
Editorial

Progress of Educational Development in Cambodia

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The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) have laid out various educational strategies and policies to boost the mass production of human capital with skill and knowledge to accelerate the country's economy (see RGC, 2007; RGC, 2015, 2019). One of the main endeavours of the RGC is to transform Cambodia from a lower-middle-income country to an upper-middle-income country by 2030. To achieve their goals and visions, the RGC and MoEYS have developed and adopted national and international development agenda for the education system as stated in the Education Strategic Plan 2019–2023 (ESP 2019–2023) and towards 2030. The ESP 2019–2023 comprises two main key education policies, including (1) ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all and (2) ensuring effective leadership and management of education officials at all levels (MoEYS, 2019).

To date, it has been observed that Cambodian education has experienced significant progress in line with the development goals and visions of the RGC and MoEYS. Despite the remarkable progress, it has been found that there were various emerging challenges intervening in the progress of the education development in Cambodia. The progress and challenges of educational development were discussed in-depth in a recent national education congress held on April 25 to 27, 2022 in Cambodia (see MoEYS, 2022). The national education congress was deemed as a crucial mid-term review and evaluation of the ESP 2019–2023 and especially reflection of challenges perpetuated by the COVID-19 pandemic (see MoEYS, 2022).

Therefore, the current special issue entitled “Progress of Educational Development in Cambodia” discusses various education development issues that Cambodia has encountered from the adaptation of SDG4 to the implementation of ESP 2019–2023. It provides policy and

practical insights to educational stakeholders, especially policymakers, through research findings that were useful for project and policy reform and intervention.

The first article, written by Sovath Seng, orients readers to understand what the best practices of award-winning primary school principals are. They were the awardees from 2013 to 2019 in Cambodia. It has become a good mirror for other school principals to learn and conform to enhance their leadership and management. The second article, contributed by Sokunrith Pov, explores how educational staff perceive action research in the context of Cambodia. Action research is deemed as a new education reform agenda that aims to instil research concepts into all educational staff. This study explores how educational staff perceive action research in terms of research useful for the profession, research anxiety, positive attitudes towards action research, relevance to life, and research difficulty. The third article, written by Sreypouv Ouch, is considered a crucial review piece that looks into how student-centre approach has been integrated into various new education development agendas and models. It offers a comprehensive insight on positive changes and challenges that teachers continue facing in implementing student-centre approach in the classrooms. The fourth article, contributed by Ponleak Yat, depicts empirical evidence on factors influencing students' motivation and academic performance at lower secondary schools in Cambodia. This study concerns students' academic motivation and achievement that refrain them from doing well at school. Lastly, the article, written by Samuth Chea, discusses the deaf and hard-of-hearing students' Khmer language writing performance at public schools in Cambodia. This study directly addresses the SDG4 notion of how inclusive education has been implemented and whether teaching practices respond to the special educational needs of students at Cambodian public schools.

Taken together, these five pieces provide useful evidence for improved leadership and management and students' learning outcomes, including students with special educational needs. Those are deemed as valid cross-check indicators for the implementation of SDG4 and ESP 2019–2023 respectively.

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