



## ANNEX 2: TIMELINE OF KEY EDUCATION EVENTS AT COUNTRY LEVEL 2003–2012

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
1979	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted by UN General Assembly.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The collapse of Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979) of which almost all of Cambodia’s infrastructures and institutions, were destroyed, and millions of Cambodians were killed.</li> <li>•After 1979, schools were reopened and a 10-year educational system was used (<b>4+3+3</b>: 4 years in primary, 3 years in LSS and 2 years in USS). There was an urgent need for trained teachers, developing school curricula, constructing school buildings and educating people.</li> </ul>	As noted in 1996–2000 UNICEF Plans of Operations, UNICEF has been a partner with Cambodian government since 1952. This cooperation interrupted during 1975–78, was resumed when UNICEF became the lead agency for UN support in the 1979–81 emergency, supported by regular cycles of cooperation.
1980	UN World Conference on Women identified equal access to education as fundamental to women’s rights.	UNICEF launches Women in Development Programme.		
1986			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education sector improved, one more year was added to the system aiming at increasing the quality of education an 11-year-educational system. (<b>5+3+3</b>: 5 years in primary, 3 years in LSS and 3 years in USS)</li> </ul>	
1989	Convention on Rights of the Child endorsed at UN.			From 1989, emphasis shifted from primarily emergency oriented activities to more stable processes and structures for development and protection of children and women, moving as far as feasible towards convergence of support from various sources.



Annex 2 (cont'd )

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
1990	Education For All (EFA) Goals adopted in Jomtien, Thailand.	UNICEF founds the Education for All Movement with four partners, including UNESCO and the World Bank.		
1993–1995	In 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action formed at the UN 4 <sup>th</sup> World Conference of Women. Equal access to education and eradication of women's illiteracy key strategic objectives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The 1993 election sponsored by the United Nation -UNTAC. <b>RGC 1st Mandate.</b> New constitution enacted. Target: privatization, liberalization of economy, free markets and reconciliation.</li> </ul>	Increasing realization for more focus on capacity development instead of service delivery. Support to establishing EMIS begins in 1995.
1996			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education sector improved, another one year was added to the system in primary level to become 12-year educational system (<b>6+3+3</b>: 6 years in primary, 3 years in LSS and 3 years) in order to reach the global standard.</li> <li>• First Socio Economic Development Plan (SEDP I), a 5 year national development plan 1996–2000.</li> <li>• SEDP integrates NPRD, Socioeconomic Reconstruction Plan 1994–95, and Public Investment Program (PIP). 1996–98.</li> <li>• PRSP: A mid-term (3-year) national policy paper formulated. It was announced for the first time to major donors and aid agencies at an informal meeting of the CG in May 2000.</li> </ul>	Cluster school approach piloted.



Annex 2 (cont'd )

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
(cont'd) 1996			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP): i) Promoting opportunities, ii) Creating social security, iii) Strengthening capabilities, iv) Generating empowerment.</li> <li>• PRSP. Main concept behind the I-PRSP is to alleviate poverty by taking measures to: i) accelerate economic growth, ii) improve the distribution of income and wealth, iii) promote social development.</li> </ul>	
1998			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 1998 election. <b>RGC 2nd Mandate</b></li> <li>• The Government's Triangle Strategy-1998–2003. Side 1: build peace, restoring stability and maintain security for nation and people; Side 2: integrate Cambodia into the region; Side 3: promote development. 4 key areas of the reform programs: i) reform armed forces, (military demobilization); ii) public administration reform (efficiency of the public services); iii) judicial reform (democracy, rule of law and human rights); iv). economic reform.</li> </ul>	
2000	<p>i. Dakar World Education Forum confirmed commitment to UPE by 2015.</p> <p>ii. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted. Education targets consistent with Dakar confirmed.</p>	<p>UNICEF's: "The State of the World's Children 2000" published.</p> <p>UNICEF becomes Secretariat for UNGEI.</p>	<p>MoEYS moves towards a SWAp; moves towards developing Education Sector Strategic Plans, Education Sector Plans.</p>	<p>CFS piloted with KAPE</p> <p>UNICEF one of the main DPs to make the government move towards education sector SWAp.</p> <p>Capacity development of planning department for ESSP.</p>



Annex 2 (cont'd )

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
2001	G8 meeting in Italy establishes EFA Task Force led by Canada.	<p>UNICEF MTSP 2002–5 states aims to influence larger group of actors for children, through its alliances, partnerships, advocacy, monitoring, research, and policy analysis at all levels.</p> <p>Girls' Education becomes UNICEF's "Organisational Priority No. 1!"</p>		<p>Creation of a new international position in the UNICEF Cambodia office to work with the emerging education SWAp.</p> <p>UNICEF facilitated the participation of NGOs in sector coordination, including through support to the NGO Education Partnership.</p>
2002	<p>i. EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) launched.</p> <p>ii. Monterrey Consensus at International Finance and Development Conference, Mexico.</p>	<p>EFA Global Monitoring Report established in UNESCO to monitor progress towards EFA goals.</p> <p>Second Meeting of High-Level Group on EFA, Abuja, Nigeria 19–20 November 2002.</p>		Piloting of bilingual education model with CARE.
2003	<p>Rome Declaration on harmonisation of aid.</p> <p>Development community committed to aligning and harmonising assistance round a country's development priorities and systems.</p>	Third Meeting of High-Level Group on EFA, New Delhi, India.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2003 election. RGC 3rd Mandate</li> <li>• EFA National Plan 2003–2015 approved in May.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF Mid-term review suggested stronger engagement from the Education Section with the Seth Koma project in relation to child care and incentives to be paid to ECE staff.</li> <li>• UNICEF started technical support to the development of an Education Law.</li> <li>• Support to gender mainstreaming and girls education congress.</li> <li>• Support to the Education Sector Donor Report.</li> </ul>



Annex 2 (cont'd )

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
2004	Marrakech Round Table on Results, Morocco: Development agencies endorsed five core principles on managing for development results (MfDR).	Education Programme Development Fund (EPDF) established under FTI to help low income countries improve quality and sustainability of sector planning and programme development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESP 2004–08 developed in Sept.</li> <li>• ESSP 2004–08 developed in Dec.</li> <li>• National plan for non formal education 2004–2015. (no approval date)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situational analysis of Commune Council Activities in 2004 supported by UNICEF. The need for structured community-based ECE is identified.</li> <li>• Ongoing support to strengthen the EMIS at central and decentralised levels.</li> <li>• Technical and financial support to hold the 2004 ESSP Review.</li> <li>• TA for the formulation of the new curriculum policy.</li> <li>• Support to the EFA Secretariat in the preparation of analytical reports for input to the ESSP Review.</li> </ul>
2005	Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness endorsed by over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials.	Upstream work becomes an area of explicit organisational focus as one of UNICEF's five focus areas in medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006–09.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESP/ESSP 2006–10 revised by MOEYS in Dec 2005 in line with NSDP 2006–10</li> <li>• A new national curriculum approved in Dec.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWAp seminar organised in June 2005.</li> <li>• Development of new Education Programme for the 2006–2010 period.</li> <li>• Support to implementation of the new curriculum policy.</li> </ul>
2006		CIDA, DFID, et al. recognise UNICEF's strategy to reposition itself within the international aid system and strengthen its role as the global leader on policy and advocacy for children and their rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy for Life Skills Education approved in Aug</li> <li>• Policy on School health approved in Aug.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donor coordination advisor co-funded with the World Bank to prepare FTI application.</li> <li>• Major support activities to CFS, including policy development, national mainstreaming and implementation in seven provinces.</li> </ul>



Annex 2 (cont'd )

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
2007	Seventh meeting of High-Level Group on EFA – Dakar, Senegal.	UNICEF's Executive Board endorsed the Education Strategy, as a long-term framework for interpretation and implementation of (MTSP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Law passed by the National Assembly in Dec.</li> <li>• CFS Policy approved in 2007.</li> <li>• Joint circular of MEF and MoEYS issued in March to devolve responsibility to MoEYS to define provincial education budget allocations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support to the Life Skills Education Policy, CFS Policy, Inclusive Education Policy.</li> <li>• Support to the updating of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Two studies on the impact of ECE conducted.</li> <li>• Pledge for ECE to be supported by the FTI grant.</li> </ul>
2008	<p>i. Accra summit on aid effectiveness, donor commitment on end to aid fragmentation.</p> <p>ii. Mid-Term Evaluation of FTI began.</p>	<p>i. Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Initiative.</p> <p>ii. MTSP 2006–2009 extended to 2011.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2008 election. <b>RGC 4th Mandate</b></li> <li>• Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities approved in March.</li> <li>• Policy on Secondary Resource School approved in May.</li> <li>• Mid Term Review of ESP/ESSP completed.</li> <li>• Development of vision, mission and Job description and Job specification for staff at central level and sub-national level.</li> </ul>	<p>Support to the ECD department for drafting of ECCD Policy started</p> <p>Conducted study on out-of-school children.</p>
2009		UNICEF MTSP 2006 to 2009 (11) extended for a further 2 years to 2013.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Professional standard (code) approved in Sept.</li> <li>• Secondary Education Development Plan approved in Jan.</li> </ul>	Support to Early Learning Development Standards for 3–5 year olds completed.
2010			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESP 2009–2014 developed in Sept.</li> <li>• National policy on early childhood care and development approved in Feb.</li> <li>• Competency Standards for Director of Teacher Training Centers approved in Sept.</li> <li>• Policy on research development in the education sector approved in July.</li> </ul>	<p>Bilingual Education National Guidelines Adopted.</p> <p>Transformation to zone offices.</p> <p>UNICEF was re-elected co-chair of the Education Sector Working Group.</p>



Annex 2 (cont'd )

Date	International Aid	UNICEF Global	Cambodian Education	UNICEF in Cambodia
2011	<p>i. EFA – FTI changes name to Global Partnership for Education (GPE).</p> <p>ii. Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation signed by ministers of developed and developing nations, emerging economies, providers of South-South and triangular co-operation and civil society.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National policy on Cambodian youth development approved in June.</li> <li>• Teacher Development Master Plan 2010–2014 developed in Aug</li> <li>• Master Plan on ICT in Education developed in Dec.</li> </ul>	CDPF launched; focus of capacity development for education management shifts to sub-national level
2012	<p>i. World Bank's Report on Gender Equality and Development noted 31 million girls are still out of school.</p> <p>ii. Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation jointly supported by OECD and UNDP.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy on Human Resource in education sector approved in Nov.</li> <li>• Policy on textbooks and guides for developing the core instructional material approved in March.</li> </ul>	Revised CFS policy adopted and extended to junior secondary schools.
2013	UNICEF named Interim Chair of GPE.	June: Evaluation of Upstream engagement in BEGE begins MTSP extended to 2013.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2013 election. <b>RGC 5th Mandate</b></li> <li>• Teacher Policy approved in May.</li> </ul>	



## ANNEX 3: SUMMARY OF BASIC EDUCATION INDICATORS, UNICEF BUDGETS AND AID FLOWS 2003–12

**TABLE A3.1 Education sector performance indicators, selection**

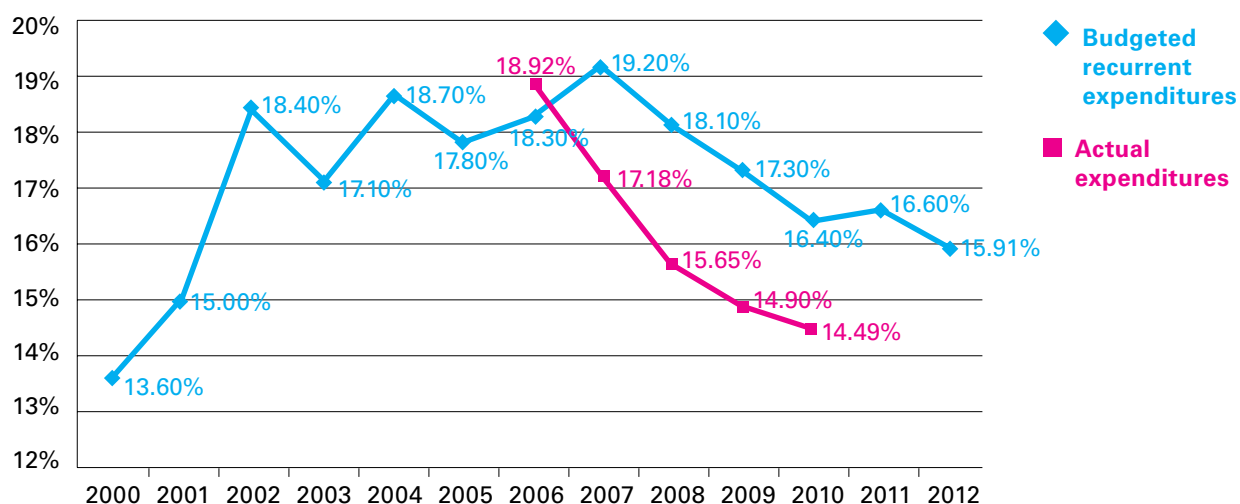
	2000/01		2005/06		2009/10		2012/13	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
“Share of five-year old children enrolled in ECE”	...	...	27.3	27.9	39.8	40.5	56.5	49.5
Net enrolment ratio (NER):								
Primary	83.8	80.7	91.3	89.7	95.8	95.5	97.0	97.0
Lower secondary	16.6	13.7	31.3	30.4	31.9	33.7	37.8	40.2
Upper secondary	7.7	5.4	11.3	9.9	19.3	19.3	18.1	18.8
Repetition rate:								
Primary	...	...	11.0*	9.8*	8.9	7.8	5.3	4.5
Lower secondary	...	...	2.5*	24.9*	2.3	1.5	1.5	1.0
Upper secondary	...	...	3.3*	15.5*	2.8	1.7	1.7	1.1
Dropout rate:								
Primary	...	...	11.6*	11.9*	8.3	7.8	3.7	4.7
Lower secondary	...	...	22.8*	24.9*	18.8	19.4	20.0	18.7
Upper secondary	...	...	15.9*	15.5*	11.2	10.8	10.1	9.8
Completion rate:								
Primary	...	...	...	...	83.1	83.7	87.4	87.8
Lower secondary	...	...	...	...	48.6	44.2	40.6	40.4
Upper secondary	...	...	...	...	25.9	22.4	27.0	25.2

\* Results from SY 2008-2009

Sources: Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2006-2010, ESP 2009-2013, Draft ESP 2014-2018



**TABLE A3.2 MoEYS Budgeted and Actual Recurrent Expenditures**



Source: World Bank PAD for GPE grant, September 2013

**TABLE A3.3 Aid flows to the education sector by type, 2011–2013**

Sub-sector	2011			2012			2013*		
	"Number of projects"	"ODA (US\$ millions)"	"Share of aid (%)"	"Number of projects"	"ODA (US\$ millions)"	"Share of aid (%)"	"Number of projects"	"ODA (US\$ millions)"	"Share of aid (%)"
Primary/ Basic	18	43.0	41.2	13	40	45.3	6	28	24.5
School and Facilities	14	12.6	12.0	7	7.2	8.2	14	18.3	16
Secondary Education	2	2.0	1.9	3	2.3	2.6	5	5.5	4.8
Sector Policy	6	1.4	1.4	6	1.8	2.1	6	2.9	2.5
Teacher Training	6	2.0	1.9	4	2.3	2.6	1	0.3	0.2
Tertiary, Vocational	26	17.9	17.2	21	21.7	24.6	17	24.9	21.8
SWAp/ Sector Budget Support	5	19.9	19.0	5	10.7	12.1	4	24.1	21.1
Other	12	5.6	5.3	19	2.2	2.4	13	10.3	9
<b>Total ODA</b>		<b>104.4</b>			<b>88.2</b>			<b>114.3</b>	

\*ODA disbursements as of 13 November, 2013

Source: Council for the Development of Cambodia (2013)

**TABLE A3.4** Aid flows to the education sector by donor, 2005–2011

Aid disbursements to education, constant 2011 US\$ millions							
Donor	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Australia	1.0	0.0	..	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.5
Belgium	4.5	6.3	3.7	4.6	4.4	3.2	2.5
France	8.0	9.3	9.6	7.7	6.6	6.5	7.9
Germany	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0
Japan	17.3	16.6	9.1	7.9	11.4	14.3	15.4
Korea	..	2.1	1.5	1.5	2.4	4.4	6.4
New Zealand	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.8	1.0
Norway	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.5	2.0	1.7	1.7
Sweden	5.1	8.0	7.7	6.1	4.0	3.3	3.5
United States	..	..	0.0	0.7	0.1	1.5	2.3
ADB	..	..	..	..	..	8.7	9.1
EU Institutions	5.8	11.3	7.0	4.0	8.9	4.2	18.7
IDA	2.8	3.7	5.7	5.0	3.8	2.2	3.1
UNICEF	0.1	0.1	0.8	1.3	0.5	0.6	1.0
WFP	..	..	..	..	0.2	1.3	2.2
Other	1.4	1.5	1.7	2.2	1.5	0.4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>77.5</b>

**Note:** The data in this table do not use the same source as the previous table (A3.3). The evaluation team tried to use the data from the Council for the Development of Cambodia's ODA database, but its donor disaggregated data did not add up to the same global total figure reported in table A3.3

**Source:** OECD-DAC CRS database, accessed 5 November 2014

**TABLE A3.5 UNICEF Country Programme Document budgets**

Summary budget 2001-2005 Country Programme	
Programme component	"Current US\$ millions"
Cross-sectoral costs	3.1
Advocacy and Social Mobilization	3.5
HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care	7.9
Children in Need of Special Protection	10.5
Health and Nutrition	13.3
Expanded Basic Education	14.2
Community Action for Child Rights	15.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.7</b>

Summary budget 2006-2010 Country Programme	
Programme component	"Current US\$ millions"
Cross-sectoral Support	5
Advocacy and Social Mobilization	2.4
HIV/Prevention and Care	9.4
Child Protection	15.6
Child Survival	18.1
Expanded Basic Education	25.7
Community Action for Child Rights	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.2</b>

Programme component	"Current US\$ millions"
Cross-sectoral costs	6.5
Policy, advocacy and communication	10.5
Water, sanitation and hygiene	12.5
Child protection	18.5
Maternal, newborn and child survival	24.5
Basic education	20
Local governance for child rights	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>107.5</b>

Sources: UNICEF Country Programme Documents

**TABLE A3.6 UNICEF Education Programme Expenditure, 2003 - 2012****Country Programme : Cambodia Country Programme 2001-2005**

Programme: YE303 - Expanded Basic Education	2003	2004	2005
YE203 01 - Basic Education Priorities	2,457,143	2,658,799	2,893,925
RR	314,027	339,494	327,605
OR	2,143,116	2,319,305	2,566,321
YE203 02 - Expanded Learning Opportunities	3,046,623	2,659,020	2,724,761
RR	65,082	47,361	43,772
OR	2,981,541	2,611,659	2,680,989

**Country Programme : Cambodia Country Programme 2006-2010**

Programme: YE303 - Expanded Basic Education	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
YE303 01 - Capacity Building for Sector-wide Education Reform and Decentralization	1,513,998	1,320,602	1,228,966	1,297,492	1,353,307
RR	167,921	122,155	192,245	180,086	228,250
OR	1,346,076	1,198,447	1,036,720	1,117,406	1,125,057
YE303 02 - Improving Equitable Access and Quality of Basic Education	2,809,512	2,831,609	2,471,701	3,193,438	3,108,911
RR	14,179	9,420	39,504	38,704	42,000
OR	2,795,333	2,822,189	2,432,196	3,154,733	3,066,911
YE303 03 - Expanded Learning Opportunities for Disadvantaged Young Children and Youth	1,919,598	1,218,752	1,257,263	1,677,290	1,712,751
RR	179,467	299,382	277,170	300,575	326,269
OR	1,740,132	919,370	980,093	1,376,715	1,386,482

**Country Programme : Cambodia Country Programme 2011-2015**

Programme: YE303 - Expanded Basic Education	2011	2012
YE003 01 - Early Childhood Education	1,347,028	822,060
RR	198,949	205,160
OR	1,148,079	616,900
YE003 02 - Inclusive BE services (CFS)	2,642,505	1,380,580
RR	44,191	81,854
OR	2,598,314	1,298,726
YE003 03 - Capacities for ESP	1,264,969	489,648
RR	506,914	30,000
OR	698,918	459,648
YE003 04 - Coordination monitoring and management	59,136	218,169
	240,840	126,753
RR	240,840	126,753
OR	-	-
YE003 005 - Capacity Development Partnership Fund		2,817,479
RR		431,352
OR		2,386,127

RR = Resources distributed by HQ  
OR = Other resources raised from donors  
ORE= Resources for emergencies

Source: UNICEF Cambodia (2013).



## ANNEX 4: MAPPING OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

UNICEF, Cambodia Country Office			
Ms Rana Flowers	Representative	Mr Sain Kimlong	Education Officer, CDPF
Ms Erika Boak,	Education Specialist, lead on CDPF	Mr Chea Kimlong	Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Social Sector
Mr Chum Chanra,	Education Specialist, CFS	Ms. Usha Mishra	UNICEF Chief-Policy, Advocacy and Communication Section, PAC
Mr Chea Huot,	Education, Officer Planning and CD	Ms Nhonh Sophea	Early Childhood Development Officer
Mr Masahiro Kato	Early Childhood Development Specialist	Ms. Ros Sivanna	LGCR specialist
		Mr Sok Thol	Education Officer, CDPF
Other UNICEF			
Mr Peter de Vries	Chief of Education, Zimbabwe, Former Chief Education Advisor in Cambodia		
Minister of Education, Youth and Sports			
H.E Nath Bunroeun, Secretary of State of MoEYS & Mr. Lim Sothea, Director	Department of Planning of MoEYS	Mr Chan Sophea, Director, & Mr.Thong Rithy, Deputy Director	Department of Primary Education, MoEYS
Mr. Eng Kimly	Curriculum Development Department of MoEYS	Mr Oung Boart, Deputy Director, and Mr Pong Pitin, Deputy Director, Jim Shoobridge, Technical Adviser on EMIS (under CDPF) and other EMIS senior staff	Department of Planning, MoEYS,
Mr Prak Kosal, Director, Ms Plong Monykosal, Deputy Director, and Ms Meach Sobuna, Chief of Inspection office	ECE Department	H.E Sieng Sovanna, Director	National Institute of Education
		Mr. Ly Sathik, Director	Department of Finance, MoEYS

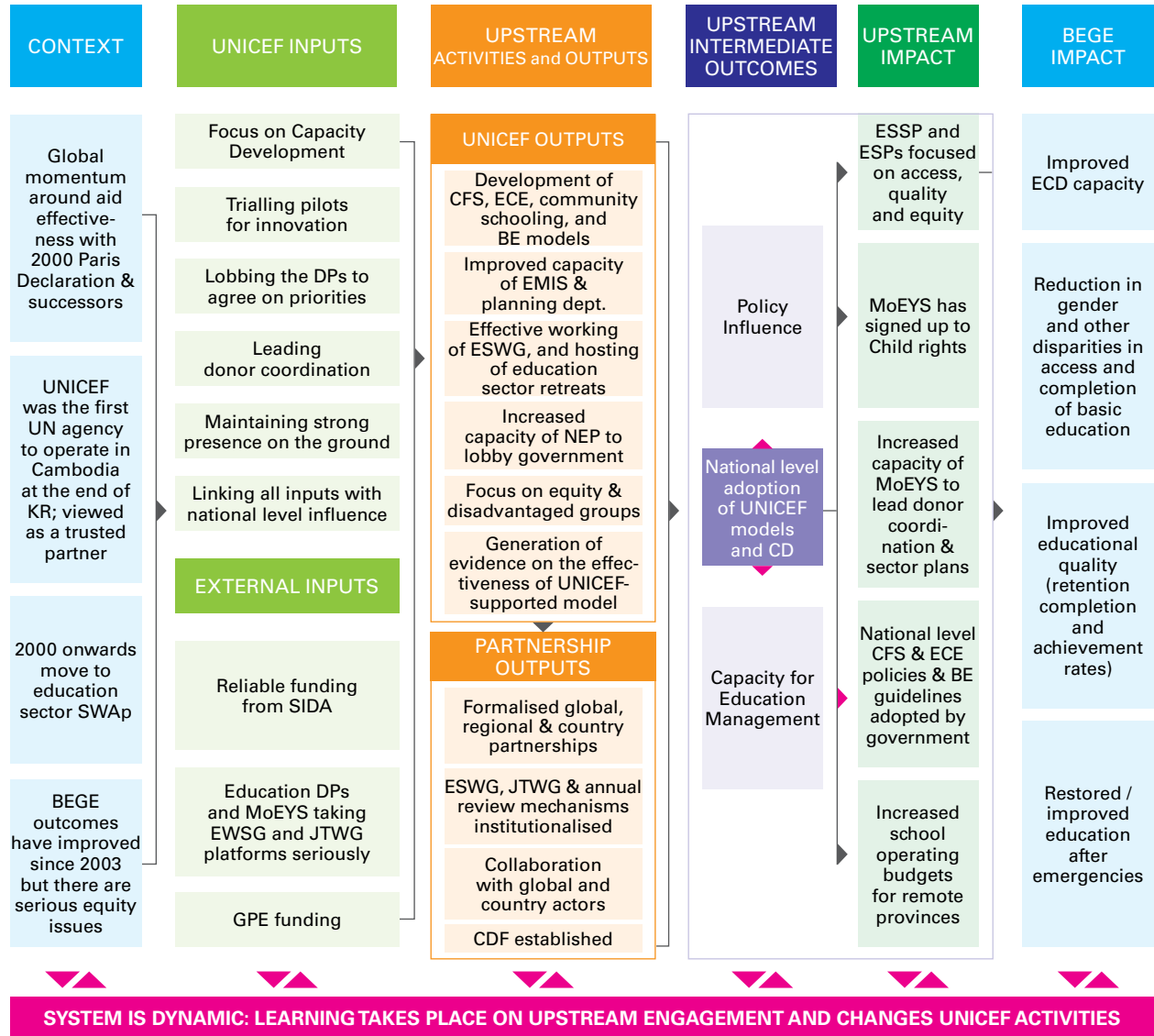


**Annex 4 (cont'd )**

<b>Donors</b>			
Dr. Errol Cresshull, project team leader, EEQP/ADP Project	Asian Development Bank	Mr. Magnus Saemundsson, Senior Education Adviser	Sida
Beng Simeth, Senior Human Development Operations Officer, & Tsuyoshi Fukao, Education Specialist,	World Bank	Ms Kanazawa Shiko, Representative, & Ms Pich Thida, program officer Education & governance section	JICA
Ms Anne Lemaistre, Representative	UNESCO	Mr Vincent Vire, Social Development, Education and Health	European Union
<b>INGOs</b>			
Mr Kann Kall, Country Director	Room to Read	Mr. Jan Noolander, Country Representative	CARE
John C. Friend- Pereira, Program Manager-Education	VSO	Mr. Keo Sarth, Education Manager	Save the Children
		Mr. Chan Solin, Development Effectiveness Manager	Child Fund
<b>NGO</b>			
Sister Luise Ahrens, RUPP/MKS Cambodia, Royal University of Phnom Penh		Mr Chin Chanveasna, Executive Director,	NGO Education Partnership (NEP)
Mr. Kurt Bredenburg, Senior Technical Adviser, Mr. Chea Kosal, Country Coordinator,			
Ms Ali Lane, Advisor at Large	KAPE	Mr. Jan Geusens, Program Manager	VVOB Cambodia



# ANNEX 5: CAMBODIA: THEORY OF CHANGE





## ANNEX 6: SUMMARY MATRIX FOR CAMBODIA CCS REPORT AND EVALUATION BRIEF

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>EQ1. What has been the context for UNICEF's education work?</b>			
<b>Subquestion 1.1</b>			
<b>Who are the major players, alongside UNICEF, concerned with basic education? What differentiates UNICEF and its positioning from the other players (as perceived by UNICEF and by others)?</b>			
EU (has especially focused on direct budget support) Sida (has supported different initiatives and is core funder for UNICEF education portfolio), UNESCO (co-chairs the Education Sector Working Group), WB (coordinating entity for GPE in Cambodia), and ADB.	Interviews, UNICEF, donor and government documents related to education sector.	A number of issues differentiate UNICEF from other development partners in Cambodia, but three are most significant: 1) UNICEF is the oldest operating DP to work in Cambodia after 1979, this gives UNICEF strong credibility with the government; 2) UNICEF is the only DP with strong presence on the ground in terms of having its staff deployed in provincial offices and since 2011 maintaining five zonal offices that cover the full country; 3) UNICEF is the only DP that trials pilots on the ground through local or international NGOs and then takes them up with government for national level policy adoption.	Strong presence on the ground helps UNICEF establish credibility among other DPs as UNICEF field staff can verify things on the ground which helps the DPs' collective lobbying efforts at the national level. Second, having boots on the ground and trialling pilots with NGOs can be very effective in influencing national level policy as the evidence of success on the ground is very useful in convincing government.
<b>Subquestion 1.2</b>			
<b>What have been the key developments in the country aid environment during the evaluation period?</b>			
Cambodia moved towards an education SWAp type arrangement in 2000. With support from core DPs, the government moved towards developing five year education sector strategic plans starting and DPs started to align their education strategies with it.	Documents, interviews.	The education SWAp has led to harmonization of DPs' policies around education and there is visible improvement in MoEYS capacity to develop five-year education strategic plans and annual action plans. However, most donors have continued to support independent projects rather than pooling resources. Recently, there are attempts by some DPs to pool resources to support a similar intervention: the recently launched Capacity Development Partnership Fund, jointly managed by UNICEF, SIDA and EU is an example of this effort.	Even if DPs don't move towards developing joint projects, moving towards a SWAp can help the sector develop common priority areas to lobby the government.



Annex 6 (cont'd )

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<p><b>Subquestion 1.3</b>  <b>What have been the key partnerships concerned with basic education, and how has UNICEF featured in these?</b></p>			
<p>There is clear evidence of active coordination among DPs within the education sector in Cambodia. This coordination has happened through three platforms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Education Sector Working Group (this includes all DPs as well as NEP). The chairing of this rotates between UNICEF and UNESCO.</li> <li>2) Joint Technical Working Group (this is the main platform for coordination between the DPs and the government).</li> <li>3) Education Sector Retreats (UNICEF sponsors them and pays for the participation of the government staff). These were argued by all DPs to be a very good platform for building consensus on priority issues and lobbying the government.</li> <li>4) At the broader level, the most important global partnership platform would be GPE. WB is the coordinating entity for GPE. There seemed some discomfort among DPs about this. Given that the GPE funds in Cambodia are mainly targeted towards ECE, where UNICEF Cambodia has established expertise, many DPs were of the view that UNICEF might have been more suitable for this role.</li> </ol>	<p>Interviews with DPs, some private UNICEF e-mails with DPs over GPE.</p> <p>Section 2.2 Section 3.3</p>	<p>The education sector coordination within DPs as well as between DPs and the government has been quite effective in Cambodia. UNICEF is openly credited for leading this dual process (building consensus within the DPs on core priority issues) as well as taking that consensus forward to lobby the government along with donors and many INGOs.</p>	<p>UNICEF has taken its role as the co-Chair of the ESWG seriously and this has helped it establish its lead in the sector. Sponsoring education sector retreats which give government officials and the DPs quality time to focus on priority education issues has also proved a visible contribution in the lobbying efforts, which is appreciated by all DPs as well as the government. The interactions over GPE between WB and other DPs, however, suggests that at times maintaining cohesion among DPs requires endorsing programmes about which many DPs have reservations.</p>
<p><b>Subquestion 1.4</b>  <b>What have been the principal international trends in regard to basic education and gender equality?</b>  <b>What issues have been the focus of international debate and action?</b></p>			
<p>During the focus period, Cambodia has made visible improvement in BEGE indicators. The challenge however has been with improving quality of education, reducing the dropout rates which are attributed to poverty and poor quality of education, and reducing disparities in educational outcomes across different regions.</p>	<p>EMIS data; government and DPs' education sector reports.</p>	<p>Cambodia has made impressive progress against EFA targets in terms of access to education but the quality challenges are huge. UNICEF current programmes such as bilingual education, ECE and capacity development for education management are meant to address these concerns.</p>	<p>Increasing access to education is often easier than improving quality of education.</p>



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>EQ2. What upstream work has UNICEF undertaken?</b>			
<b>Subquestion 2.0</b>			
<b>What is meant by “upstream work” and how can it be distinguished in practice from other types of intervention?</b>			
<p>UNICEF Cambodia has, over the evaluation period, moved towards a strategy where the purpose of all its activities is to have upstream effects. This means that the aim of ALL its activities is to strengthen service delivery at different levels in the system through policy leverage, partnerships, demonstrating evidence, fostering participation and nurturing national ownership. There is great awareness among the UNICEF education staff that its support should not any longer replace the work of the Ministry, but reinforce it. However, the term upstream is never used.</p>	<p>Interviews, literature review. Section 2.2 Section 3.3</p>	<p>UNICEF now sees the purpose of all of its activities as upstream work. Yet in practice it appears less straight- forward to always be able distinguish upstream work from direct service delivery. For instance, UNICEF helps with topping up the salaries of community preschool teachers. It can be argued that this is both direct service delivery and a way to strengthen the system for this form of ECE provision.</p>	<p>As soon as UNICEF funds part of a service delivery component, the distinction between what is direct service delivery and what is upstream work becomes somewhat blurred. Technical support for capacity development, either from UNICEF staff or consultants, is different. When such technical support provides guidance rather than fill capacity gaps, this is more easily identifiable as upstream work.</p>
<b>Subquestion 2.1</b>			
<b>What “upstream work” can be identified in Cambodia over the evaluation period?</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising, knowledge generation, advocacy and support to the development of Child Friendly Schools, Community-Based Pre-Schools and Bilingual Education models.</li> <li>• Leading donor coordination through the ESWG and support to education sector retreats.</li> <li>• Facilitation of NGO participation in education sector coordination.</li> <li>• Financial and technical support for improved capacity of EMIS and planning department.</li> <li>• Managing the Capacity Development Partnership Fund.</li> <li>• Technical support to development of key education policies (Child Friendly School Policy, ECCE Policy) and Education Act</li> <li>• Influencing the FTI and GPE to invest in ECE.</li> </ul>	<p>Literature review, interviews. Section 2.2</p>	<p>Upstream work takes place at different levels of the education system and UNICEF sees and uses its comparative advantage of presence in the field for upstream purposes.</p> <p>The combination and sequencing of upstream activities is important.</p> <p>Strong emphasis on TA and training activities.</p> <p>More activities and upstream focus related to policy development and awareness building, less work on budgets.</p>	<p>Difficult to see the impact of education policy endorsements when national budget commitments have not followed.</p> <p>The linking of policy development to budgeting could be strengthened, but would require recruiting education economists.</p>



## Annex 6 (cont'd)

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>Sub-question 2.2</b> <b>In what ways has “upstream work” been defined by UNICEF and incorporated in its strategies and policies? What was the rationale for emphasis on upstream work in education? Has UNICEF (explicitly or implicitly) spelt out a theory (or theories) of change for upstream work in education?</b>			
<p>The gradual shift in meaning of upstream work in Cambodia is well reflected in the definitions included in the core UNICEF documents, most notably the three relevant country programme documents. The rationale for shifting the 2011–2015 country programme towards a complete focus on upstream work is linked to national sustainability. The review of the 2006–2010 country programme showed that UNICEF had ‘overemphasized direct accountabilities for quantitative targets (...) at the expense of qualitative results that facilitate national processes for the advancement of children’s rights.’ The latest programme puts a stronger focus on capacity development and equity.</p>	<p>Interviews, literature review.</p> <p>Section 2.2 Section 3.3</p>	<p>Step by step, capacity development at all levels has become the core of what upstream work means for UNICEF Cambodia. The main rationale for putting capacity development at the heart of all its undertakings is the realisation of major accountability and structural weaknesses in the management of the education sector. It is not enough to train individuals, but the strategy of UNICEF’s upstream work is to support the Cambodian Ministry in strengthening its management system, including core functions such as human resources and decentralised planning.</p>	<p>How to best monitor upstream work emerges as a BIG issue. The new Capacity Development Partnership Fund includes some interesting process indicators.</p>
<b>Sub-question 2.3</b> <b>What measures has UNICEF taken to prioritise upstream work in education? e.g.:</b> <b>a. strategic plans and policy guidance (including KRAs etc.)?</b> <b>b. tools, methodologies, capacity development?</b> <b>c. M&amp;E mechanisms to support emphasis on upstream work (how have targets been set and achievements measured)?</b> <b>d. Other measures?</b>			
<p>Several instruments have been used over the evaluation period to review and adjust the approach to upstream work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From 2004 to 2010: Sida sent an annual Advisory Team to review Sida’s support (which accounts for 75–90% of the UNICEF education budget). The recommendations from the SAT team provided an external, insightful and sometimes critical voice on UNICEF’s upstream work and created a forum for internal debate.</li> <li>- Several internal reviews of the Country Programmes over the evaluation period have played a role in refining the country office overall approach to upstream work.</li> <li>- Since 2010, the Education chief’s main tools for ensuring an upstream focus of staff work are the annual performance reviews and quarterly reviews with each zone office, where the Education chief provides on-the-job training for ensuring upstream focus.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews, literature review.</p> <p>Section 2.2</p>		



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<p><b>Subquestion 2.4</b>  <b>Have shifts to upstream work in the education portfolio been reflected in UNICEF budgets and UNICEF's portfolios of activities?</b></p>			
<p>The most visible shifts towards a stronger upstream focus in UNICEF's budget and portfolio include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The budget for upstream advocacy increased significantly in the 2011–2015 country programme. The name was expanded to be called the Policy, Advocacy and Communication and the role of the unit was expanded to include more of knowledge generation for social development and equity.</li> <li>-The restructuring in 2011 of UNICEF's field presence from working more directly with service delivery in six provinces to working with capacity development from zone offices covering the whole country.</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews, literature review. Section 3.3</p>		
<p><b>EQ3. How relevant has UNICEF's (approach to) upstream work been?</b></p>			
<p><b>Sub-question 3.1</b>  <b>Is UNICEF's approach to upstream work aligned with its mandate and objectives?</b></p>			
<p>Yes, it is. It is very focused on improving access and quality of primary education by working through the government and having high level policy influence. It is now also working on supporting lower secondary schools to help improve transition from primary to secondary. The Cambodia office is focused on reducing gender gaps and bridging inter-regional or inter-group disparities. Also, it is very heavily focused on ECE whereby it is funding a major share of ECE programme costs at the national level, even when it is not expressed as the top government priority.</p>	<p>Interviews, UNICEF Cambodia and UNICEF global documents.</p>	<p>Being aligned with UNICEF's internal priorities can at times mean that the country office could end up developing an agenda which is not the priority of the government. Thus, ECE is not a priority of the government but UNICEF Cambodia has made the government identify it as a priority. This works well till the point UNICEF is funding ECE but raises serious questions about sustainability of interventions that are internally aligned but not necessarily the priority of the government.</p>	<p>UNICEF can benefit from having an internal discussion around how to deal with areas of intervention which are central to UNICEF's internal mandate but not recognized so by the government. Further thinking on how to make such interventions become sustainable and a genuine priority for the government can be useful.</p>



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<p><b>Sub-question 3.2</b>  <b>Do UNICEF's priorities align with emerging priorities for education? [country needs and beneficiary requirements]</b></p>			
<p>Yes, they do. They align with the emerging priorities for education and are quite responsive to the changes within government capacity. Thus, initially much of capacity development for education management happened within the planning department at the national level. Given the improved capacity at the national level the focus of the new Capacity Development Partnership Fund has moved to improving capacity at the provincial and district level. Similarly, in the area of access, the earlier focus on improving access for all has now included the additional dimension of more specialized focus on improving access to education within disadvantaged communities concentrated in specific geographical areas. Examples of support in this area include lobbying the government to approve bilingual education to improve education access for tribal communities which were low performing or lobbying the government to adopt a formula for calculating school operating budgets which allows additional support to schools in disadvantaged areas.</p>	<p>Interviews, documented evidence in UNICEF or DP reports and government policy documents.</p>	<p>UNICEF has been good at constantly identifying the next level of needs for the ministry while supporting its current priorities. This has enabled it to keep innovating and developing interventions and programmes that help the government keep identifying the next set of priority needs.</p>	<p>Undertaking effective upstream work at the sector wide level requires the ability not only to meet the current needs but to also constantly to work with the government to keep identifying the next level priorities so that the government is prepared to adopt them as its own priorities in the next strategic plan.</p>
<p><b>Subquestion 3.3</b>  <b>How well aligned are UNICEF's policy positions and outputs to national government priorities?</b></p>			
<p>As outlined above, the policy positions and outputs are quite aligned with the national priorities. They are also aligned with some of the regional priorities as bilingual education is a key area of interest for UNICEF Southeast Asia office based in Bangkok. Thus, the Cambodia office's focus on bilingual education and any innovations on the ground get transmitted to other UNICEF offices in the region.</p>	<p>Interviews, documents.</p>	<p>It seems that the regional priorities are also reflected in the UNICEF Cambodia working priorities as noted for the case of bilingual education.</p>	



**Annex 6 (cont'd)**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<p><b>EQ4. What are the identifiable results of UNICEF's (shift towards) upstream work? Are there discernible patterns in these results? [results occur at output, outcome, impact level – cf. Theory of Change]</b></p>			
<p><b>Subquestion 4.1</b>  <b>... in terms of UNICEF participation in global and regional education partnerships (from the country perspective)?</b></p>			
<p>GPE is the main global partnership in education operating in Cambodia. As noted in EQ1.3, there have been some tensions between the WB and other DPs over the GPE. UNICEF was viewed to be the more appropriate coordinating entity for GPE funds rather than the Bank given the focus of these funds on ECE. However, UNICEF has actively stayed engaged in the GPE discussions.</p>		<p>In terms of global partnerships operating in country, UNICEF's role has been a bit more limited than desirable. However, evidence suggests that it is not due to lack of initiative.</p>	
<p><b>Subquestion 4.2</b>  <b>... in terms of UNICEF activities at country level?</b></p>			
<p>1) Improved capacity for education management; Evidence that planning department as opposed to the TAs take the lead in designing education sector strategic plans and annual workplans; Improved capacity of EMIS unit.</p> <p>2) Government adoption of UNICEF CFS pilots as good practice at national level; CFS national policy adopted in 2007 and revised policy adopted in 2012; bilingual education model accepted for expansion.</p> <p>3) Government expansion of ECE programme; Government to expand the community based ECE model supported by UNICEF.</p>		<p>Yes, there are visible results of UNICEF's shift towards upstream work. These are visible in terms of the improved capacity within the Ministry of Education as well as in adoption of national level policies or best practice models that can be traced to UNICEF lobbying efforts.</p>	
<p><b>Subquestion 4.3</b>  <b>... in terms of different Key Result Areas (KRAs)? viz:</b>  <b>• Early Childhood Development (ECD) and school readiness;</b>  <b>• Equitable access;</b>  <b>• Quality and Child Friendly Schools; and</b>  <b>• Education in Emergencies. (including "building back better")</b></p>			
<p>ECD: Widespread recognition among stakeholders that UNICEF activities have influenced the policy development (most notably the National ECCD Policy) and strengthened the capacity of the public sector to provide ECE services. The main activities have included financial and technical support for the development of a model for community pre-schools, the development of Early Learning and Development Standards, curriculum revision, material development, monitoring tools, teacher training, influencing the FTI and GPE to invest in ECD and the piloting of bilingual and inclusive ECE programmes.</p>	<p>Staff presentation for the evaluation team, ECD evaluation from 2010, interviews.</p> <p>Section 2.2 Section 3.2</p>	<p>The results of UNICEF upstream work in education have been quite visible in the first three KRAs during the evaluation period, 2003–2012.</p>	



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>(cont'd) Subquestion 4.3</b>			
<p>At the same time, a large number of stakeholders question the sustainability of these efforts, as the national financial commitment is not yet present.</p> <p>Equitable access: This has been important to UNICEF's agenda when supporting government central planning capacity development and in lobbying for adoption of CFS models and more recently the focus on bilingual education and children with disabilities.</p> <p>Quality and Child Friendly Schools: The CFS model has been accepted at the national government as explained in 4.2. And, further pilots within this model are being trialed to improve access to marginalized communities such as the bilingual education programme aimed at tribal communities, or programme for children with special needs.</p> <p>Emergencies as a specific category is not a priority in the case of Cambodia UNICEF office. However, UNICEF has been working in Cambodia since 1979 and thus much of its current status in country comes through the work it did in the post-emergency/conflict period.</p>			
<b>Subquestion 4.4</b>			
<b>Have there been unintended results of UNICEF's shift towards upstream work?</b>			
<p>The main unintended result that could possibly be relevant is if the UNICEF investment in education enabled the government to limit its own resource commitment to the sector. The government education sector budget has seen a decrease in recent years. All DPs, including UNICEF, are conscious of this, and are lobbying the government to increase its commitment to the education sector.</p>		<p>The signs of unintended consequences are relatively limited.</p>	



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>EQ5. How coherent have approaches to upstream work been within UNICEF?</b>			
<b>Sub-question 5.1</b>			
<b>Is there is a shared understanding of what constitutes 'upstream' work in BEGE? How well is it understood by Education program staff at all levels?</b>			
<p>There is a strong shared understanding of what upstream work entails among UNICEF Cambodia's education staff and its senior management. The core of this understanding is that the purpose of ALL of UNICEF's work is the strengthening of the national education system to deliver better basic education. This understanding is closely aligned with the current country programme. However, the term 'upstream' is not used and is not found appropriate for the Cambodian context, mainly because it assumes there is still 'downstream' work.</p>	<p>Interviews and group discussions with UNICEF staff. Section 3.3</p>	<p>The shared understanding of what working upstream means is an invaluable strength of the UNICEF Cambodia office. It has been fostered through strong internal leadership and a management culture where regular retreats and discussions play an important role. Constant questioning and refinement of upstream work in relation to the rapidly changing education context stand out as two essential components for the common understanding.</p>	
<b>Sub-question 5.2</b>			
<b>To what extent is there horizontal collaboration on upstream at work across units in UNICEF in Cambodia?</b>			
<p>Collaborations across different sector units have been relatively limited over the evaluation period. However, the re-organisation of UNICEF's field presence in 2011 from working in 6 provinces to working in zone teams has promoted closer collaboration between education, WASH, child protection and local governance. In addition, the Education Section's priority to education financing has in the past year led to a closer collaboration with the new Policy, Advocacy and Communication's section.</p>	<p>Interviews Section 3.3</p>	<p>The main reason for restructuring UNICEF's field presence in 2011 was to better align the organisation and staffing with its strategy to work 'upstream'. At the same time, the restructuring to zone offices built the foundation for stronger collaboration across sectors. It is however unclear to what extent this potential has been fully utilised. From the education section, collaboration across sectors is not seen as an objective in itself, but needs to add value. The increased focus by UNICEF Cambodia on addressing inequities that cut across sectors (finance, rights of children from ethnic minority groups, gender inequalities, disabilities etc) is likely to require close collaboration across sectors in the coming years.</p>	<p>It seems appropriate to mainly work within the education sector at the start-up phase of UNICEF's upstream work (i.e. SWAp facilitation), as this work is heavily focused on getting actors together to form more harmonised ways of working together.</p> <p>However, as the Ministry's capacity improves and UNICEF wants to influence issues which are not only related to education, UNICEF has had to 'step up' its upstream work and bring in a wider range of expertise. This requires closer interaction with other parts of UNICEF and another way of working at sub-national levels.</p>



## Annex 6 (cont'd )

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>Sub-question 5.3</b> <b>To what extent is there vertical collaboration on upstream work across HQ, regional and country levels of UNICEF?</b>			
<p>The country office expresses a general satisfaction with the level and types of collaboration on upstream work with the regional office. It has found it useful to draw upon and bring in the regional advisor for strategic meetings in the education sector. The direct engagement with HQ appears limited. At the same time, the senior management points to the difficulties in funding upstream work and that HQ and the regional office could have a bigger role in developing tools for measuring upstream work and for telling the upstream story better. 'We fail to fund the talk and the challenge is evidence and measurement of upstream work'.</p>	<p>Interviews Section 3.3</p>	<p>UNICEF Cambodia has been in the forefront of moving its work upstream over the past decade. While the regional office and HQ have played supportive roles, it is the decentralised structure of UNICEF that has made it possible for the country office to advance and to be in charge of its own development. Its approach to capacity development, including the recent Capacity Development Partnership Fund, stands out as rather unique and 'bold'. But the evidence base on the results of previous capacity development efforts is limited. The interest in building a better evidence base on capacity development extends well beyond Cambodia office capacity and the regional office and HQ could potentially play a bigger role in this endeavour.</p>	
<b>Subquestion 5.4</b> <b>To what extent has relevant advice, methodological support and capacity development been provided between different levels and departments of UNICEF?</b>			
<p>Education and management staff mention that UNICEF HQ has improved its offer of training in recent years, including useful online training opportunities. This is appreciated. UNICEF Cambodia expresses that the monitoring of results on capacity development is challenging and would welcome more advice in this area. At the same time, there is reluctance to the provision of general tools, guidelines etc. and a request that any such advice, support etc. is driven by a specific demand from the country office.</p>	<p>Interviews Section 3.3</p>	<p>The workload of the country office is high and some staff signal that what they need is time to do their job and that there is an overload of requests (rather than support) from higher levels. The recent leadership of the education section has played a very important role in providing on-the-job training for his staff. This support, in combination with useful technical assistance, is more valuable than any type of general external advice.</p>	



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>EQ 6. Has UNICEF's upstream work in education been coherent with that of major external partners?</b>			
<b>Subquestion 6.1 Has UNICEF communicated clearly its upstream approaches and the policy positions it seeks to promote through upstream work?</b>			
<p>The main stakeholders in the education sector in Cambodia are well aware of UNICEF's approach to upstream work and its policy positions. UNICEF's financial and technical support to donor coordination, education planning and monitoring, Child Friendly Schools and ECE are the most frequently mentioned issues in terms of UNICEF's upstream priorities. A number of respondents mention that UNICEF is the only development partner with presence at sub-national levels and this is identified as a strong comparative advantage and a core aspect of the Agency's upstream approach. However, some NGOs express that UNICEF is not sufficiently aware of the reality at the local levels and that it has 'lost the downstream'. UNICEF's approach of 'walking with the Ministry all the time' is also identified as a distinctive UNICEF approach to upstream work.</p>	<p>Interviews</p>	<p>UNICEF's long standing presence in Cambodia's education sector combined with its upstream working methods and persistent policy priorities over the past decade explain UNICEF's firm positioning in the sector.</p>	
<b>Sub-question 6.2 Has there been effective coordination and has UNICEF's upstream work been complementary with that of other UN agencies and/or other international partners?</b>			
<p>UNICEF's consistent presence and priority to donor coordination over the evaluation period is widely recognised and appreciated among all key stakeholders. The donor coordination efforts are anchored in the strive for greater ownership of the education planning process by the Ministry and a more harmonised donor voice and support. Overall, the structures for donor coordination have improved over time and interviewees repeatedly say that the Ministry is more in charge of the planning process now than under the first ESP. This has resulted in reduced fragmentation in donor support over the evaluation period. UNICEF has a close and well functioning working relationship with UNESCO and the two UN bodies complement each other. The relationship with the World Bank has at times been tense, in particular in preparation of the FTI grant in 2007 and 2008 and the GPE application in 2013. Sources of tension seem to be different approaches to capacity development and lack of transparency from the World Bank/GPE towards the Education Sector Working Group.</p>	<p>Interviews, literature review</p>		<p>Recommendation – improve the relationship with the World Bank, including developing a joint approach to capacity development and develop transparent collaboration on the implementation of the GPE grant. UNICEF has a lot to contribute in relation to the ECE funding.</p>



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<p><b>Subquestion 6.3</b>  <b>Have UNICEF's resources for upstream work been applied where they can make the most difference? (complementarity and comparative advantage)</b></p>			
<p>Not enough data from the interviews on this and not sure how to address the question based on the documents we have.</p>		<p>The lack of evidence on the results of previous capacity development efforts/effects of TA and training on behavioural changes is a major obstacle for assessing whether the stronger focus on CD is sensible.</p>	<p>Donors to UNICEF such as Sida should insist and be prepared to pay for solid evaluations of the effects of TA and training in terms of behavioural change.</p>
<p><b>EQ7. What factors account for the success (or not) of UNICEF's upstream work?</b></p>			
<p><b>Subquestion 7.1</b>  <b>Has UNICEF allocated resources efficiently to upstream work?</b></p>			
<p>Yes, it seems so, as UNICEF has been quite effective in undertaking upstream work in the education sector. It is however difficult to really answer this question as we do not have access to budgetary details as to how much the Cambodia education sector team did actually spend on upstream work. However, given that there is ample evidence to show that the upstream work evolved organically due to the efforts of the education sector staff, the context where all DPs were moving towards sector plans and were asking government to do the same, and due to an earlier history of wide-ranging support to education sector by UNICEF, it is unlikely that in the early period any explicit budget was allocated for upstream work. This is changing now as there is more conscious awareness within the staff of the HQ push towards upstream work. The fact that other sectors such as health within UNICEF Cambodia have not succeeded in having a similar level of upstream impact as the education sector does however show that the national level developments in the education sector since 2000 were in general particularly conducive to undertaking upstream work.</p>	<p>Documents</p>	<p>Upstream work can often be simply an extension of routine UNICEF work if that work is being done effectively. It does not have to incur major independent costs of its own. For example, if a UNICEF-supported pilot on the ground is working effectively it does not cost UNICEF much to take it up with the government provided that UNICEF maintains a routine contact with the relevant ministry/officials. Thus, upstream work is most effective when it is built into the basic job description of the staff (and staff are allowed time to write the relevant reports to take up issues with the government, as has been the case for the education sector staff in Cambodia) and is built into the intervention rather than necessarily being viewed as a standalone activity.</p>	<p>Given that other sectors in the UNICEF Cambodia office have not had a similar level of success in upstream work as the education sector, looking for the causes of this difference can be quite illuminating to understand why upstream efforts succeed or fail. Methodologically, studying within case differences can be as illuminating as cross-case differences.</p>



**Annex 6 (cont'd )**

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>Sub-question 7.2</b>			
<b>Have UNICEF's partners been willing to support and to fund upstream work in education?</b>			
<p>Yes, this has been actually central to UNICEF's success in upstream work. UNICEF's Cambodia education sector has received reliable ongoing funding from Sida which has been critical to UNICEF's ability to undertake upstream work at two levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sustainability of funding flows has helped UNICEF education staff stay focused on priority areas without having to shift focus to meet the funding priorities of different donors;</li> <li>2. It has put a lot of money at UNICEF's disposal to actually support the government such as purchasing books, buying computers for ministry staff, paying salaries of teachers for community based ECE model, etc.</li> </ol>	Interviews, documents	<p>Having reliable funding can help focus on core activities which can help undertake upstream work. Further, having money to support interventions definitely buys a lot of leverage with the government which in turn can really help with upstream work as the government is then more willing to listen.</p> <p>Thus, while there is credit due to UNICEF for the effective upstream work, the reliability of Sida funding and the money at disposal of UNICEF to provide material support to government has been critical to having upstream impact.</p>	
<b>Sub-question 7.3</b>			
<b>Has UNICEF been effective in dialogue with partners at different levels? How effective have global, regional and country partnerships been?</b>			
<p>As noted in the first section, UNICEF has been very effective in forming education partnerships with all DPs as well as with the government. It has also been a key player in bringing together the NGO Education Partnership (NEP), a coalition of education NGOs which helps build consensus within NGOs on core education priorities and then feeds this to the ESWG.</p>	Interviews, documents	<p>Often, being effective in leading policy dialogue with the government first requires building consensus among DPs on an issue. UNICEF has been very effective in leading the lobbying process in the education sector in Cambodia because of this strategy of building within group consensus before approaching the government.</p>	
<b>Subquestion 7.4</b>			
<b>Have UNICEF and its partners had the necessary capacities for effective upstream work ? (cf. also EQ 8)</b>			
<p>Much of this upstream work has happened due the way things evolved at the country level given the context rather than due to a conscious emphasis on upstream work due to guidelines from the HQ. Thus, explicit training of UNICEF staff or its partners on how to undertake upstream work has been limited. However, a few training programmes have been open to the UNICEF staff for their overall capacity development. UNICEF office is now also investing in social policy advisors, who are meant to do more focused upstream work across sectors.</p>	Interviews, documents		



## Annex 6 (cont'd)

Findings	Sources of evidence	Conclusions	Lessons learned/ Recommendations
<b>EQ8. To what extent is UNICEF's upstream work sustainable?</b>			
<b>Sub-question 8.1</b>			
<b>Are the results to date of upstream work (cf. EQ4) likely to be sustained?</b>			
Partially. There is evidence to suggest that capacity development within the planning department is relatively sustainable even though many of the staff trained through foreign training courses such as at UNESCO Paris IIEP programmes, leave the ministry for better-paid jobs. However, in other areas such as ECE or bilingual education, which are not the top priorities of the government, sustainability of the UNICEF inputs is very questionable even when national level policy or guidelines have been adopted around them.	Interviews, documents. Section 3.6	Adoption of policy guidelines at national level is a good sign of upstream work but it does not mean that it makes the intervention sustainable. At times, governments find it easier to issue such policies to appease donors and ensure continued funding flows. Securing government financial commitment for the specific intervention remains the ultimate test of sustainability of the intervention.	
<b>Sub-question 8.2</b>			
<b>Does UNICEF have/is it effectively developing the necessary capacities for continued upstream work?</b>			
UNICEF Cambodia is trying to improve its capacity for upstream work by having social policy advisors who try to link the different sectors within UNICEF to undertake cross-ministry lobbying. But, there is little evidence that it is getting any systematic support from HQ for this. The Cambodia office will also welcome support on how to measure impact of their upstream activities more effectively.	Section 3.3	Not historically as much of upstream work evolved naturally on the ground rather than due to a focused plan. But, now more focused efforts are being made to support capacity of UNICEF staff to undertake upstream work.	
<b>Sub-question 8.3</b>			
<b>Are appropriate capacities being developed amongst governments and other partners at country level?</b>			
Yes, it seems so. The move towards building capacity for education management at provincial and district level under the newly launched Capacity Development Partnership Fund is a good example of that. Similarly, the attempt to support the NGOs Education Partnership (NEP) to lobby the government more effectively is a good move towards building capacity of non-state actors to hold government to account against desired education outcomes.		Yes, capacity is being built but there is need to set clear exit indicators or else there is a possibility that future capacity development will be carried out even in areas which can now be self-sufficient.	
<b>Sub-question 8.4</b>			
<b>Does UNICEF have adequate mechanisms for monitoring its upstream work and learning from experience?</b>			
No. As noted in 8.2, it is an area where UNICEF Cambodia wants to get support from HQ. However, in case of the education sector, upstream work has been visible enough due to government adoption of national policies and programmes that can be directly linked to UNICEF inputs.	Section 3.3	No. Currently, the upstream work is only assessed if certain policies or models get accepted. There is no monitoring system in place to systematically record what upstream investments have been made and what has been their impact.	

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Srey Ah (Oddar Meanchey): 26/12/2003:

Small community-built school.

