



INCLUSION AND QUALITY

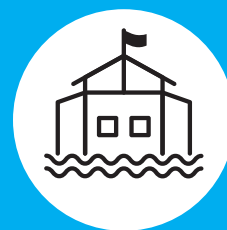
IN



**ISLAMIC
SCHOOLS**



**BUDDHIST
MONASTIC SCHOOLS**



**FLOATING
SCHOOLS**

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Abbreviations

BSDA	Buddhism for Social Development Action
DoE	District Office of Education
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoCR	Ministry of Cults and Religion
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
Mufti	Highest Council for Islamic Affairs in Cambodia
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

This research study was commissioned to generate a better understanding of three school communities in Cambodia: Islamic schools, Buddhist monastic schools, and floating schools with a focus on identifying challenges in delivering quality and inclusive education.

There has been significant progress in Cambodia's education system. Student enrolment in the public-school system has increased rapidly across all education levels. In recent years, primary education enrolments have reached near gender parity. These improvements are in large part a result of strong commitment from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to educational access and equity. This is reflected in the first Education Strategic Plan (ESP), and has been consistently reaffirmed via policy commitment for equitable access, quality learning and effective leadership in schools including via the 2014-2019 ESP. This commitment is sure to continue in the ESP 2019-2023, currently under formulation.

Despite these rapid advances, not all children have safe access to quality learning in Cambodia, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable communities. While recognizing that Cambodia has many in-need minority groups, lack of time and human resources, coupled with logistical constraints, have somewhat limited current investigation into these three school communities: Islamic schools, Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools.

To date, these communities have only marginally benefited from in-country work done by UNICEF in education. Therefore, the main intention of this research is to identify ways in which UNICEF and other partners could assist children in these minority groups more directly through improved education service delivery.

Purpose and objectives

The research was not intended as a comprehensive assessment of these three school communities but rather an exploration of common circumstances. The overall objectives of this research are to:

- 1) Build knowledge of the circumstances facing Cambodia's Islamic, Buddhist monastic and floating school communities, and;
- 2) Identify ways in which the overall quality and inclusiveness of education in these schools could be improved.

To meet these objectives, the research was guided by three key areas of investigation: (1) specific challenges the three school communities face in providing quality and inclusive education; (2) the existing regulations, government or otherwise guiding education service delivery for the three school communities; and (3) possible entry points for UNICEF and other development partners in improving quality and inclusiveness of education in these schools.

Methodology

Quality, inclusion and vulnerability are the primary lenses through which this research was analyzed.

The assignment consisted of three phases: a desk review, data collection and analysis, and report drafting. The desk review included a literature review of existing academic journal articles, news articles, journalistic resources, documents and reports from ministries and civil society organizations working with Islamic schools, Cham Muslim students, Buddhist monastic and floating schools.

For the data collection phase, researchers conducted field visits to relevant schools, interviewed key informants and conducted focus group discussions in Kampong Cham, Battambang and Pursat provinces. In total, the team visited twelve schools (three floating schools, five Buddhist monastic schools, three Islamic schools and one Cham-majority state school) and conducted twenty-three interviews and focus group discussions. The interviewees were: ministry officials, local NGOs, partner organizations, United Nations staff, researchers, school directors, teachers and students.

Common theme findings

1. Obstacles remain in teacher recruitment and training

Teacher recruitment and training related issues were found in all three school communities. Given the three school communities are considered marginalized and/or vulnerable and often experience financial constraints, teaching in these schools is less attractive which results in a shortage of qualified teachers. In addition, the research revealed that there is insufficient pre-service training and in-service professional training for most teachers in all three types of schools. The absence of sufficient in-service professional training deprives teacher from obtaining new knowledge and practices in the teaching field, resulting in significant negative impacts on the quality of their teaching.

2. School management capacity is limited

Across many of the schools included in the sample, many school administrators/managers were employed with little or no prior experience. There were insufficient trainings for school directors and administrators. Many of the school directors stated that they lacked the skills and resources necessary to efficiently manage their schools. Those skills include budgeting, planning, personnel management, reporting and conducting procurement, as well as the capacity to shape the school's vision and cultivate meaningful relationships with staff, parents, students and the broader community.

3. Schools have limited resources, impacting their overall quality

Most of the schools in the study have limited resources available to them to provide quality education, ranging from school materials to infrastructure. Existing school resources such as learning materials, teacher instruction manuals and supplies to maintain the school buildings are out of date, limited and insufficient, while school budgets are used to remunerate staff, fund projects and make other necessary purchases throughout the school year are also limited. These constraints hindered the quality of education that the three school types could provide. Nevertheless, staff and parents demonstrated commitment to providing quality education for their students.

4. School communities face multiple vulnerabilities

Vulnerable community: Vulnerability was a key lens through which this research was conducted. By nature, children are assumed to be vulnerable regardless of their social condition. Nevertheless, there are children in some social, political and environment situations that make them more vulnerable than others. Student population of the three school communities are those most vulnerable in Cambodia because of their ethnicity, economic status and remote settlement.

Inclusive education: Existing policies do not adequately cater for student's religious values, linguistic abilities, socio-economic status and/or geography. These three school systems are examples of alternative education options that are better able to provide diverse communities with accessible and inclusive education. While these schools may be inclusive in some aspects, each school type could benefit from more inclusive practices. Some examples include offering multilingual education; ensuring accessibility for students with physical disabilities; offering accessible learning materials to those with developmental disabilities; preparing and training teachers on inclusive pedagogy; incorporating the community in inclusivity campaigns; promoting gender equity; better supporting children who need to work to support their families; and strengthening data collection and monitoring efforts.

Recommendations



ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

Short-term recommendation

1. Increase access to pre-service and in-service training

Given the ministry's employment of 1,500 civil servants in Islamic schools, the ministry should consider providing those teachers with the same in-service pedagogical training that all public school civil service teachers receive. The recommendation to the ministry is to extend the same one-year training to Islamic school teachers who have achieved civil servant status. While training subject matter and content may differ from the mainstream public schools, the pedagogical tools needed to provide a quality education are the same.

Long-term recommendations

1. Improve monitoring of WASH facilities

Systematic monitoring of WASH in Islamic schools should be introduced. While two of the three schools the research team visited were well-resourced and WASH facilities appeared satisfactory, the final Islamic school visited did not have any WASH facilities.

2. Provide capacity development on collecting statistics

The research team experienced difficulty in obtaining statistics on Islamic schools, in addition to disaggregated minority statistics, such as information about the number of students within the Cham community. Therefore, the research team recommends greater data transparency at the Mufti level. Sharing of student enrolment, teacher employment, completion rates and ethnic composition with MoEYS would strengthen awareness and inform policy development across all levels.

3. Strengthen community outreach and advocacy programmes

Community outreach programmes that convey to parents the importance of education, regardless of the school type, would be very valuable. During one school visit, the common practice of child marriage was cited as a reason for student drop out. This could be addressed through community advocacy programmes that highlight the drawbacks of such practices. Khmer Muslim, Cham Muslim and the broader Cambodian Islamic community would benefit from such advocacy programmes.



BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

Short-term recommendations

1. Increase funding for the publication of religious textbooks, curriculum and teacher guidebooks

MoCR is appointed by the RGC to administer and promote Buddhist monastic education. Thus, MoCR is the rightful ministry to allocate funding within its annual budget plan for sufficient publication and distribution of these learning materials across all Buddhist monastic schools. In response to teacher shortages in Buddhist monastic schools, the immediate and short-term solution proposed to MoCR is to mobilize more funding for schools to recruit more contract teachers to fill gaps that exist from too few MoCR civil service teachers.

2. Comprehensive dissemination of MoEYS textbooks to schools, including monitoring of curriculum implementation

MoEYS is required to supply textbooks and other relevant curriculum documents to all Buddhist monastic schools throughout the country. However, this did not appear to be the case in schools included in this sample. It is recommended that MoEYS take action to remedy this issue, as all the schools the team visited raised this as their main challenge. Buddhist monastic schools would benefit significantly from continuous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as well as technical support in implementing the MoEYS curriculum.

3. Improve school library quality

Based on the consolidated interview results from four Buddhist monastic schools and one university, the top three prioritized actions relating to school libraries that school management committees wanted to improve are: 1) increasing the amount and variety of books and reading materials, particularly related to the MoEYS curriculum; 2) providing age-appropriate and up-to-date books and reading materials; and 3) providing training for librarians.

Long-term recommendations

1. Ensure contract and community/volunteer teachers are adequately trained

MoCR should provide pre-service pedagogical training to its future contract teachers, as well as community/volunteer teachers, before they start teaching.

2. Provide on-going professional development training to civil service teachers and contract teachers

MoCR should continue providing in-service training annually, not only to civil service teachers, but also to their existing contract and community/volunteer teachers. It is recommended that MoCR and MoEYS jointly organize annual school leadership and management trainings for all Buddhist monastic school leaders.

3. Develop multi-age and multi-grade training component into pre-service pedagogical and in-service trainings

Given that multi-age and mixed-ability classrooms are common in Buddhist monastic schools, the research team recommends that MoCR incorporate one or two courses on multi-age and multi-grade pedagogy into both pre-service pedagogical and in-service teacher training.

4. Establish systematic financing for school operation

The establishment of systematic financing for school operations from the RGC would ensure the sustainability and overall improvement of the Buddhist monastic education system. Although this would be a significant financial undertaking by the RGC, the benefits gained from investing in Buddhist monastic education would be tremendous, given the integral role Buddhist monastic education plays in producing well-rounded human resources. It would also preserve Cambodian culture and tradition.



FLOATING SCHOOLS

Short-term recommendations

1. Provide boats and fuel stipends to floating schools

Floating schools need a school boat to provide safe transport for students, as well as additional long-term funding for fuel and upkeep. Floating schools still need boats to transport students and teachers, and to re-position the school structure throughout the seasons. Providing boats would contribute to school access and support the often-lone civil service teacher who is tasked with maintaining the floating school.

2. Supply life jackets for teachers and students

For basic teacher and student safety, floating schools would benefit from having access to a minimum number of life jackets. Many of the teachers and students consulted during site visits could not swim, which means they are at risk of drowning. Life jackets would contribute to school access and security and decrease risks associated with traveling to school.

3. Provide sufficient and up-to-date teaching and learning materials

Floating schools would benefit from new teaching and learning materials that are covered with plastic to prevent water or rodent damage. In addition to textbooks and workbooks, mixed-grade classroom manuals for teachers that meet the learning needs of students of all ages are required.

Long-term recommendations

1. Revise formula for operating costs

The research team recommends MoEYS revise the Programme Budget formula that determines operating costs received for all public schools, including floating schools. In addition to the school operating budget, MoEYS offers a top up to small and disadvantaged schools. The current school operating budget does not factor in the unique contextual needs and challenges of floating schools.

2. Increase number of scholarships

Floating school students would benefit from more scholarships so they could pursue secondary education on the mainland. An increase in scholarships for floating school students would likely improve their transition rate from primary to secondary school.

3. Investigate the feasibility of providing multilingual education

Students in floating communities would benefit from access to multilingual education. Having teachers who are able to support non-Khmer speaking students in their successful transition to the early grades of primary school and their continued participation beyond the first year would improve overall attendance and broaden education access to children within these communities. Multilingual education in multi-ethnic schools would improve literacy rates among Vietnamese-descendant and Cham students, further enabling integration into Cambodian society and promoting social cohesion.

4. Increase monitoring and technical support to schools

Floating schools would benefit from increased monitoring and technical support from DOE. The research team recommends that more funding be provided to DOE specifically for more frequent visits to monitor floating schools. In addition, the MoEYS Department of Construction, which establishes the infrastructure standards of public schools, should advise on and monitor floating school infrastructure standards and requirements.

5. Increase and improve WASH facilities and resources

Floating schools would benefit from greater WASH facilities and resources within the school, as well as the broader water-based community. The hygiene practices and resources available across water-based communities are replicated in floating schools. Both need more hygienic options when it comes to defecation, washing practices, access to clean water and garbage disposal.

6. Introduce local life-skills subjects

Studying local life skills would prepare students living in floating communities for the reality of their future employment and equip them with the skills to deal with the challenges of climate change and global warming. In addition, career counselling as a part of local life-skills for grade 5 and grade 6 students can be an effective method for increasing student transition to and attendance in secondary school.

Conclusion

While this research used the lens of vulnerability to better understand quality and inclusion in these three school types, there are a multitude of ways in which research into Islamic, Buddhist monastic and floating schools could have been approached. There are many other cross-cutting challenges that were not explicitly addressed in this report, but that further compound the issues addressed here. Nevertheless, this report and its recommendations can be used by RGC, UNICEF and other development partners to continue to expand and strengthen their current education interventions. The research team concludes by urging policy makers and development partners alike to consider a broad variety of stakeholder perspectives when designing education interventions, so that the specific needs of minority communities are effectively addressed.

1. Introduction

Since 1952, in partnership with Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has focused on developing educational opportunities in Cambodia.¹ In the last few decades, this work has primarily focused on assisting with rebuilding the country's education system following its destruction during the Khmer Rouge period.

The new UNICEF Country Programme (2019–2023) highlights its intention to focus future programming efforts on the delivery of inclusive and quality education. In pursuit of these two priorities, UNICEF is investigating the following three minority communities and their education systems: Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools. To date, these communities have only marginally benefited from in-country work done by UNICEF in education. While recognizing that Cambodia has many in-need minority groups, lack of time and human resources, coupled with logistical constraints, have limited current investigation into these three communities. Through this research, UNICEF hopes to better understand the situation of children in these schools, including the nature of the education they receive with reference to inclusion and quality principles. The intention of this research is to identify ways in which UNICEF could assist children in these minority groups more directly through improved education service delivery.

The international community's shifting focus from education access to education quality, in addition to Cambodia's rapidly developing economic infrastructure, was the impetus for a similar pivot in UNICEF Cambodia's strategic goals. The conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals and the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 highlighted the notion that a child's access to education or attendance in school did not always mean that he or she was actually learning. Sustainable Development Goal 4 codified the need to provide "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".²

UNICEF defines quality education as encompassing a variety of factors related to the learning environment, resources, teacher standards and safety. Social inclusion in education refers to the accessibility of a school for students of various genders, differing physical and intellectual abilities, varying social classes and diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. The Key Definitions section of this report lists comprehensive definitions relevant to this study: quality, inclusion and vulnerability.

In partnership with MoEYS, UNICEF Cambodia has continued its support inclusive and higher quality education for Cambodian children. Some examples include:

- Assisting the government to provide multilingual education in pre-schools and primary schools in five highland provinces
- Assisting in the provision of tailored 'catch-up' classes for over-aged children or those who have dropped out of school

¹ With a short hiatus from 1975-1979 during the Khmer Rouge regime. UNICEF Cambodia, 'History of UNICEF in Cambodia', https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/overview_12873.html, accessed 15 June 2018.

² United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report, United Nations, New York, January 2017.

- Enhancing the capacity of district authorities to provide quality support to schools through the provision of electronic tablets and an online information and management tool for collecting and viewing school data.³

With these programmes being supported by UNICEF and other development partners, and being prioritized by MoEYS, many of Cambodia's state schools have already begun to improve in quality. However, UNICEF Cambodia would like to explore the possibility of expanding its work on inclusive and better-quality education to directly include support for Islamic schools, Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools.

Statistics show there has been progress in Cambodia's education system. In terms of student enrolment, there has been a rapid increase across all education levels. Net enrolment for primary education increased from 87 per cent in 2001–2002 to 92.6 per cent in 2017–2018.⁴ In terms of social inclusion, primary education has reached near gender parity, with girls' net enrolment reaching 92.9 per cent and boys' net enrolment reaching 92.4 per cent.⁵ These improved enrolment figures are in large part a result of commitments by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to educational access and equity, introduced in the 2000 Education Strategic Plan (ESP). Policy commitments for equitable access, quality learning and effective leadership in schools were reaffirmed in the 2014–2018 ESP, and are likely to continue in the ESP 2019–2023, currently being formulated. Although quality is more difficult to measure, Cambodia participated in the 2016 round of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's 'Programme for International Student Assessment for Development', an international large-scale student assessment. The RGC carried out periodic and systematic national student learning assessments in reading and mathematics across all grade levels, highlighting the importance MoEYS places on monitoring learning quality. As seen in Table 1, the reading and mathematics achievement results were very concerning.

Table 1: Disparity between teacher-assessed pass rates and student assessments

Year	Tool	Grade	Result	National promotion rate (Education Management Information System) (not by subject)
2010	Early grade reading assessment (EGRA) Primary Education Dept. (PED)	1	Letter recognition task: 50% zero scores (children unable to identify a single character cor- rectly)	2010 G1 = 77.5%
2010	EGRA (PED)	2	Letter recognition task: 25% zero scores	2010 G2 = 84.4%
2012	EGRA (PED)	1	Letter recognition task: 35% zero scores	2012 G1 = 80.4%
2012	EGRA (PED)	2	Letter recognition task: 17% zero scores	2012 G2 = 85.6%

³ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Inclusive Education', <https://www.unicef.org/education/bege_61717.html>, accessed 15 June 2018.

⁴ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, *Public Education Statistics and Indicators 2017–2018*, Phnom Penh, March 2018.

⁵ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, *Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018*, MoEYS, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2014.

Year	Tool	Grade	Result	National promotion rate (Education Management Information System) (not by subject)
2015	Early grade mathematics assessment (EGMA) Second Education Sector Support Project (SESSP/PED)	1	8% of student sample met standard required for G1 mathematics	2015 G1 = 83.5%
2015	EGMA (SESSP/PED)	2	8% of student sample met standard required for G2 mathematics	2015 G2 = 87.1%
2015	EGMA (SESSP/PED)	3	2% of student sample met standard required for G3 mathematics	2015 G3 = 87.0%
2015	National learning assessment by Education Quality Assurance Dept. (EQAD) (Khmer language)	3	24.4% of G3 tested could not write a single word on dictation test	2015 G3 = 87.0%
2015	EQAD national test (Mathematics)	3	Quote: <i>"The overall average correct of 41% suggests that the average Grade 3 student mathematics achievement is not at the expected (or desired) level."</i> ⁶	2015 G3 = 87.0%

Source: Cambodia Submission (2018–2021) for the Education Sector Programme Implementation Grant 2018–2021 from the Global Partnership for Education

The RGC continues to prioritize education through the national budget. The education sector's share of the national budget increased from 15.5 per cent in 2013 to 18.3 per cent in 2017.⁷ The RGC's medium-term forecasts indicate an increase in the education allocation of the national budget of up to 23 per cent by 2020.⁸ This increase will provide education institutions with more resources to continue improving the quality of education, schools and working environments. It would make education the highest funded government service, followed by transport and defence.⁹

In terms of volume within each school type, the MoEYS Education Management Information System lists 34 floating schools operating within the state school system. For Buddhist education centres, the Ministry of Cults and Religion (MoCR) 2017 statistical summary recorded 272 Buddhist primary schools, 87 Buddhist secondary schools, and 520 Buddhist Dharma schools across the country.

⁶ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, *Results of Grade Three Student Achievement from the National Assessment in 2015*, Phnom Penh, April 2016 (Draft), p.13.

⁷ Ministry of Economy and Finance, *Budget in Brief, Fiscal Year 2018*, Kingdom of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, January 2018.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sokhean, Ben, 'Government proposes \$6B budget for 2018', *The Phnom Penh Post*, 30 October 2017.

There are an additional 1,933 ‘pagoda schools’ recorded by MoEYS, referring to public schools located in pagoda compounds. These were not included in the scope of this study.¹⁰ MoCR data recorded 363 Islamic schools in Cambodia.

MoCR is responsible for overseeing Buddhist monastic schools. MoEYS has some responsibility for Islamic schools, as some Islamic state teachers were given civil servant status in 2016 and have since been receiving their salaries from MoEYS. These types of schools operate semi-privately. The distinction between state and private schools is blurred, as some teachers in each of these schools have civil service status and receive a salary from MoEYS or MoCR, even if the schools’ operations are funded by the community and/or by private donors. Floating schools fall under the jurisdiction of MoEYS. There is a dearth of qualitative and quantitative data on floating school practices, student populations, curricula and educational outcomes.

¹⁰ These schools are administered and financed by MoEYS. Hence, the use the national curriculum and their student population are not monks.

2. Key definitions

Quality, inclusion and vulnerability are the primary lenses through which this research was analysed. While there are numerous ways in which these terms can be defined, the research team used UNICEF definitions to navigate the research. Quality and inclusion are important key terms, as these two notions will guide UNICEF Cambodia's next country programme. While vulnerability is another term underpinning much of the UNICEF in-country work, the notion of vulnerability emerged from the research team's findings. Vulnerability will serve as the framework through which all findings will be conceptualized.

Quality

UNICEF defines quality education as encompassing a variety of factors related to the learning environment, resources, teacher standards and safety. Five dimensions of educational quality reflect the complex context within which education takes place: 1) Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; 2) Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; 3) Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace; 4) Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; 5) Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.¹¹

Inclusion

Inclusive education refers to the accessibility of a school or learning institution for students of various genders, differing physical and intellectual abilities, varying social classes and diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Every learner navigates multiple social identities, including gender, socio-economic status, religious and ethnic background. Even when one social identity is shared among classmates (such as religion), other intersecting identities shape learning experiences in unique ways. UNICEF is dedicated to advocating for and collaborating with schools to establish greater inclusion of all learners. In an ethnically diverse country such as Cambodia, school access is not only about geographic accessibility or the formal right of all children to enrol in schooling; it is also about the inclusivity of children from all communities, backgrounds and identities.

Vulnerability

The United Nations defines vulnerability as, "The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards."¹² Humankind is vulnerable but there are individuals, groups and situations to which greater attention must be paid. Children are assumed to be vulnerable regardless of their social conditions.¹³ It is important to point out there are children in some social, political and environmental situations who are more susceptible to hazards than others.

¹¹ Colby, Jeanette et al., 'Defining Quality in Education', A paper presented by UNICEF at a meeting of the International Working Group on Education, Florence, Italy. Working Paper Series, Education Section, Programme Division, New York, USA, June 2000.

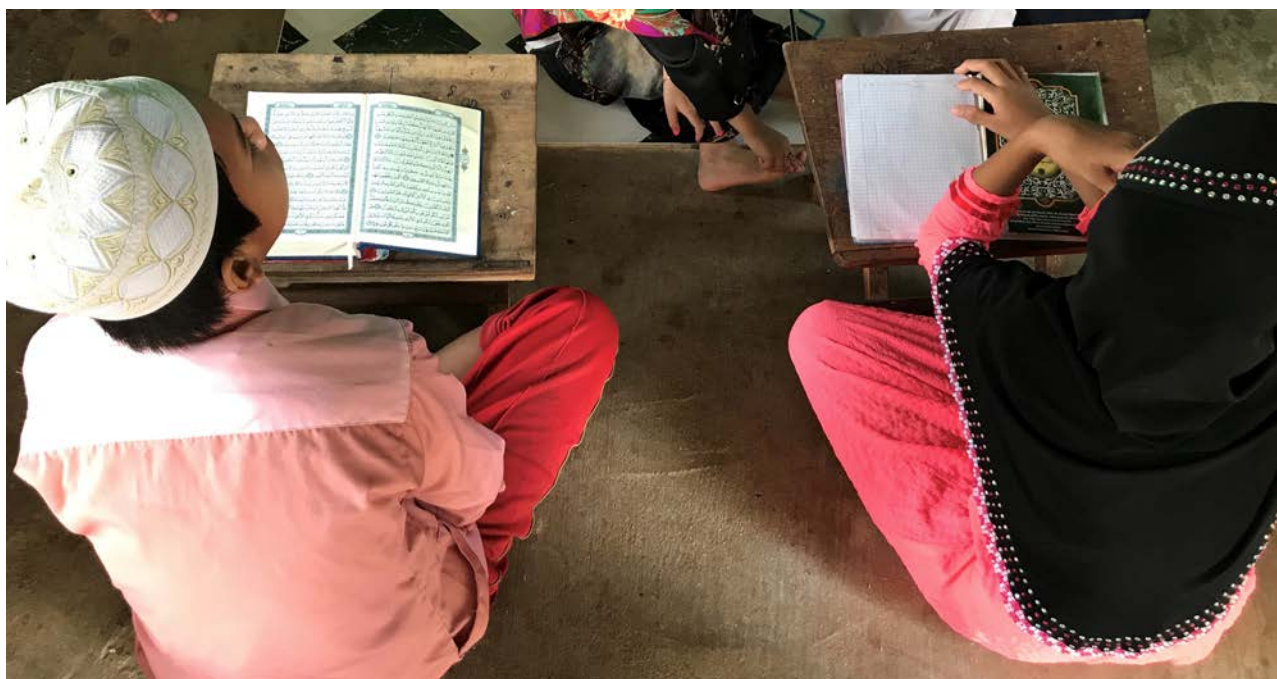
¹² United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 'Terminology', <<https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology#letter-v>>, accessed 28 July 2018.

¹³ UNESCO, 'The Principle of Respect for Human Vulnerability and Personal Integrity', <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002194/219494E.pdf>>, accessed 27 July 2018.

3. Literature review



Islamic schools in Cambodia



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Students studying in an Islamic School, Battambang Province

The Cham community are descendants of the once powerful Champa kingdom located in modern-day Vietnam, of Austronesian origin.¹⁴ During the Khmer Rouge period, Chams were targeted by Pol Pot's regime with estimates stating that no fewer than 90,000 Islam followers died. This represented 36 per cent of the Cham-Malay population.¹⁵ Now a minority ethnic group in Cambodia, Chams are predominantly Muslim, with a small percentage identifying as Buddhist.¹⁶ However Chams are distinct from the broader Islamic community and ethnic Khmers both ethnically and culturally.¹⁷ They speak their own language and have a unique set of customs and religious practices.¹⁸ Cham Muslim students either attend both state and Islamic schools, or choose one or the other.

¹⁴ Osborne, Milton, 'The "Khmer Islam" Community in Cambodia and its Foreign Patrons', *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, November 2004.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Eng, Kok-Thay, *From the Khmer Rouge to Hambali: Cham Identities in a Global Age*, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, January 2013.

¹⁷ Hamid, Abdul and Mohamed Effendy, 'Understanding the Cham Identity in Mainland Southeast Asia: Contending Views', *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, vol. 21, no. 2, October 2006, pp. 230-253.

¹⁸ Taylor, Philip, 'Economy in Motion: Cham Muslim Traders in the Mekong Delta', *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 7, no. 3, December 2006, pp. 237-250.

This is true for rural and urban settings. Often, state schools and Islamic schools operating in Muslim-majority communities negotiate half-day schedules to incentivize students to attend both types of schools. As opposed to state schools, Islamic schools operate privately and have a variety of fee structures that parents are aware of prior to registration. The Cambodian Islamic school curriculum is adapted from the Malaysian state curriculum, which allows many Islamic school graduates to pursue higher education or work opportunities in Malaysia or other Muslim-majority countries.

Social capital has emerged as one of the primary motivations behind Cham families sending their children to Islamic schools. Famed political scientist Robert Putnam defines social capital as, “The features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.”¹⁹ Islamic schools connect children to greater educational and economic opportunities abroad, such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Arab Gulf countries. Islamic schools often teach students Malay and/or Arabic languages to equip them with the cultural knowledge and skills that facilitate the transition to foreign universities and/or workplaces. Students who continue their education or enter the labour force abroad often earn more and experience social mobility not possible in their home communities.²⁰



Buddhist monastic schools in Cambodia



© UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Meredith Lunsford

Students learning Pali in a Buddhist monastic school, Kampong Cham province

¹⁹ Sen, Vicheth, ‘Social Capital in an Urban and a Rural Community in Cambodia’, *Cambodia Development Review*, vol. 16, no. 2, April 2012, pp. 6-10.

²⁰ Bruckmayr, Phillip, ‘The Cham Muslims of Cambodia: From Forgotten Minority to Focal Point of Islamic Internationalism’, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2006, pp. 1-23; Ahmad, Rashida and Massarrat Abid, ‘The Concept of Tradition and Modernity in Madrassah System of Education’, *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, vol. 51, no. 2, December 2014, pp. 19-52; Steiner, Kerstin, ‘Madrassah in Singapore: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Education’, *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2011, pp. 41-70; Sabeone, Federico, ‘Islam in Cambodia: The Fate of the Cham Muslims’, *European Institute for Asian Studies*, June 2017.

Theravada Buddhism is a conservative branch of Buddhism most commonly practiced in Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Sri Lanka. Cambodia has been a majority Buddhist country for many centuries, with more than 95 per cent of the population identifying as Buddhist.²¹ Buddhist monastic schools were the earliest form of schooling offered in the country. Evidence dates to the late thirteenth century when Chou Ta-Kuan, a Chinese ambassador from Timur Khan, came to visit Cambodia and documented his stay. Chou reported that, “Although there appeared to exist no school but children of the laity became novice of the bonzes²² who taught them.”²³ The Buddhist education system has produced a number of well-known intellectuals and thought leaders, and as a result Buddhist leaders and institutions in Cambodia have held a high degree of authority, respect and power for a relatively long time.²⁴

This sentiment is still relevant today, allowing Buddhism to continue to shape society. Currently, there are approximately 60,000 Buddhist monks in Cambodia. Millar states that, “The local pagoda is the beating heart of traditional Cambodian society.”²⁵ Historically, pagoda schools were regarded as learning centres that provide life skills beyond religion. According to Tan’s research, these schools impart civic and moral values, social and emotional learning, traditional forms of arts and culture, and spiritual mentorship.²⁶ While still viewed as cultural preservation centres, Buddhist monastic schools now offer two types of curriculum – religious studies and academic studies. The religious curriculum is established and approved by MoCR and the academic curriculum is provided by MoEYS, with each ministry responsible for their respective channels.

²¹ Millar, Paul, ‘The Sound of Silence: Sexual Abuse in Cambodia’s Buddhist Pagodas’, *Southeast Asia Globe*, 12 February 2018.

²² Bonze: a Japanese or Chinese Buddhist religious teacher.

²³ Ayres, David, ‘Tradition, Modernity and the Development of Education in Cambodia’, *Comparative Education Review*, November 2000, pp. 400-463.

²⁴ Examples of Buddhist leaders: Samdach Chuon Nath was a highly respected monk and was at one time called “the Great Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia”. His achievements include publishing a Khmer dictionary, which is still widely used and referred to today. He also composed Cambodia’s national anthem “Nokor Reach”. The late Samdach Preah Maha Ghosandada, a protégé of Samdach Chuon Nath, is another renowned Cambodian monk. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, Samdach Preah Maha Ghosandada played an important role in peacebuilding and national reconciliation in Cambodian society by launching many humanitarian programmes in refugee camps. Regarded as the Buddha of the Battlefields, he was nominated four times for the Nobel Peace Prize and awarded the 1992 Rafto Human Rights Award. Blomfield, Simon, ‘Maha Ghosananda’, <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/28/guardianobituaries.religion>>, accessed 18 September 2018.

²⁵ Millar, Paul, ‘The Sound of Silence: Sexual Abuse in Cambodia’s Buddhist Pagodas’, *Southeast Asia Globe*, 12 February 2018.

²⁶ Tan, Charlene, ‘Two Views of Education: Promoting Civic and Moral Values in Cambodia Schools’, *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 28, no. 5, September 2008, pp. 560-570.



Floating schools in Cambodia



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A student standing outside her classroom, Pursat Province

Cambodia is a topographically diverse country. In the central plains of the country lies the Tonlé Sap lake and river complex. During the wet season, the lake nearly doubles in size, with excess water flooding 1.25 million hectares of land for several months each year.²⁷ The area becomes abundant with fish and supports the livelihoods of many communities living around the lake's perimeter. During the rainy months, inhabitants live in a variety of homes designed to withstand the conditions. Structures range from homes built on stilts to homes that float like rafts with rising water levels, and homes built on small boats.²⁸ Educational, religious, and commercial facilities and/or any other buildings within the community are all constructed similarly. Education buildings are often made of timber, making them relatively more stable in floating villages. However, environmental factors pose a threat to the sustainability of all floating village infrastructure.

The remoteness of floating schools means monitoring by MoEYS is often irregular, recruiting teachers is difficult, resources are continually scarce, and school operating schedules are frequently interrupted by the activities of a seasonal lifestyle.²⁹ Students must rely on boats to travel to and from school. Among many other impediments, boats are frequently in disrepair or encounter impassable vegetation, which results in irregular student attendance or leads to students dropping out of school altogether.³⁰

²⁷ Roshko, Tijen, 'The Floating Dwellings of Chong Kneas, Cambodia', *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of The Vernacular Architecture Forum*, vol. 18, no. 2, September 2011, pp. 43-59.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Save the Children, 'ECCD for Floating Villages', Baseline Report, September 2017, pp. 14; Save the Children, 'Situation Analysis of Children in Tonlé Sap's Kampong Chhnang and Pursat Provinces', December 2017.

Estimates put the ethnic Vietnamese population in Cambodia at approximately 500,000.³¹ Many of the communities in floating villages are of Vietnamese descent, and most have no legal status, having lost their citizenship documents through generations of mobility in water-based communities vulnerable to flooding and environmental challenges. This contributes to making Cambodia a country that has a high percentage of stateless persons. These ethnically Vietnamese families face harsh environmental and legal challenges unique to their status, which work together to compound the insecurities and vulnerabilities of the children from these communities who attend floating schools.

Youth and adolescent vulnerability

Cambodia is home to the largest youth and adolescent population in Southeast Asia.³² The burgeoning young population entering the workforce gives Cambodia a window of opportunity for rapid economic growth over the next 30 years, until its working-age population starts to decline.³³ With one in five Cambodians currently aged between 15 and 24, and almost two thirds of the population under the age of 30, young people have great potential to drive economic and social development.³⁴ However, negative factors such as corruption, the high cost of education (both direct and indirect), recurring unemployment, and constant under-employment often block youth education and employment. Compared to their peers, learners from floating, Buddhist monastic, and Islamic schools are often more vulnerable to these challenges. Their socio-economic, cultural and environmental circumstances mean they often face higher risks of low school enrolment, high repetition, poor school performance, and/or high student drop out.

Three elements of child vulnerability are: 1) biological and physical needs, 2) strategic needs (children's limited levels of autonomy and dependence on adults), and 3) institutional invisibility and lack of voice in policy agendas.³⁵ According to Corvalan's definition, vulnerable young people refers to, "Socially and economically disadvantaged young persons, who have either never entered school or have dropped out early in their lives, (and who) do not possess a qualified and relatively permanent occupation and have not had access to educational and training opportunities."³⁶ Children and youth from these schools are not only vulnerable to income poverty but also to various threats, such as climate change, conflict and macro-economic shocks, among many others. As suggested by Naudé et al, of all the major challenges currently facing the world, no progress is possible without the alleviation of poverty; we cannot deal with poverty unless we also deal with vulnerability.³⁷ It is therefore important to address the vulnerability of children and youth from these three different types of school communities.

Contextualized curriculum

Literature used by this study identified curriculum as an explicit challenge for floating schools and Cham students, but not necessarily for Islamic or Buddhist monastic schools. Whether referring to

³¹ Parsons, Laurie and Sabina Lawreniuk, 'Seeing Like the Stateless: Documentation and the Mobilities of Liminal Citizenship in Cambodia,' *Political Geography* 62, 2018, pp 1-11.

³² United Nations Population Fund Cambodia, 'Fact Sheet', <https://cambodia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Flyer_Cambodia_Youth_Factsheet_final_draft_%28approved%29.pdf>, accessed 31 July 2018.

³³ World Bank Group, 'Cambodia Economic Update: Recent Economic Developments and Outlook', <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/740941525786311189/pdf/126030-WP-PUBLIC-may-10-9-am-cambodia-time-Cambodia-Economic-Update-V04.pdf>>, accessed 29 July 2018.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ GSDRC, 'Social Protection Topic Guide', <<http://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/SocialProtection.pdf>>, accessed 01 August 2018.

³⁶ Cheng, I-Hsuan, 'Case Studies of Integrated Pedagogy in Vocational Education: A Three-Tier Approach to Empowering Vulnerable Youth in Urban Cambodia', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 30, 2010, pp. 438-446.

³⁷ Naudé, Wim, Amelia U. Santos-Paulino and Mark McGillivray, 'Measuring Vulnerability: An Overview and Introduction', *Oxford Development Studies*, vol.37, no. 3, September 2009, pp. 183-191.

the language of instruction, curriculum content, pedagogical practices or class age distribution, some Cham students were unable to relate to the curriculum and learning materials they were presented within state schools. Given that Buddhist monastic schools have their own curriculum for religious studies, this point was not identified as a challenge for them in the literature used for this review. For Cham students, one challenge was the language of instruction. The state school curriculum is taught in Khmer, the national language. Some younger Cham Muslim students only speak Cham. The language barrier makes it difficult for them to integrate and perform academically in state schools. In addition, there are few teachers from the Cham community in state schools. The lack of Cham representation in state schools is often perceived as a barrier, as Cham students may feel unsupported by role models from similar backgrounds. Until 2008, Cham Muslim girls were restricted from wearing the hijab in state schools, constituting a barrier to regular attendance in state schools for some students.³⁸

Floating schools also use a curriculum that is not contextualized to their students' educational experience. Many floating schools have classrooms with students of varied ages and grade levels, and much of the curriculum does not adequately challenge older and younger learners equally. Additionally, the unique seasonal weather fluctuations challenge the typical length of the school year, as many students are forced to fish during the wet season so their family can meet their living costs. Because floating schools are state schools under the jurisdiction of MoEYS, they receive the same curriculum content and materials as other Cambodian state schools. To address the unique needs of floating school students, Save the Children implemented a programme to modify the state school curriculum and textbooks for each community with which they work. These modifications involved truncating the content to accommodate for a shorter school year, and/or customizing the content to better mirror the floating school student experience.³⁹

Pagodas for the vulnerable

Pagodas serve as a refuge for children coming from a variety of circumstances. Some children join the monkhood to access education, some children join because their families cannot financially provide for them, and some join to pursue Buddhist knowledge and practice. In addition to assertions by Tan and other researchers that Buddhist monastic schools serve a social cohesion and moral compass function, scholarly research overwhelmingly asserts that Buddhist monastic schools are often the only opportunity for poor children to obtain an education.⁴⁰ Black states that many of Cambodia's rural farmers join the monkhood for the "allure of receiving a good education."⁴¹ A 2017 UNICEF Cambodia study on alternative care community practices found that Buddhist monastic schools were seen as a means of providing children with access to free education, without informal fees, as well as boarding, which state schools do not provide.⁴² Beyond education, joining the monkhood allows students to live and eat securely while studying freely with little or no family contributions. When students join the monkhood, they are not only provided with an education, they also have

³⁸ No, Fata, Kyoko Taniguchi and Yukiko Hirakawa, 'School Dropout at the Basic Education Level in Rural Cambodia: Identifying its Causes Through Longitudinal Survival Analysis', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 49(C), 6 April 2016, pp. 215-224; Marshall, Jeffery and Seng Bunly, 'School Grants and School Performance in Rural Cambodia', *Journal of Developmental Effectiveness*, vol. 9, no. 3, June 2017, pp. 305-328; Hamid, Abdul and Mohamed Effendy, 'Understanding the Cham Identity in Mainland Southeast Asia: Contending Views', *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, vol. 21, no. 2, October 2006, pp. 230-253.

³⁹ Save the Children, 'Situation Analysis of Children in Tonlé Sap's Kampong Chhnang and Pursat Provinces', December 2017.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Black, Euan, 'Pagoda Problems: The Decline of Buddhism in Cambodia', *Southeast Asia Globe*, 1 February 2017.

⁴² Hamilton, Carolyn, et al., 'Study on Alternative Care Community Practices for Children in Cambodia, Including Pagoda-Based Care', *United Nations International Children's Fund*, 2017.

access to accommodation and food. This is generally free of charge, although some families may give financial donations to the pagoda. Such pagodas are regarded as places of learning for students from families who live in poverty or lack stability for their children.⁴³

One research study extends beyond these notions and posits that monks serve an important intersectional function between the elite and the poor.⁴⁴ This intersectional function results from the relationship between monks and the rest of the Cambodian community. While many Buddhist monastic school students come from poor backgrounds, monks garner a high level of respect from the wider Cambodian community. In a way, participation in the Buddhist monastic community bridges the social divide that exists between the wealthy and the poor. Traditionally, birth right establishes social class. However, joining the monkhood is one of the only ways in which someone can transcend those barriers into higher levels of social class. The majority of monks receive the utmost respect and trust from the community. Whether from the royal family, government or lower class, most lay people respect monks highly, affording them influence that most others do not have.

Long-term effects of genocide

The Khmer Rouge period lives on in the collective memory of Cambodians. During the four years from 1975 to 1979, up to 2 million Cambodians were killed, with many more displaced and separated from their families.⁴⁵ The country suffered a deep trauma that continues to define the emotions and everyday lives of Cambodians from all generations. Such a traumatic experience has created an environment where trust is fragile and community participation in education is apprehensive.

Some policies have been implemented to address the challenge of parental involvement in schools. Several researchers have acknowledged the use of the school cluster system as a modern way of engaging the local community. Adopted in the 1990s, school cluster policy reform was intended to: facilitate education decentralization to increase management efficiency through resource sharing; improve teacher quality through shared practices; inform decision makers of local needs; and improve parental participation.⁴⁶ The school cluster system comprises one core school, a small number of satellite schools (typically five to six), and several annex schools in exceptionally rural areas. The core school is usually centrally located and provides administrative support and library facilities to the whole school cluster. Satellite schools and annex schools have very limited resources and grade level offerings.⁴⁷

Tan argues that civic and moral education, essential components of a healthy society, are values historically learned in Buddhist monastic schools, whereas modern education focuses on imparting technical skills to develop human capital for economic development. This modern focus limits the opportunity for students to learn moral values. Tan argues that the school cluster system was implemented to fill this vacuum by engaging the local community.⁴⁸ A study by Pellini found the

⁴³ Kent, Alexandra, 'A Buddhist Bouncer: Monastic Adaptation to the Ethos of Desire in Today's Cambodia', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 24, no. 3, October 2009, pp. 291-303; Hamilton, Carolyn, et al., 'Study on Alternative Care Community Practices for Children in Cambodia, Including Pagoda-Based Care', *United Nations International Children's Fund*, 2017.

⁴⁴ Kent, Alexandra, 'A Buddhist Bouncer: Monastic Adaptation to the Ethos of Desire in Today's Cambodia', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 24, no. 3, October 2009, pp. 291-303.

⁴⁵ Dy, Khamboly, *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)*, Documentation Center of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2007.

⁴⁶ Pellini, Arnaldo and Kurt Bredenberg, 'Basic Education Clusters in Cambodia: Looking at the Future While Learning from the Past', *Development in Practice*, vol. 25, no. 3, April 2015, pp. 419-432.

⁴⁷ Pellini, Arnaldo, 'Decentralisation of Education in Cambodia: Searching for Spaces of Participation Between Tradition and Modernity', *Compare*, vol. 35, no. 2, June 2005, pp. 205-216.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Cambodia school cluster strategy to be ineffective at fostering community and parent participation in schools beyond financial and material contributions.^{49,50} A more recent research study by Pellini and Bredenberg cites anecdotal evidence that the school cluster system has reduced school drop out and grade repetition, while increasing community participation.⁵¹ Thus, community participation continues to be an aspect of education that could be addressed to improve educational impact and the experience of learners across all school communities in Cambodia. This system could be especially beneficial to the school communities highlighted in this study, as these schools are more vulnerable to drop out and have limited community engagement.

Spectrum of quality

While this research study focuses on Islamic, Buddhist monastic and floating schools, education quality is a challenge for most Cambodian schools.⁵² Cambodia's formal education system was eliminated during the Khmer Rouge period, as the value of education was considered a western and capitalistic indoctrination that had no place in the newly minted Democratic Kampuchea. Since the regime's defeat in 1979, much work has been done to rebuild the education system. The RGC, international and national NGOs have partnered to bring development funding and expertise to Cambodia in a concerted effort to ensure that all Cambodian children have access to education. It is important to acknowledge the incredible achievements that have been made in education access in the years since 1979. These strides have allowed attention to shift toward improving education quality, which several research studies have revealed as an on-going challenge.

Literature reveals that instructional quality is limited by the amount of pedagogical training and materials that teachers receive. Teachers exercise full discretion in developing their own lesson plans even though most do not have experience or training in doing so. Teachers are often responsible for locating, funding and acquiring their own classroom materials. While most school directors have teaching experience, they are often appointed with little or no formal school-based management experience or training. Without proper planning and budgeting skills, people-management skills or administrative skills, effective school management is difficult for many school directors to realize. While education quality is a cross-cutting challenge in Cambodia, Buddhist monastic, Islamic and floating school students frequently begin from a more vulnerable and disadvantaged place than many other students, making education quality challenges even more acute in these schools.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

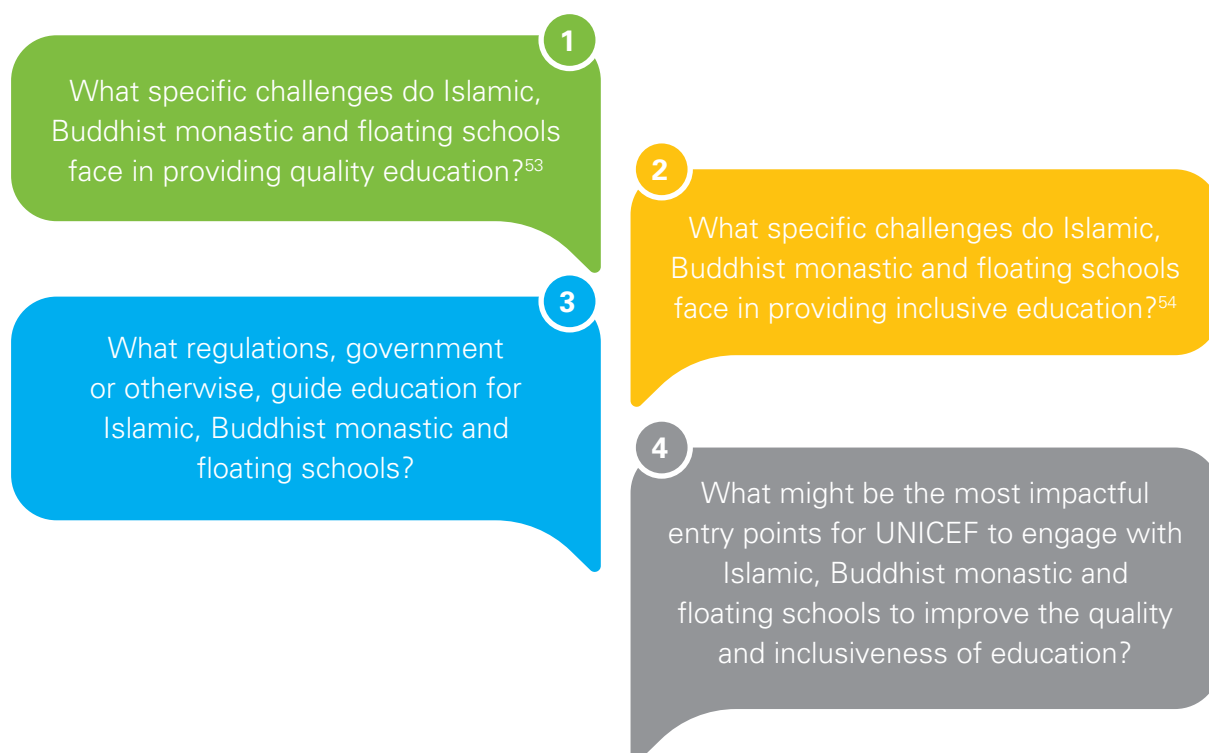
⁵⁰ Pellini draws from a 1996 UNICEF report entitled, *Towards A Better Future: An Analysis of the Situation of Children and Women in Cambodia*, that similarly refers to a lack of family participation in schools stemming from diminished trust following the Khmer Rouge period.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Marshall, Jeffery and Seng Bunly, 'School Grants and School Performance in Rural Cambodia', *Journal of Developmental Effectiveness*, vol. 9, no. 3, June 2017, pp. 305-328; Ai, Shoraku, 'School Leadership and Management in Cambodia: National Culture and Its Impacts on Leading Educational Changes', *Journal of International Cooperation Studies*, vol. 13, no. 3, February 2006, pp. 111-142; Ayres, Davis, 'Tradition, Modernity, and the Development of Education in Cambodia', *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 44, no. 4, November 2002, pp. 440-463; Kim, Chae-Young, 'Child Labour, Education Policy and Governance in Cambodia', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 31, no. 5, September 2011, pp. 496-504.

4. Research objectives

This research study is guided by four overarching questions:



By answering these questions, the overall objective of this research is to generate qualitative baseline knowledge of Islamic schools (with a particular interest in Cham students), Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools. Given the pivot in the UNICEF education programme strategy, research was gathered to better understand the key challenges that each type of school faces, and what ways the quality and inclusiveness of education could be improved. Through the establishment of this baseline knowledge, UNICEF aims to further inform current programming efforts and identify future programming opportunities.

⁵³ United Nations Children's Fund, *Defining Quality in Education*, UNICEF, New York, June 2000, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

5. Methodology

Research methods

This research study was divided into three phases: a desk review, data collection and analysis, and report drafting. The desk review included a literature review of existing academic and journalistic resources on Islamic schools, Cham Muslim students, Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools. Information sources comprised academic journal reports; journalistic articles; pamphlets, documents and reports from in-country organizations and partners; and literature obtained from schools during site visits. Further information was collected through in-country consultations with partner organizations and local NGOs, RGC officials and other United Nations staff. The data collection phase included field visits to relevant schools, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Field visits were concentrated in four provinces based on factors which are discussed in the Sampling Strategy section. Following the field visits, the qualitative data was coded and analysed according to commonly occurring themes. The final phase was the report drafting and completion of findings, which included presentations to fellow UNICEF staff members, the Education Sector Working Group and other Cambodia-based development partners for feedback and potential programme strategy incorporation of findings.

Sampling strategy

Convenience sampling was the strategy employed for this study. As the UNICEF education section has previously only provided support to floating schools, and not engaged with Islamic or Buddhist monastic schools, whether at the school, district, provincial ministry or national ministry levels, this study could not leverage previously established relationships. Most of the selected schools were referred by external advisors and/or interviewees. The research team aimed to sample three schools from each category. While Buddhist monastic schools are located in every province across Cambodia, floating schools and Islamic schools are relatively concentrated in specific provinces. Floating schools surround the Tonlé Sap in Pursat, Battambang, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang provinces. Islamic schools are most populous in areas where there are a large number of Cham residents. Nearly 40 per cent of the Cambodian Cham community lives in Kampong Cham province, with the remaining Cham population in Kampong Cham, Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kratie, Kampong Chhnang and Battambang provinces, which are ordered by population from largest to smallest, respectively.

Relevant stakeholder consultations

To represent multiple perspectives, the research team aimed to gather information from a number of relevant stakeholders. RGC officials, local NGOs, partner organizations, fellow United Nations staff, subject-matter experts, researchers, school directors, teachers and students were all included in these consultations. While the research team intended to consult with as many stakeholders as possible, some individuals may have been unintentionally overlooked. Appendix 1 has a more detailed outline of interviews.

To guide discussions, the research team developed a set of interview questions in advance of the data collection phase. For each interview, questions were drawn from the set relevant to the interviewee, school or institution. Where possible, questions were shared with interviewees in advance. All interviews were semi-structured, and interview guidelines were not strictly followed. The research team felt it was important to allow flexibility based on participants' comfort level, and to allow participants to guide the discussion based on their interests/priorities. While this approach did not always enable the research team to discuss every intended topic, the majority of participants were eager to share their experiences and frequently covered material outside the predetermined questions. The team felt it was important to organically forge relationships with stakeholders that would withstand the lifespan of the research. See Annex 2 for individual interview guides.

Review process

After each interview, the research team reviewed and analysed their notes, and coded the data according to common primary themes and sub-themes for each type of school. The frequency of each theme was counted to ascertain how often it arose in all interviews. The coding process, in combination with personal reflections and research group discussions, led to the interview findings and common research themes. Common research themes are elaborated on in the subsequent sections of this report. Numerous themes emerged from the coded qualitative data, however the research team needed to limit the discussion to themes that occurred most frequently.

Limitations of the research



Time and resource constraints

Time, personnel and resource constraints were all factors in completing the literature review, conducting the research and writing the report. The full project implementation timeline was three months and the research team comprised three people—one national and two international researchers. They worked across multiple time zones, which made collaboration and turnaround times more challenging. Due to the short implementation time and research team capacity, this study had a limited sample size from which to draw findings and conclusions. The study would have benefited from a mixed-methods research design, namely the inclusion of more quantitative data.



Statistics

The most notable constraint to this body of work was the dearth of qualitative and quantitative information available about these three school communities. Much of the statistical information that exists about these communities differs across data sources. Obtaining current information was difficult, as there is a significant lag time between data collection and public dissemination. In some cases, the most recent statistical figures were not available on MoEYS or MoCR websites until they were years out of date. Often, the research team had to rely on personal connections and acquaintances with internal employees to obtain current information.



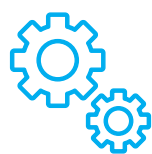
Limited knowledge

Given the limited information around the three types of school communities, an additional challenge was the small pool of literature from which to draw. While the scholarly research used for this literature review was rich, it is important to recognize that much of the scholarly work was produced by a small number of researchers. With such a limited pool of information sources, this literature review may only reflect a few perspectives and/or research interests, which in turn limits the robustness of the knowledge. Of the research that does exist, most work is several years old and the findings may be out of date. This provides further rationale for continued research on Islamic schools, Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools in Cambodia.



Cultural nuances

All interview responses were received on the assumption that interviewees expressed their true opinions. The research team had to bear in mind that Buddhist culture prevents many from sharing negative experiences and/or opinions. Additionally, some Cham Muslim communities remain relatively private and insular. This limited the team's access to more conservative Cham communities and only exposed the team to those Cham communities that are relatively open to accepting foreigners, interviewers and observers.



Generalizability

Many of the research team's school visits were concentrated in a few provinces. Most interviews conducted at Buddhist monastic schools took place in Kampong Cham province, which is considered a model province for other Buddhist monastic schools across Cambodia.⁵⁵ Often new policies and/or initiatives are piloted in Kampong Cham and, if successful, subsequently implemented in other provinces. With most of the research team's findings garnered from one province, and the qualitative data not being substantiated by quantitative data, the team could not generalize about Buddhist monastic schools at the national level. Much of the Islamic school site visits took place in Phnom Penh, which typically has schools with the most progressive leadership. Floating schools are geographically limited by nature to the regions around the Tonlé Sap, allowing the study to be relatively more representative of these communities. However, even within floating schools there exists a variety of school situations and experiences. This study should be considered exploratory and not regarded as a comprehensive picture of Cambodian Buddhist monastic, Islamic or floating schools.

⁵⁵ Many interviewees commented that the Buddhist monastic education in Kampong Cham province is more progressive and is of better quality than other provinces in Cambodia. When Buddhist monastic classes and schools in the surrounding provinces gradually closed, the operation of Buddhist monastic schools in Kampong Cham province remained steady, despite also experiencing many challenges. This claim was reaffirmed by the Kampong Cham provincial chief of cults and religions. According to the provincial chief, any new programmes related to Buddhist monastic education would be trialed in Kampong Cham province first.



Language barriers

While the team could rely on the national researcher for Khmer language, it is possible that some contextual information was lost through translation. Body language, voice inflections and other cultural nuances could also have gone undetected. All the scholarly research used to inform this literature review was written and published in English, which highlights the issue of language barriers during data collection. While not questioning the validity of the research, it is important to note this possibility and the cascading effects. Furthermore, researchers in this study were not able to draw on research published in languages other than English by academics that may have offered new insights.



Triangulation

The researchers intended to interview school directors, teachers and students at each school visited, however this was not always feasible. Interviews took significantly longer than expected due to translation time, and in some cases participants' enthusiasm made responses quite lengthy. As a result, time constraints limited the research team's ability to interview participants beyond the school director.

6. Key school characteristics



ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

Islamic education was devastated during the Khmer Rouge period, with nearly every school ceasing operations and Islamic intellectuals, including Cham, being executed. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, the remaining few Islam-educated individuals felt the weight of responsibility and conviction to rebuild Islamic education in Cambodia. In 1998, efforts to rebuild Islamic education began in earnest. Despite relatively slow growth, there are more than 700 learning centres across Cambodia today. Unlike traditional schools, the physical structures of Islamic schools vary widely, ranging from one classroom in a small home to a classroom constructed next to a mosque, to a formal school compound.

Islamic schools represent one school system in which the lines between public and private education are blurred. Islamic schools are primarily financed by private sources, such as the Saudi Arabian government, the Malaysian government, private family foundations and the local community. As a result, funding can be completely unreliable and irregular. However, in 2015, MoEYS allocated 1,500 teaching positions with civil service status to the Islamic education school system. Of those, currently 1,391 Islamic school teachers hold that title and receive their salaries from the RGC. Recruitment of the 1,391 Islamic school teachers to become civil service teachers was done by MoEYS, in collaboration with the Highest Council for Islamic Religious Affairs in Cambodia (referred to as Mufti), which has a leadership team appointed by the RGC. Mufti is also in charge of training both Islamic teachers and school directors. At the time of writing, Mufti was recruiting another 109 Islamic teachers to meet the quota of 1,500 teachers. According to Mufti, those newly recruited 109 Islamic teachers will be deployed to remote areas or recently established schools with insufficient teachers.

Islamic schools are not overseen or monitored by one centralized management system. Some schools fall under the jurisdiction of Mufti. These schools are more unified and therefore easier to describe, as they employ the same curriculum and are overseen by the same institution. To better administer the school within the system, Mufti appointed provincial and district imams to supervise education affairs. This is similar to the MoEYS system of provincial and district offices of education. Other more informal Islamic schools, such as those operating out of community homes, employ either contract teachers or community/volunteer teachers who receive their salaries through private donations. These schools are more difficult to describe, as they are context-specific and operate entirely at the discretion of the community member(s) leading them. In addition to Mufti, the Department of Religious Affairs within MoCR oversees all religious matters, except Buddhist-related matters, which fall under a separate department solely designated for Buddhist affairs. MoCR supervises imam teaching, mosque management and Friday education in the mosque, among other Muslim-related activities.

In terms of curriculum, the schools that fall under Mufti's jurisdiction employ a curriculum imported from Malaysia. Before disseminating the curriculum, Mufti contextualizes the content to better match local need. Schools that operate independently offer subjects ranging from teaching directly from the Quran to curricula imported from Egypt, Saudi Arabia or other Islamic countries. Cambodian Islamic education centres around religious-based studies. Typically, subjects include Quranic teachings, Aqidah (morality), Fiqh (prayer preparation), Islamic history and Arabic. Some schools also include English and Malay language courses. The language of instruction can range from Khmer to Cham, Arabic and Malay, depending on the student body and subject matter.

Mufti also administers primary and secondary level exit exams at its headquarters in Phnom Penh. Primary school exams have been administered for the last 10 years, while secondary school exams have only been administered in the last two years. Despite students from across Cambodia having to travel to Phnom Penh to sit an exam, at their own cost, registration has increased with each passing year. This is a result of a memorandum of understanding between the Malaysian Ministry of Education and MoCR, which recognizes the Cambodian completion certificate as equivalent to the Malaysian completion certificate. However, certificates received in Cambodia do not include an official Cambodian MoEYS stamp. This means they are not accepted by Cambodian higher education institutions.

Most Islamic schools work in tandem with the public-school system by offering morning or afternoon sessions, which enables students to attend both types of schools. Despite the heavy workload, many students do manage to attend both. While the Islamic community in Cambodia recognizes the importance of STEM skill development, it equally values the social capital gained from Islamic education. Through the networks cultivated in Islamic schools, anecdotally every source that the research team spoke with asserted that most students continue to higher education and/or pursue work opportunities abroad in Muslim-majority countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia or Malaysia.



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Popram primary school after the morning shift, Kampong Cham province



BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

Although Buddhist monastic education is the oldest form of education in Cambodia, it was severely damaged during the Khmer Rouge regime. In 1970 there were 3,369 pagodas throughout the kingdom and 65,092 monks. After the fall of Khmer Rouge regime, the number of pagodas fell to 1,821 with only 2,311 monks remaining. Since then, Buddhism has grown again, and there are currently 4,932 pagodas and 68,954 monks. In terms of education levels offered, the Buddhist monastic education system and the public education system operate similarly, with three stages of education: primary, secondary and higher. However, in contrast to six years of general primary education in the state school system, there are only three years of primary education in Buddhist monastic schools. Fourth, fifth and sixth grades of public primary school are equivalent to first, second and third grades of Buddhist primary education, respectively. For secondary and higher education, the levels in each system are equal.

Buddhist monastic schools are located in the pagoda compound, however not all pagodas have a school. Some pagodas have only one or two classes, and offer only first, second or third grades. The grades offered mostly depend on the number of novice monks enrolled and the human and financial resources available at those pagodas. As classes that constitute a complete set of grades are provided in different pagodas located close to each other, MoCR uses a 'classroom cluster system' by grouping those classes together to become one 'primary school'. Based on anecdotal evidence shared with the research team, the cluster mechanism is operated only at the primary level. The purpose of this mechanism is quite similar to the school cluster system implemented by



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Student monks of Hanchey Pagoda return from collecting their daily alms, Kampong Cham province

MoEYS in its public primary schools, which is implemented to manage and leverage limited technical support. The only difference between the two systems is that MoCR groups 'classrooms' together while MoEYS groups 'schools' together.

A school's management team mostly comprises members of the pagoda management committee. Directors of Buddhist monastic schools are usually the pagoda chiefs, and in some cases the school directors is also a teacher. Teachers are classified into three categories: civil service, contract and community/volunteer. Civil service teachers are those who pass the MoCR entrance exam. They then receive one year pre-service pedagogy training in Phnom Penh, and they are paid by MoCR. They teach subjects related to religion. Contract teachers are mostly recruited to teach general MoEYS curriculum subjects, but frequently also teach religious subjects. Contract teachers are paid 5,500 Cambodian riel (\$1.34) per hour from MoCR. Community/volunteer teachers are recruited to fill gaps when the number of civil service and contract teachers does not meet the school's needs. The financial remuneration of the community/volunteer teachers is the responsibility of each school. Until recently, monks were not permitted to become teachers of Buddhist monastic schools for religious reasons. However, to alleviate the teacher shortage over recent years, monks are now able to teach without having to leave the monkhood.

Buddhist primary and secondary schools use a religious-related curriculum provided by MoCR, and a general academic curriculum provided by MoEYS. In addition to Buddhist subjects, such as the Pali language, Sanskrit, Buddhist Vinaya, Buddhism and Life of Buddha, students are required to learn subjects such as Khmer Literature, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Biology, Moral Civics, Physics, Chemistry and English.⁵⁶ A typical school day has two shifts: morning classes from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and afternoon classes from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. In between the two school shifts, novice monks must collect alms from the nearby community to support their subsistence and studies.⁵⁷ Buddhist monastic schools provide a holistic approach to learning; in addition to religious and general academic studies, students also learn life skills such as meditation, carpentry and boat carving.

Students do not have to join the monkhood to attend Buddhist monastic schools. Lay people who are too young to join the monkhood, or those who have already left the monkhood but desire to continue their studies, may still attend Buddhist monastic schools. Concessions are made to accommodate the many orphans left at pagodas, and the many students who cannot afford to attend public school. Regardless of these concessions, most Buddhist primary and secondary school students are monks. Although no religious rule or regulation explicitly states that female students are prohibited from attending Buddhist monastic schools, female student enrolment in Buddhist primary and secondary schools is extremely rare. This is a result of traditional Cambodian practices and beliefs.

⁵⁶ Vinaya is a Pali and Sanskrit term meaning 'a code of monastic disciplinary rules in Buddhism'.

⁵⁷ Almsgiving is a daily ritual for many Cambodian Buddhists. Early in the morning, monks leave the pagoda with their alms bowls and walk silently through the villages to gather alms. Along the streets, lay people wait patiently for them. Lay people take off their shoes and kneel down when placing their offerings such as food, flowers and money into the bowls. Monks are not allowed to beg or ask for any offerings, as lay people have to give alms voluntarily. Cambodian Buddhists give alms for a number of reasons, including honoring deceased loved ones and supporting monks' study and living.



FLOATING SCHOOLS

While there are many water-based communities in Cambodia that endure annual periods of flooding, for the purposes of this study the researchers focused on schools that are floating year-round. There are 34 such schools across five provinces, overseen by MoEYS in the Tonlé Sap River complex.⁵⁸ They are all primary schools and each varies in the number of students and classes offered. Due to capacity constraints, most schools have multi-age classrooms. From the schools included in the sample, each employed between one and four civil service teachers supplemented by contract and/or community teachers. Every civil service teacher comes from the mainland, either relocating to the floating community or commuting daily. Civil service teachers are incentivized by MoEYS, with an additional \$20 per month top up for teaching in remote schools. However, the top up does not cover all expenses associated with commuting to floating schools. For example, the cost of one commuter boat trip exceeds the top up incentive. All teachers from the mainland who the research team spoke with often have no choice but to sleep in a hammock at the school.



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Students rowing home from school in a floating community, Pursat province

⁵⁸ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Public Education Statistics and Indicators 2017–2018, p.9.



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Student recess at Cholsa floating primary school in Pursat province

Weather conditions create additional challenges that are unique to floating schools. Often, strong winds and storms move floating school structures, occasionally resulting in collisions with neighbouring floating homes, health centres or other community structures. School staff shared anecdotes of collisions causing disputes between neighbouring communities. Overall, flooding threatens the entire structural integrity of floating schools. During the dry season, schools need to be moved frequently to adjust to the changing water levels in the river complex. In some cases, these location adjustments happen many times per day.

Floating schools are in remote locations that can only be accessed by boat. Communities rely on fishing for their livelihoods. The Tonlé Sap's declining fish stock poses an additional challenge imminently threatening the future of these communities. The majority of families only have one boat, which is primarily used for fishing. Thus, students find it difficult to get to school every day, and schools do not typically have the resources to purchase a boat for student transport or general school use. Some of the youngest students, as well as the teachers who all come from the mainland, are not able to swim, and face the constant threat of drowning. These challenges, as well as others to be discussed in the qualitative data section, mean that school attendance is low and inconsistent.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices in water-based communities are a significant challenge. Floating villages have no optimal method for disposing of garbage, which accumulates in the water directly surrounding school structures. Communities either use bottled water brought from the mainland, which is very expensive, or boil rainwater for drinking. General cleaning and washing (plates, clothes, bathing) occurs in the river and it is unclear how many people have access



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A student passing a house next to his school, Pursat province

to soap or detergent. Some have a floating latrine system that is an open-faced container attached to a plastic pipe, but once the system is full it is unclear where the waste goes. Others practice open defecation in the river. There have been a number of initiatives by international NGOs to implement floating latrines in water-based communities, however the researchers are unclear about how many floating schools have incorporated these treatment systems.

Gender

This research primarily focused on learning more about education service delivery within each school type. However, the research yielded relevant and important qualitative findings on how gender shapes and impacts the educational choices and experiences of students in each school type.



Islamic schools

Prior to 2008, Muslim female students and staff in state schools were not allowed to wear a hijab. This was a barrier for many to attend state schools. After many years of lobbying and protesting by the Muslim community, MoEYS enacted new legislation permitting the hijab in all schools. Although this enabled more Muslim female students to attend state schools, there continues to be other gender-based reasons that influence a family's decision not to send their child (especially girls) to state schools. State schools are co-educational institutions where boys and girls sit next to each other in the classroom, which goes against the religious beliefs of some Muslim families. As a result, some parents prefer to send their children to Islamic schools where gendered religious values, such as gender-segregated seating, are upheld.

Of the schools visited, the ratio of female to male teachers/staff and female to male students varied. Some schools were male dominated, while others were female dominated. The researchers were not able to collect or source current quantitative data disaggregated by gender, making it difficult to gauge exact percentages of males and females across each school. In some interviews, school directors said more female students graduate due to the common practice of boys dropping out to work and financially contribute to the livelihoods of their families. Drug abuse also played a role in boys dropping out.



Buddhist monastic schools

Buddhist monastic school students and teachers are all male. While there is no formal rule preventing girls from entering, in practice girls do not join these institutions. Some Buddhist monastic schools offer community day care, where girls and boys from the community attend together, but this is not part of the formal education programme. While there was a mix of female and male students at Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University in Battambang, at the primary and secondary levels female students were visibly absent.








Floating schools






All floating school classrooms included in the sample were mixed-gender. However, as students progressed to higher primary school levels, particularly grades 4, 5 and 6, there were fewer boys. The research team discovered that this was because families in floating communities consider that children aged 6 years are old enough to join the family fishing business. As children get older, the economic contributions from fishing are deemed more valuable than the amount of time spent in the classroom.

7. School profile – quantitative data






BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

 School name	 Total students	 Total teachers	 Grades offered	 Subjects offered / Degree programmes
Buddhist Primary Cluster School at Wat Thmey	Unknown	5	Grade 1	<u>Religious subjects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pali • Buddhism • Buddha biography <u>Academic subjects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khmer literature • English • Geography • History
Samdach Chunath Buddhist High School	446	44 (15 of whom are contract teachers)	Grade 7–12	<u>Religious subjects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pali • Sanskrit • Buddhist Vinaya • Buddhism • Buddha biography <u>Academic subjects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khmer literature • Mathematics • Chemistry • Geography • History • Civic education and morality






BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

 School name	 Total students	 Total teachers	 Grades offered	 Subjects offered / Degree programmes
Hanchey Buddhist Primary School	100	8 (5 of whom are monks)	Grade 1–3	<u>Religious subjects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pali • Buddhist Vinaya • Buddhism • Buddha biography <u>Academic subjects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khmer literature • Mathematics • Science • Social studies (Geography and History)
Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University	282 (134 female; 148 male)	48 professors	University level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law • Khmer literature • English literature • General studies • Education management

FLOATING SCHOOLS

 School name	 Total students	 Total teachers	 Grades offered	 Subjects offered / Degree programmes
Cholsa Primary School	322 (141 female; 181 male)	5 (3 female; 2 male)	Grade 1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khmer language • Mathematics • Science • Social studies
Anlong Reang Primary School	63 (29 female; 34 male)	4	Grades 2, 4, 5 and 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khmer language • Mathematics • Science • Social studies
Oakal Primary School	116 (61 female; 55 male)	3 (all male)	Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khmer language • Mathematics • Science • Social studies

ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

 School name	 Total students	 Total teachers	 Grades offered	 Subjects offered / Degree programmes
Da Lol I-San Islamic School	24	1 (male)	Preschool; Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quran • Aqidah (morality) • Arabic • Islamic etiquette
Al Ha Ro Mai Islamic School	282	11 (4 female; 7 male)	K–Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quran • Aqidah (morality) • Fiqh (prayer preparation) • Islamic history • Arabic
Madrasah An Nikmah Al Islamiah Cambodia	300 (200 female; 100 male)	29 (7 female; 22 male)	K–Grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morality • Grammar • Essay • Muhammad speech • Arabic • Reciting Quran • Quran interpretation • Islamic disciplines • Malay • P.E.

8. School profiles – qualitative data

The research team did two field visits to interview stakeholders and tour schools. The first visit was to Kampong Cham province and the second to Battambang and Pursat provinces. The remaining schools and interviews were conducted in Phnom Penh, where the research team was based. In total, the research team visited three Islamic schools, one Cham majority state school, five Buddhist monastic schools, one Buddhist university and three floating schools. The map in Figure 1 shows the four provinces where research was conducted. The subsequent passages reflect the qualitative data compiled through these meetings. It is important to recognize where all three school systems are situated within Cambodia's unique historical context. All education systems, and many educated professionals, were eliminated during the Khmer Rouge period, and Khmer, Cham and other ethnic groups were targeted victims of the regime. As a result, all three school systems were destroyed. After 1979, the surviving Buddhist and Muslim intellectuals began to incrementally rebuild their respective school systems through community efforts. The state school system was a national effort undertaken by the RGC. Thus, each system is relatively new compared to other countries in the region.

Figure 1: Map of Cambodia indicating the provinces where field research was conducted





ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

While this study initially focused on the Cham community, only extrapolating Cham from the larger Islamic community proved difficult for a number of reasons. The research team initially encountered challenges in connecting with the Cham community. One Cham school declined the research team's request to visit citing an apprehension of foreign visitors. While the research team cannot confidently attribute this response to one specific reason, much of the background literature claims that the Cham community remains relatively insular. Within the first few interviews, the research team became aware of challenges with education access and quality that affect the broader Islamic community rather than only the Cham community. Given the preliminary goals of this research (investigating the state of quality and inclusive education for all Cambodian children), the research team felt it was important to expand the focus to include Islamic schools more broadly. As a result, the research team visited a range of Islamic schools from which the qualitative data is drawn. Four Islamic schools were visited: 1) a well-resourced primary state school with a 70 per cent Cham student body (public) in Kampong Cham; 2) a well-resourced Islamic primary school (private) in Phnom Penh; 3) a well-resourced Islamic primary school (private) in Battambang town; and 4) a severely under-resourced Islamic kindergarten and Grade 1 school (private) in Battambang province.

The qualitative data confirms that Islamic schools are not a monolithic entity. There are a variety of ways Islamic schools are administered, offering different curricula and serving diverse Muslim communities across Cambodia. With the exception of the Cham-majority state school included in the sample, each of the schools are overseen by Mufti and use an adapted version of the Malaysian curriculum. All the schools included in the research team's sample were referred by Mufti, and thus were schools under their jurisdiction. Background research asserts that many other Islamic community schools or schools within mosques exist in Cambodia. This is because individuals can and do establish Islamic education classes and/or schools within mosques, allowing full discretion to dictate teaching and operations. The research team did not have access to such schools.

While all schools and individuals the research team spoke with emphasized the split schedule that many Islamic schools offer in order to enable students to attend both state and Islamic schools, a discrepancy emerged when discussing this facet with Islamic school teachers. When reflecting on their own education journey, every Islamic school teacher the research team met recalled struggling with the number of subjects, amount of school work and the ability to perform well when they attended both state and Islamic school. Several teachers acknowledged that they ultimately had to choose one or the other when the heavy workload began to affect the quality of their learning. Every teacher consulted ultimately chose to only attend Islamic school, citing the social capital procured through participating in the Islamic school system as being more valuable for their futures. A separate discussion with the Kampong Cham MoEYS provincial director confirmed these anecdotal experiences by expressing concerns around what the proliferation of Islamic schools in Cambodia might mean for state school enrolment.

Teacher training in Islamic schools emerged as a common theme in the qualitative data from all Islamic schools visited. Even though to date 1,391 teachers with civil service status work in Islamic schools and receive their salaries from MoEYS, those teachers do not receive the same training as other civil service teachers working in public schools. To fill the gap, Mufti formalized a four-day pedagogy workshop, however this training takes place at Mufti's headquarters in Phnom Penh and requires attendees to fund their own participation, travel and accommodation.

Limited teacher qualifications are a further challenge to the teaching quality of Islamic civil service teachers. All current Islamic teachers in Cambodia either survived the Khmer Rouge period or the years immediately following, when well-organized Islamic education was not available to them. Thus, access to more established and formalized Islamic education is only a recent development, and as a result many Islamic teachers have limited education themselves. Additionally, there does not appear to be a systematic approach to teacher recruitment. At the local level, teachers are appointed by the Hakem based on their studies abroad and/or expertise. Those teachers typically teach from personal experience and not necessarily from formal training. In larger, more established schools, civil service teachers are also appointed, but are required to have a certificate from abroad.

As previously discussed, multiple ministries, in addition to the numerous private actors involved in Islamic education, create disunity in service delivery. The research team experienced difficulties grasping all the moving parts involved in the unique context of Islamic education. Discussions with Mufti illuminated the ways in which this posed a challenge to the quality of education at the local level. Once funnelled through ministry channels, new policies take an exorbitant length of time to be implemented at the local level and potency diminishes as a result.

Table 2: Differences between pre-service pedagogical training provided by MoEYS and MoCR

Pre-service pedagogical training provided by MoEYS	Pre-service pedagogical training provided by MoCR
<p>Before civil service teachers begin work in public schools, they are required to attend pre-service pedagogical training administered by MoEYS. The training duration is based on the grade level the teacher teaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-school teacher students receive two years training at a pre-school teacher training centre in Phnom Penh (12+2)⁶⁰ • Primary teacher students receive two years training at a provincial teacher training college (12+2) • Lower secondary teacher students receive two years training at a regional teacher training centre (12+2) • Upper secondary teacher students receive two years training at the National Institute of Education (Bachelor+1) <p>Except for upper secondary teacher students, who are required to hold a bachelor degree, teacher students at pre-school, primary and lower secondary need to graduate from high school.</p>	<p>Before civil service teachers begin work in Buddhist monastic schools, they are required to attend pre-service pedagogical training administered by MoCR. This takes place at the General Inspectorate for National Buddhist Education of Cambodia, situated within MoCR in Phnom Penh. The training duration is one year for all grade levels. On completing the training, the civil service teacher students are deployed to Buddhist monastic schools to teach religious curriculum subjects.</p>

⁶⁰ 12 refers to 12 years of schooling and 2 refers to an additional two years at college.



BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

Qualitative data reveals that the current Buddhist monastic education system faces many challenges despite being the oldest form of schooling and playing an important role in human resource development. These challenges range from a lack of basic physical infrastructure, a shortage of skilled teachers, insufficient teaching and learning materials, inexperienced school management, unreliable funding for school operations and limited collaboration between relevant ministries.

The establishment, operation and sustainability of a Buddhist monastic school depends heavily on the pagoda management committee. With no link to MoEYS, MoCR solely supports Buddhist monastic schools with salaries for their civil service and contract teachers, and some teaching materials (mainly curriculum documents). However, operational costs and other expenses are the responsibility of the pagoda management committee. To cover these expenses, the pagoda management committee tries to mobilize financial and human resources from local communities, students' families and other donors. Due to unreliable and limited financial resources, some pagodas are not able to finance their school for more than a few years before being forced to close.

School directors are often also the serving pagoda chiefs. They have religious knowledge and wisdom but can lack the necessary leadership skills to manage both teaching and non-teaching staff to implement the curriculum and facilitate teaching, assessment and student learning outcomes. To date, MoCR has not provided any training for Buddhist monastic school management teams, citing budget constraints. One interviewee described the 'survival' of a Buddhist monastic school as being at the mercy of 'fate'. The absence of systematic financial and technical support is a major challenge to the sustainability of Buddhist monastic schools.



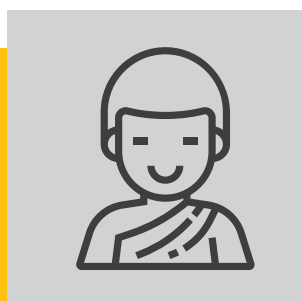
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A Buddhist monastic classroom in Wat Thmey, Kampong Cham province

The majority of Buddhist monastic civil service teachers that the research team interviewed discussed their limited ability to provide quality education to their students. Previously, pre-service pedagogical training was too short, ranging from three to six months, and the content was very basic, lacking detailed technical and implementation strategies. It was not until 2016 that the MoCR pedagogical training was extended to one year. Fewer than half of contract teachers and community/volunteer teachers receive any formal pre-service pedagogical training prior to entering the classroom.

Recognizing that there was a lack of in-service teacher training, MoCR implemented a five-day training workshop for Buddhist monastic civil service teachers, similar to professional development. The first workshop, in July 2018, aimed to provide trainees with the teaching methodologies of Pali language, Buddhist Vinaya, Khmer literature and Mathematics. Of the 195 civil servant Buddhist monastic primary school teachers in Cambodia, only 90 have received this training. While offering such training is a positive development, there were shortcomings. For example, the training was held in Phnom Penh, and even though it was free of charge, trainees had to fund their participation. With the exception of snacks during the day, trainees funded their travel from provinces around the country, accommodation and meals. They did not receive any daily subsistence allowance. Feedback revealed that the five-day training was too short and only covered introductory information that was not detailed enough to meet teachers' needs. Trainees suggested that MoCR incorporate not only Khmer literature and Mathematics, but also the MoEYS primary subjects into future training agendas. Trainees also recommended that future trainings be held during school breaks and that contract teachers be included.

Three of the five school directors interviewed expressed growing concern over teacher recruitment for religious subjects and general academic subjects. The limited budget of MoCR restricts it from producing and deploying more civil service teachers to meet demand. There is an increasing number of private general education schools in Cambodia that are willing to pay teachers significantly more to teach general education subjects than Buddhist monastic school religious subjects. Thus, Buddhist monastic schools are experiencing a shortage of both religious subject teachers and general academic subject teachers, causing schools to hire community/volunteer teachers with few qualifications, and who will likely never receive any pedagogical training. In some case, schools do not even have a budget to recruit community/volunteer teachers.



// I hope to further my studies at the Buddhist monastic university here (in Kampong Cham) if I pass the high school exam. I want to have higher education because I want to get a good job...you know when I eventually leave the monkhood. People said to me that once your parents were farmer, you will be a farmer as well. I don't believe that. //

- Monk student, Grade 12



// The reason that I joined the monkhood is because my parents are too poor to support me continuing my study at upper secondary school. The only option that I have is to become a monk and get free education at Buddhist monastic school. //

- Monk student, Grade 9

Another challenge that Buddhist monastic schools face is the limited number of teaching and learning materials available to them. Buddhist monastic schools are responsible for buying their own textbooks, teacher guide books and other teaching materials related to the MoEYS curriculum. Not all Buddhist monastic schools have sufficient budget to cover these expenses, which means that teachers resort to using their own money to purchase materials to meet the needs of their students. Currently, the MoCR civil service primary teachers are paid \$202 per month, lower secondary teachers receive \$222 and upper secondary teachers receive \$242.⁶¹ As salaries rarely cover a teacher's living expenses, purchasing additional learning materials is an enormous sacrifice for them.

Multi-age classes are common in the Buddhist monastic schools the research team visited, with the age difference among students being as much as 10 years. Regardless of the student's age when entering the Buddhist monastic education system, students must start in first grade. This becomes a challenge when a 19-year-old student who has already completed tenth grade in the public education system later joins the monkhood to attend Buddhist monastic school and must start from first grade. That student would be in a class with much younger students and would need to re-learn fourth grade general academic subjects because fourth grade general academic subjects are taught in the Buddhist monastic first grade classes. Not only is this design a challenge for Buddhist monastic school students, it is also a challenge for teachers tasked with managing multi-age and mixed-ability classes.

The idle collaboration between MoEYS and MoCR has negative effects on the overall operations of Buddhist monastic schools. In theory, MoEYS is required to support MoCR with teacher recruitment for academic subjects, as well as with the distribution of textbooks to students in Buddhist monastic schools. However, based on the experiences of school directors and teachers, this is not the case, as all Buddhist monastic schools visited cited the lack of textbooks and the teacher shortage as on-going challenges.

Many interviewees raised concerns about the general perceptions of Buddhist monastic education. Despite being the oldest form of schooling in Cambodia, it is generally undervalued. The public misunderstands Buddhist monastic education as being merely the memorization of the Dharma for chanting in Buddhist ceremonies and nothing more. However, Buddhist monastic education provides a more holistic approach to learning. This misconception impedes students from enrolling in Buddhist monastic schools. Those who do graduate face enormous challenges finding jobs, as many employers subscribe to these misconceptions.

⁶¹ Sub-decree on Buddhist monastic teachers and officials working at the National Buddhist Monastic Education General Secretariat.



FLOATING SCHOOLS

The research team visited three floating schools, which highlighted the magnitude of the vulnerability floating schools and their communities experience. Due to geography and climate, floating school students face stark challenges to access and sustainability. School structures are commonly a building made from durable wood and/or bamboo that float with the help of tanks, such as cement jugs or plastic buoys held together by rope and bundles of bamboo. Schools with more than one classroom are tied together with rope. Every year, schools require new building materials to reinforce their structure(s), which can cost upwards of \$500 every few years.

These expenses are financed by the school operating budget and/or community donations. Currently, bamboo costs \$2.50 per stem, and schools require between 160 and 170 stems per classroom every other year. Floatation tanks cost \$25 per tank, and schools require 25 floatation tanks per classroom every other year. There are also fuel costs associated with using boats to reposition the school buildings according to changing water levels. Some floating schools are just three or four boats roped together with a tarpaulin or roofing made of other scrap materials. These structures are vulnerable to changing water currents and strong winds. Unsurprisingly, floating schools are vulnerable to flooding. Teachers and students are regularly recruited to purge water with buckets as it floods into the school structure, and place school books on rafters to prevent them from being damaged.

// They are my students and I love them! I don't want to leave them. It is not easy coming to teach here (floating school) because I live at the nearby mainland village...I have to commute a long distance everyday...and I don't know how to swim. The lack of proper toilet and insufficient clean water is another challenge for me as a female teacher. Oh...another challenge is I and my students have to shovel water out of the classroom every day because it is leaking. But if you asked me whether I want to teach in another school, I don't, because I love my students. //



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Grade 2 and 5 teacher, Cholsa primary school, Krako district, Pursat province.



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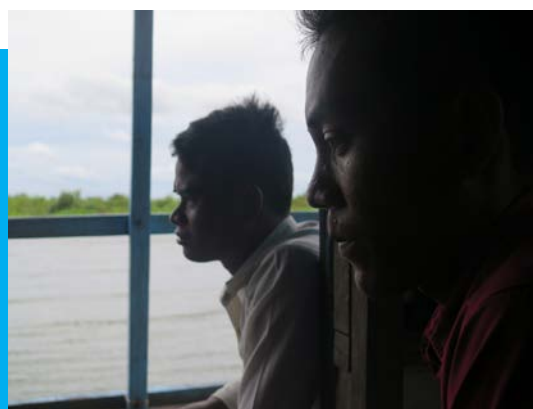
A student rows back home after his class in Pursat province.

Students need access to a boat to get to school, and many students as young as 6 years old row themselves to school. This poses risks to students who cannot swim or those who have bad eyesight. One school mentioned a recent incident where a young student was rowing herself and her classmates when the boat accidentally hit a yellow jacket's⁶² nest. Tragically, the youngest student died as a result of numerous wasp stings. During the fishing season, students typically come to school between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. They ask to leave by 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. and spend the rest of the afternoon and all night fishing on their family's boat or on larger boats owned by other people in the community. This schedule is demanding and exhausting for a child, but students have demonstrated incredible will to continue attending school.

Another significant challenge is that some floating school communities are multi-ethnic. Families of Khmer, Cham and Vietnamese

descent all live in floating communities. Some families of Vietnamese descent do not speak Khmer, posing a major barrier for them in attending floating schools. Civil service teachers, who are from the mainland, do not typically speak Vietnamese and therefore teachers and students are limited in their ability to communicate with each other. As a result, student motivation wanes, often leading to drop out. Some Vietnamese-descendant students enrol in school only to learn basic Khmer and then drop out to work in the fishing industry with their families.

I am not from here and my family is living in a different commune. It is impossible for me to commute from my house to the school every day. So I am staying here (in the school). Um...did you see a room at back of the school when you were walking here? It is not much. Just a hammock and some of my clothes. //



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Contract teacher, Ou Akol primary school, Pursat province

⁶² Also known as wasps.



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Grade 1 students studying with their teacher (also the school director and Grade 3 teacher).

Despite the desire for an education, most students do not continue after the primary years. As there are no floating secondary schools, students must commute to the mainland by boat and then cycle or walk to the nearest secondary school if they want to continue their education. They need to find a place to live on the mainland, or commute daily. Living on the mainland is expensive, as is the cost of transport for commuting. Anecdotal evidence collected by the research team suggests that the existing MoEYS primary scholarships are not enough to overcome these financial barriers. Of the three floating schools visited, one only received 22 student scholarships for 322 students. Traveling to the mainland requires students to commute alone, which can be dangerous. This causes concern for parents.

Another factor that influences the low transition rate from primary to secondary school is opportunity cost. Many students need to work and contribute financially to their family. Typically, students begin working in the fishing industry at age 6. In water-based communities, there is a social hierarchy determined by wealth. Students from relatively lower-income families either work on the family boat or are hired to work on bigger boats in their communities for a wage. Even though the fishing harvest on the Tonlé Sap Lake continues to decline, most students go on to become fisher people, like their parents.⁶³ This economic context contributes to students dropping out of school.

Of the schools included in this research, each one employed one civil service teacher (commonly also the school director) supplemented by contract and/or community teachers. Civil service teachers are mandated by MoEYS to serve five years in the remote community to which they are sent. If they are posted to a floating school, these teachers usually sleep in the compound. They are responsible for maintaining the school infrastructure, teaching mixed-age classes and all other school-related tasks, with the support of contract or community teachers. Teachers identified the main challenges as irregular student attendance, lack of student transportation, sanitation/hygiene, and lack of textbooks and learning materials.

⁶³ How long this career progression can continue is unsure, as the fishery continues to decline.

Civil society support

Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA)

Established in 2005, BSDA is a monk-led organization based in Kampong Cham province. The organization is guided by Buddhist principles and aims to teach good ethics. BSDA is the umbrella organization of many community programmes ranging from education, health, social enterprise, civil society and governance to climate change. The programmes include improving quality learning in public schools and providing inclusive education and vocational training for women, young people and vulnerable groups.

Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE)

As the largest local education-focused NGO in Cambodia, KAPE has operated since 1996. KAPE has numerous past and current programmes, such as child friendly school initiatives, school feeding programmes and inclusive education programmes, which aim to increase access to quality education and foster education innovations in Cambodia. The research team's consultation with KAPE focused on its former programme, Minority Outreach in Education (MORE), which aimed to provide educational access to Cham Muslim students.

Rural Friend for Community Development (RFCD)

RFCD is a community-led NGO operating exclusively in Krako district, Pursat province. Since its inception in September 2009, RFCD has worked primarily in education and food security. Currently, RFCD is working with 15 primary schools, four of which are floating schools. The RFCD education projects include: 1) enhancement of child leadership through club activities, 2) development and implementation of local life skills, and 3) supporting local schools to implement their operational plans.

9. Cross-cutting research findings

Teacher recruitment and training

Teacher recruitment and training was a theme that emerged across all schools and all school systems in this research. Buddhist monastic schools find it difficult to recruit teachers with expertise in the MoEYS general education curriculum due to insufficient budget and their inability to pay the same salaries as private general education schools. This is also true for teachers of religious subjects, as there is an imbalance between the supply and demand of teachers within the Buddhist monastic education system, and budget constraints in recruiting contract teachers to fill the gap. In more remote and geographically challenged schools, such as floating schools, teacher recruitment and retention becomes a huge barrier to attracting qualified and experienced professionals. There are sufficient teachers within the public-school system and there is an over-supply of teachers in urban areas. Nevertheless, there is a shortage of teachers in rural and remote areas. The \$20 monthly top up for civil service teachers in floating schools does not cover the cost of working, and often living, in floating communities. Teachers in all three school systems appear to have very limited financial and technical support from national ministries and provincial departments responsible for them. All these factors make the teaching profession unattractive, resulting in a shortage of qualified teachers across these three types of schools.

Research findings revealed that there is insufficient pre-service pedagogical training and in-service professional development training for the majority of civil service teachers in all three types of schools. The 1,391 Islamic teachers with civil service status did not receive pre-service teacher training from MoEYS. The MoCR civil service teachers received a short (three to six months) pre-service pedagogical training prior to formally starting to teach. It was not until 2016 that the training was lengthened to 12 months. Contract and community teachers in all three types of schools were not trained on teaching methodology and subject content by the respective responsible ministries. The absence of sufficient in-service professional training deprives teachers from obtaining new knowledge and practices in the teaching field, which has significant negative impacts on the quality of their teaching.

Diversity within schools – Safa's personal reflection

The research revealed that each school type has a variety of schools operating within it, under a range of conditions. On one end of the spectrum, there are schools with relatively substantial resources, which have more capacity to provide quality and inclusive education and offer their students more consistent and successful educational experiences. Generally, these schools are closer to urban areas, and in the case of floating schools, closer to the mainland. They are located in communities that have a relatively high socio-economic status or have received external funding and support in recent years. At the other end of the spectrum are extremely underfunded and understaffed schools that are unable to offer every primary-level grade and have students who have to balance school and work.

This wide range of school experiences highlights the unique social conditions that exist in Cambodia, and the importance of having a contextual understanding of the broader historical, economic, political, geographic and social factors that shape a community in which a school is located. Every school is embedded in a community, and local conditions influence and impact educational experiences and school operations.

This diversity also highlights the gap that can exist between policy and implementation. While there may be appropriate school-level quality and social inclusion policies, implementing them equally across schools in different types of communities is a challenge.

Such diversity within schools can be used as an opportunity to learn, improve and share best practices among schools within the same system or even across school systems. While Islamic schools, Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools have differences, they also share commonalities. They might benefit from school directors or teachers coming together to share experiences and learn from each another's history, operations and strategies for achieving educational success.

School management

School management was a second theme that emerged from the qualitative data. Across many of the schools included in the sample, school administrators were often employed with little or no prior experience. Similar to teacher training, there was insufficient training for school directors and administrators. Many of the school directors stated that they lacked the skills and resources necessary to efficiently manage their schools. A school leader requires hard skills such as budgeting, planning, personnel management, reporting and conducting procurement, as well as soft skills such as shaping a school's vision and cultivating meaningful relationships with staff, parents, students and the broader community while fostering a healthy and honest working environment. When so many responsibilities are required of the school director, a lack of proper training makes it extremely difficult for the director to effectively fulfil the role. While ill-equipped administrators can compromise the ability of a school to be effective and successful, there are some advantages to appointing or hiring teachers internally. School directors appointed internally will likely have cultivated a rapport with community stakeholders through years of teaching, and possess valuable local-level historical and contextual knowledge.

In the case of Buddhist monastic schools, the pagoda chief often performs the role of school director, and in some cases is also a teacher in the school. Given the nature of Buddhist monastic schools, pagoda chiefs are not only responsible for student learning, but also for all activities associated with a monk's daily life. The pagoda chief must manage everything, including room, board, education and general wellbeing. Similar to other school leadership positions, pagoda chiefs are appointed. The pagoda management committee exercises full discretion in sourcing and selecting for the position, which is generally based on who has previously established a relationship with committee members and the candidate's expertise in Buddhist-related subjects.

The intention is not to discredit any school leaders based on a lack of credentials. Many school leaders the research team interviewed were motivated, resourceful and creative in their work. Insights into particular challenges were voluntarily offered during every school visit and most of the interviews included in the sample. Many school leaders expressed keen interest in attending trainings that would assist them to develop their school management skills, if these were available. The research team is not aware of any formal school leadership training, either provided by MoEYS, MoCR or partner development organizations for these three school communities. Ministry officials at all levels expressed a desire to facilitate management trainings, but conceded that such skill development opportunities were not yet available due to budget constraints at all ministry levels.

Champions in school leadership – Meredith’s personal reflection

The idea of a champion emerged during school visits, where schools were committed to providing an education, despite the enormous challenges confronting them. The leaders of the Buddhist Monastic primary cluster school at Wat Thmey, the Samdach Chungath Buddhist secondary and high school, and the Roka Popram primary school had chosen to accept their positions and had made a clear decision to remain at the schools. Despite the obstacles, of which there are many, each school leader demonstrated a genuine sympathy, and in some cases empathy, toward the plight of children at their respective schools. They all demonstrated an admirable commitment to providing the best education possible within their means.

The Wat Hanchey Buddhist primary school director said he had lobbied the local tour guide to collect tourist donations to fund a year’s worth of internet for their school. Another school director, from Samdach Chungath Buddhist secondary and high school, facilitated a community fundraiser for the construction of a new building in the school compound. The school director at Da Lol I-San Islamic school located in Battambang province near the Thai border also shared sacrifices he makes to provide an education to the 20 students enrolled in the school. His hometown in Kampong Cham, where his wife still lives, is nearly 500km away. Not only does his position as school director mean he works and lives far from his family, he also sleeps in a hammock in the two-roomed school house, with walls fashioned from tarpaulins and concrete flooring. The remoteness of the school means that there is no running water, electricity or families living in the direct vicinity. However, the school is the most central point serving a large surrounding community. Another example of a champion is the school director at the floating Anlong Reang primary school. He offered his own home on the mainland as a place to live for one student who expressed interest in attending lower secondary school. As floating school students rarely transition from primary to secondary school, this director wanted to alleviate at least one of the barriers for this student. Sadly, the student dropped out after Grade 7 due to his family’s limited financial resources and a duty to contribute financially to the household.

While effective school management is a necessary ingredient in providing a quality education, a committed champion driving progress forward is equally imperative. Upon personal reflection, it became clear that it is extremely important to support individuals with this amount of commitment, and a willingness to extend far beyond their job description to provide children with an education. Not only do development professionals have a responsibility to positively influence policy, but they also have a responsibility to uplift and support the champions on the ‘front lines’. Ultimately, these are the individuals whose hard work is shaping future generations.

Limited resources

A third theme that emerged from the research was the limited resources available to schools to provide quality education, ranging from school materials to infrastructure. Existing school resources such as learning materials, teacher instruction manuals and supplies to maintain the school buildings are out of date, limited and insufficient, while school budgets that are used to remunerate staff, fund projects and make other necessary purchases throughout the school year are also limited. Both of these constraints hindered the quality of education that the three school types were able to provide. Despite these barriers, staff and parents demonstrated commitment to providing quality education for their students.

Ministerial policies that govern funding for floating schools, Buddhist monastic schools and Islamic schools vary. Directors of state schools cited a lack of teacher training, funding and materials. Seeking external financial assistance has become a common strategy to overcome this challenge. Leaders in Buddhist monastic schools cited funding from the Swiss Bank and the Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) as sources of study materials and student scholarships. However, even in these cases, the teaching materials were perceived as out dated and no longer relevant.

A liveable salary was identified as a necessary motivation for teachers to provide quality education. Even though teacher training is provided by the provincial MoCR, it is only for a few days and there is a clear need for on-going professional development opportunities. Most teachers have to buy their own teaching materials from local markets or elsewhere, using their personal savings. A further resource constraint for these schools is a lack of age-appropriate library books and resources for students. While students in Buddhist monastic schools have an academic and spiritual education, they would benefit from increased access to material resources. Despite the overall lack of resources, school directors and staff demonstrated creativity and fortitude in using the resources available to them.

Islamic schools are partly privately funded and partly funded by a centralized management system, which varies their access to resources. For the purposes of this research, one primary school and one lower secondary school under the management of Mufti were visited. Overall, Mufti administers seven primary schools and five secondary schools in Cambodia. While the two Mufti-operated schools visited appeared to be very well financed, had high quality classroom fit-outs, and appeared to have advanced teaching and learning resources, there were other schools under Mufti that were less well resourced. The teachers and staff interviewed in the two schools visited mentioned that funding was unreliable and irregular and they faced resource limitations related to textbooks, school uniforms and teaching materials.

The most under-resourced Islamic school visited was a Khmer Islamic school in Battambang province. This school had been established near the Thai border on land that was once a Khmer Rouge stronghold and is still filled with landmines. There is one teacher who lives within the school structure, which has no walls. The teacher is only able to offer three out of the six subjects that are adapted from the Malay curriculum. The school has no resources for a proper building, teaching and learning materials, teacher training, recruiting more staff, or establishing a better place for staff to live. This lack of basic necessities and resources severely limits the quality of education and social inclusion. The research team visited one state primary school with a Cham Muslim majority student population. While this school lay outside the research team's mandate, the observations and discussions were valuable. The large number of Cham Muslim students attending this state

school also go to Islamic schools in their village and this reaffirms of what many stakeholders commented about Islamic school's students also attend to state schools. Besides, preschool and first grade Cham muslim students encounter language barriers during their study as well because they spoke Cham at home and all the teachers do not know how to speak Cham.

The resource limitations faced by the Khmer Islamic school in Battambang are similar to the challenges faced by floating schools. Floating schools lack resources for structural maintenance, providing student transport, building floating classrooms, acquiring learning materials and supporting teachers with their living costs in remote areas. All floating schools are primary schools. If students want to transfer to secondary schools, they need to travel to the mainland and receive scholarships and boarding in order to continue their education. The transfer from primary to secondary school is extremely challenging, and therefore the transition rate is very low—in many cases, zero. The resource limitations faced by these schools are so severe that they impact students' abilities to regularly attend school and to advance through all primary grades, let alone continue onto secondary school. While there is a MoEYS scholarship scheme available for these students, the scholarships are insufficient to support the majority of students in floating school communities.

Resilience and perseverance – Solyda's personal reflection

Despite facing continuous challenges ranging from poor living conditions to discrimination and climate change, each of the school directors, students and teachers interviewed demonstrated incredible resilience. Perseverance and optimism seem to enable these individuals to thrive in their challenging living environments.

A second-year student at Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University in Battambang province was forced to drop out when his parents could no longer financially support his studies. With very little education, he was forced to take a job as a construction worker. He told the researchers that every day he looked at his dirty work clothes and reflected on how he wanted a better life for himself, his family and Cambodian society. Thus, he worked part-time to put himself through high school and he is now in university.

School directors and teachers at the floating schools are all from the mainland. As a lot of teachers do not know how to swim, they literally risk their lives daily by teaching in floating schools. Nevertheless, they are committed to their profession and are trying their best to teach their pupils. Their commitment and strength are inspiring. One of the floating schools the team visited experienced the recent tragic loss of one student due to an accident on her way to school. Despite the shock and trauma, parents still sent their children to school and the school directors and teachers are doubling-down on their commitment to ensuring student safety by acquiring boats for transportation to and from school and/or using their own boats to collect students and transport them to school. These are a few of the many stories of perseverance that were shared with the research team during field visits.

Marginalized communities

Vulnerable communities: Vulnerability was a key lens through which this research was conducted. While there are hierarchies of wealth and opportunity within all three school types and their communities, an overall sense of vulnerability exists across them. In Islamic schools, this stems from the fact that some students only speak Cham, their religious practices are not entirely accommodated for in schools outside the Islamic community, and a preference to learn subjects that might enable Muslim students to access higher education and work opportunities abroad. In Buddhist monastic schools, these heightened vulnerabilities stem from the fact that students often come from the poorest families or are fleeing violence in their homes. In floating schools it stems from being geographically confined to water-based communities due to a lack of financial means to commute to the mainland. Vulnerabilities are also linked to the need for literacy and education to support a new generation of water-based youth within the next 5 to 10 years. With fishing as their only income-generating activity, they face climate change and depleted fish stocks, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities of students in these communities. Providing access to quality and inclusive education for students in these communities is increasingly important for future generations, to improve their chances of success, prosperity and security in adulthood.

Inclusive education: This research revealed that all three school types serve some of the most marginalized students in Cambodia. Existing policies do not adequately cater for their religious values, linguistic abilities, socio-economic status and/or geography. These three school systems are examples of alternative education options that are better able to provide diverse communities with accessible and inclusive education. While these schools may be inclusive in some aspects, each school type could benefit from more inclusive practices. Some examples include offering multilingual education; ensuring accessibility for students with physical disabilities; offering accessible learning materials to those with developmental disabilities; preparing and training teachers on inclusive pedagogy; incorporating the community in inclusivity campaigns; promoting gender equity; better supporting children who need to work to support their families; and strengthening data collection and monitoring efforts. While the school systems included in this research are able to offer much needed educational services in their local communities, each would benefit from financial input, professional development and partnership support to expand their inclusivity.

10. Engagement opportunities and recommendations

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were asked to share their ideas for potential UNICEF engagement opportunities. Interviewees were not given any parameters, allowing participants the freedom to make national to community-level recommendations. As a result, the responses received were wide ranging. While these discussions directly informed the research team's recommendations to UNICEF, some of the ideas collected fell outside UNICEF expertise, programmatic scope and/or organizational mandate. However, the research team felt it was important to include all opportunities and recommendations for two reasons: 1) Many of the challenges presented do need support. While UNICEF may not be best situated to support them in every way, other partners may have the expertise, organizational capacity and opportunity to engage where UNICEF cannot; and 2) the research team felt it was important that interviewee responses were heard, recorded and disseminated.

The research team reflected on the identified needs of the three school types and their communities and divided engagement opportunities into short- and long-term recommendations. While the research team is situated within UNICEF, the following recommendations target all stakeholders—UNICEF, development partners, MoEYS, MoCR and beyond.

One recommendation that relates to all school communities included in this research, but is not included in the categorized recommendations below, is the need for strengthened statistical capacity. In general, there is a lack of accurate and robust quantitative data from all three school categories. Although MoEYS publishes some statistics through the Education Management Information System, quantitative data regarding total student population in each school, by school type (Buddhist monastic, Islamic and floating), would have been very helpful in conducting this research. Additionally, data that can be disaggregated by gender, age, socioeconomic status, rate of progression to secondary school and student completion rates, to name a few, are all needed for researchers, policy makers, development partners and other stakeholders to understand and respond appropriately to the needs of these schools and to the education sector more broadly.



ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

Short-term recommendation:

The research team has one short-term recommendation for MoEYS to further engage with Islamic schools. It targets Islamic teacher training and professional development.

1. Increase access to pre-service and in-service training

Given the ministry's employment of 1,500 civil servants in Islamic schools, the ministry should provide those teachers with the same in-service pedagogical training that all public school civil service teachers receive. The recommendation to the ministry is to extend the same one-year training to Islamic school teachers who have achieved civil servant status. While the subject matter and content are not the same as the public-school curriculum, the pedagogical tools needed to provide a quality education are the same. All civil service teachers, regardless of the institution in which they teach, are entitled to the skills necessary to effectively engage students, manage a classroom, equally challenge students in multi-age classrooms and recognize the individual learning needs of students to provide a quality education.

Long-term recommendations:

Long-term recommendations for Islamic schools focus on capacity development at every level.

1. Improve monitoring of WASH facilities

At the ministerial level, the research team suggests that systematic monitoring of WASH in Islamic schools becomes a priority. While two of the three schools the research team visited were well-resourced and WASH facilities appeared satisfactory, the final Islamic school visited did not have any WASH facilities. The only facilities available to the student body and teacher (who lived on the school grounds) belonged to the nearby mosque. The mosque had one toilet for girls and boys and one open-air concrete rainwater harvesting tank for drinking. While the mosque's WASH facilities are not under the jurisdiction of MoCR, the school's lack of toilet facilities and drinking water is the responsibility of MoCR.

2. Provide capacity development on collecting statistics

In addition to statistical capacity development for all three school categories recommended above, the research team recommends greater data transparency at the Mufti level. Active sharing of student enrolment, teacher employment, completion rates and ethnic composition with MoEYS would aid in awareness across all levels. While Mufti was willing to share this information with the research team when explicitly asked, active sharing across governing bodies would further facilitate a collective awareness. As previously highlighted, the research team experienced difficulty in locating overall statistics about Islamic schools, in addition to disaggregated minority statistics, such as information about the number of students within the Cham community.

3. Strengthen community outreach and advocacy programmes

At the community-level, the research team recommends that development partners work with schools to conduct community outreach programmes. Community outreach programmes that convey to parents the importance of education, regardless of the school type, would be very valuable. During conversations with Mufti, several school leaders expressed a continued need for parent advocacy, even if it meant that Muslim parents chose to send their children to a school outside of the Islamic education system. During one school visit, the common practice of child marriage was cited as a reason for student drop out. This could be addressed through community advocacy programmes that highlight the drawbacks of such practices. Khmer Muslim, Cham Muslim and the broader Cambodian Islamic community would benefit from such advocacy programmes.



BUDDHIST MONASTIC SCHOOLS

Short-term recommendations:

The four short-term recommendations for Buddhist monastic schools aim to address insufficient teaching and learning materials for both religious curriculum and MoEYS curriculum, teacher shortages, under-resourced libraries, as well as insufficient quality assurance measures and technical support from MoEYS in curriculum implementation.

1. Increase funding for the publication of religious textbooks, curriculum and teacher guidebooks

MoCR is appointed by the RGC to administer and promote Buddhist monastic education. Thus, MoCR is the rightful ministry to allocate funding within its annual budget plan for sufficient publication and distribution of these learning materials across all Buddhist monastic schools. In response to teacher shortages in Buddhist monastic schools, the immediate and short-term solution proposed to MoCR is to mobilize more funding for schools to recruit more contract teachers to fill gaps that exist from too few MoCR civil service teachers.

2. Comprehensive dissemination of MoEYS textbooks to schools, including monitoring of curriculum implementation

Technically, MoEYS is required to supply textbooks and other relevant curriculum documents to all Buddhist monastic schools throughout the country. However, this did not appear to be the case in schools included in this sample. MoEYS should take immediate action to remedy this issue, as all the schools the team visited raised this as their main challenge. Buddhist monastic schools would benefit significantly from continuous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as well as technical support on implementing the MoEYS curriculum. Currently, the main role of the DOE is to support effective functioning of service delivery through M&E at the school level, while the District Training and Monitoring Team provides timely technical support to public schools. Together with MoCR, MoEYS should consider the possibility of expanding the available M&E and technical school support systems to include Buddhist monastic schools.

3. Improve school library quality

According to the consolidated interview results from four Buddhist monastic schools and one university, the top three prioritized actions relating to school libraries that school management committees wanted to improve are: 1) increasing the amount and variety of books and reading materials, particularly related to the MoEYS curriculum; 2) providing age-appropriate and up-to-date books and reading materials; and 3) providing training for librarians.

For example, the French NGO Sipar that promotes literacy in Cambodia has been collaborating with MoEYS to create, develop and implement school library projects in primary and secondary schools for the past 26 years. Activities have included establishing libraries, procuring book collections and providing librarian training. Building on their experience and expertise, interested development partners could work with Sipar to incorporate Buddhist monastic schools into their existing programme. Importantly, libraries in Buddhist monastic schools are open and available to all children from the community, not just their students.

Long-term recommendations:

The following five recommendations are put forward to ensure the on-going enhancement of teacher capacity within the Buddhist monastic education system, and school sustainability.

1. Ensure contract and community/volunteer teachers are adequately trained

At the national level, MoCR should provide pre-service pedagogical training to its future contract teachers, as well as community/volunteer teachers, before they start teaching. Given the current budget constraints of MoCR, the research team suggests that MoCR consider organizing pre-service pedagogical training once per year for contract and community teachers. Ideally, the pre-service teacher training should be held at the provincial MoCR over the course of one to four weeks. This would be a significant starting point to ensuring all teachers within the system have at least foundational pedagogical knowledge.

2. Provide on-going professional development training to civil service teachers and contract teachers

MoCR should continue providing in-service training annually, not only to civil service teachers, but also to their existing contract and community/volunteer teachers. MoCR and MoEYS should jointly organize annual school leadership and management trainings for all Buddhist monastic school leaders. UNICEF and other development partners specializing in teacher training and school-based management are well situated to collaborate with MoCR and MoEYS on addressing these challenges.

3. Develop multi-age and multi-grade training component into pre-service pedagogical and in-service trainings

Given that multi-age and mixed-ability classrooms are common in Buddhist monastic schools, the research team recommends that MoCR incorporate one or two courses on multi-age and multi-grade pedagogy into both pre-service pedagogical and in-service teacher training. As previously mentioned, regardless of age when entering the Buddhist monastic education system, students must start at Grade 1. While it is important for students to establish foundational knowledge before progressing to more complex subjects, this becomes a challenge when over-age learners are surrounded by a majority of younger peers. Over-age learners face specific learning barriers and often feel demotivated.

Teachers also face challenges when teaching classes with mixed-age learners. Training to equip teachers with a variety of educational skills to deal appropriately with the needs of over-age students and managing multi-age and mixed-ability classes should be mandatory. MoCR should introduce 'accelerated learning' programmes into Buddhist primary education. Accelerated education offers flexible content that can be delivered in a shorter time frame to allow students that have experienced interruptions in their learning to catch-up to an age-appropriate grade level. Accelerated education programmes often serve learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or out-of-school children.

4. Establish systematic financing for school operation

The establishment of systematic financing for school operations from the RGC would ensure the sustainability and overall improvement of the Buddhist monastic education system. Although this would be a huge financial undertaking by the RGC, the benefits gained from investing in Buddhist monastic education would be tremendous, given the integral role Buddhist

monastic education plays in producing well-rounded human resources. It would also preserve Cambodian culture and tradition. Based on information the research team gathered from relevant stakeholders, it is understood that MoCR does not have a funding system in place to support Buddhist monastic schools. Therefore, it is recommended that MoCR use the existing MoEYS mechanism to fund public schools as a model for its own funding mechanism.

MoEYS public schools receive an operating budget through the ministry's programme budget. According to the inter-ministerial declaration between the Ministry of Economy and Finance and MoEYS regarding programme budget expenditure, each school's budget is determined by: its level (pre-school, primary or secondary); number of students; number of classes; and characteristics of school (typical or disadvantaged). For example, a typical primary school with less than six classes receives \$200 with an additional \$2.50 per student in one academic year. Primary schools considered as disadvantaged would receive \$250 with an additional \$3 per student in one academic year. MoCR could either create an entirely new school operating budget system or use the one MoEYS has as a model and customize it to their unique contexts.



FLOATING SCHOOLS

Short-term recommendations:

The short-term recommendations for floating schools focus on immediate infrastructure and access needs.

1. Provide boats and a fuel stipend to floating schools

Floating schools need a school boat to provide safe transport for students, as well as additional long-term funding for fuel and upkeep. During the 1990s and again in 2012, UNICEF partnered with MoEYS to purchase some row boats for schools and speed boats for every Provincial Office of Education surrounding the Tonlé Sap. However, those initiatives did not have long-lasting impact. It is unclear to the researchers what condition the boats are in and if they are still in use, as they were not seen or referenced during school visits. Floating schools still need boats to transport students and teachers, and to re-position the school structure throughout the seasons. Providing boats would contribute to school access and support the often-lone civil service teacher who is tasked with maintaining the floating school.

2. Supply life jackets for teachers and students

For basic teacher and student safety, floating schools would benefit from having access to a minimum number of life jackets. The research team recommends at least two adult life jackets and eight student life jackets per floating school. Many of the teachers and students consulted during site visits could not swim, which means they are at risk of drowning. Life jackets would contribute to school access and security and decrease risks associated with traveling to school.

3. Provide sufficient and up-to-date teaching and learning materials

Floating schools would benefit from new teaching and learning materials that are covered with plastic to prevent water or rodent damage. In addition to textbooks and workbooks, mixed-grade classroom manuals for teachers that meet the learning needs of students of all ages are required.

Long-term recommendations:

Floating schools would benefit from specific policy changes that address their sustainability, ability to produce graduates who transition to secondary school, and the inclusivity of their programmes for multi-ethnic students.

1. Revise formula for operating costs

The research team recommends MoEYS revise the Programme Budget formula that determines operating costs received for all public schools, including floating schools. In addition to the school operating budget, MoEYS offers a top up to small and disadvantaged schools. Floating school directors are required to travel to the DOE to collect their operating budget four times per year. Transportation fees are very high, often requiring school directors to fund their travel from the tranche received. This counteracts the impact of the top up. Various floating school directors stated that they received between \$1,200 and \$1,900 per year and that in the past they had received as little as \$300 to \$400.

The school operating budget does not factor in the unique contextual needs and challenges of floating schools. A new budget formula that accounts for the extra expenses incurred by floating schools would provide them with a more needs-appropriate budget. This would enable floating school directors to handle school access challenges so efforts could be refocused on improving the quality of education.

2. Increase number of scholarships

Floating school students would benefit from more scholarships so they could pursue secondary education on the mainland. An increase in scholarships for floating school students would likely improve their transition rate from primary to secondary school.

3. Increase the feasibility of providing multilingual education

Students in floating communities would benefit from access to multilingual education. Having teachers who are able to support non-Khmer speaking students in their successful transition to the early grades of primary school and their continued participation beyond the first year would improve overall attendance and broaden education access to children within these communities. Multilingual education in multi-ethnic schools would improve literacy rates among Vietnamese-descendant and Cham students, further enabling integration into Cambodian society and promoting social cohesion.

4. Increase monitoring and technical support to schools

Floating schools would benefit from increased monitoring and technical support from DOE. The research team recommends that more funding be provided to DOE specifically for more frequent visits to monitor floating schools. In theory, DOE is required to conduct 12 monitoring visits per

year. However, according to one director of a floating school, only two visits per year are typical due to the high cost of transportation to the schools. Currently, DOEs receive \$10 per trip to cover all expenses related to monitoring public schools, including floating schools. This amount does not cover all the travel expenses associated with these visits. Increased funding would facilitate improved monitoring of floating schools and enable DOE to better support schools to improve. Likewise, the MoEYS Department of Construction, which establishes the infrastructure standards of public schools, should advise on and monitor floating school infrastructure standards and requirements.

5. Increase and improve WASH facilities and resources

Floating schools would benefit from greater WASH facilities and resources within the school, as well as the broader water-based community. The hygiene practices and resources available across water-based communities are replicated in floating schools. Both need more hygienic options when it comes to defecation, washing practices, access to clean water and garbage disposal.

6. Introduce local life-skills subjects

Studying local life skills would prepare students living in floating communities for the reality of their future employment and equip them with the skills to deal with the challenges of climate change and global warming. Fish stocks have depleted considerably in recent years, which greatly affects the livelihoods of fishing families. The majority of students from floating schools do not complete lower secondary school and typically have no options other than working in the declining fishing industry. Local life skills, such as learning to cultivate aquatic vegetables, farmed fishing, national disaster resilience skills and waste management skills would allow them to respond to the environment in which they live. Currently, UNICEF supports MoEYS to pilot a life skills curriculum in five provinces: Takeo, Siem Reap, Stung Treng, Kampot and Battambang. Floating schools should be the next targeted region for this project. In addition, career counselling as a part of local life-skills for grade 5 and grade 6 students can be an effective method for increasing student transition to and attendance in secondary school. The possibility of pursuing professions other than those connected to the fisheries, may otherwise seem impossible for many students with limited exposure to alternative career options.

Conclusions

While the research findings presented in this report provide some insights into Islamic schools, Buddhist monastic schools, floating schools and the communities they serve, these findings cannot be considered representative of the communities at large. While the research team achieved the goal of developing a foundational understanding of these three communities, this study highlights the necessity for even more research. The research team urges UNICEF and other development partners to build on the knowledge gathered thus far. By highlighting these marginalized and vulnerable communities, future programming efforts will be better informed and Cambodia's education system as a whole will be strengthened.

While this research used the lens of vulnerability to better understand quality and inclusion in these three school types, there are a multitude of other ways in which research into Islamic, Buddhist monastic and floating schools could have been approached. For example, inclusivity of students

with disabilities is a major challenge in all schools across Cambodia, and some of the schools included in the study are particularly challenged in this area. Buddhist monastic schools, for example, do not accept students with any physical disabilities due to religious beliefs. Disabilities are seen as a physical and/or mental manifestation of wrong doings in a previous life. There are many other cross-cutting challenges that were not explicitly addressed in this report, but that further compound the issues addressed here. For example, students in all three schools face child protection issues, non-existent or poor-quality WASH facilities, which is particularly challenging in floating schools, and gender equality challenges.

While each community included in this study showed inspiring resilience and creativity in the face of significant challenges, each school expressed a keen desire to work with the community, development partners and the RGC to improve educational services. Incorporating every stakeholder's perspective is a more productive and holistic approach to improving educational experiences in minority communities across Cambodia.

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Appendix 1 – Consultations

Table 1: Government

No.	Ministry	Department	Expertise
1.	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport	Education Management Information System	Floating school statistics; Muslim school statistics
2.	Ministry of Cults and Religion	General Inspectorate	Statistics, general and specific information about monastic schools
3.	Kampong Cham Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport		Cham Muslim schools in Kampong Cham

Table 2: NGOs

No.	Organization	Area of specialization
1.	UNICEF	Child Protection programme team
2.	CARE International	Multilingual Education programme
3.	Save the Children	Early Childhood Education and Development at floating villages
4.	Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA)	Buddhist monastic schools and general information about the Buddhist monastic education system
5.	Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE)	Muslim schools in Kampong Cham province
6.	NGO Education Partnership	Overview of NGOs working in the three different settings of schools
7.	Rural Friend for Community Development (RFCD)	NGO currently working with floating schools in Pursat province
8.	Siem Reap Education Support Team (SEST)	Name of NGOs that are working on or used to work with floating schools and Muslim schools
9.	Village Support Group	Floating schools
10.	Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)	Cham community and Islamic schools

Appendix 2 – Study sample

Table 1: Buddhist monastic schools

No.	School	Expertise	Province	Date
1.	Samdach Chunath Buddhist secondary and high school	Buddhist monastic school	Kampong Cham	9 July 2018
2.	Hanchey Buddhist primary school	Buddhist monastic school	Kampong Cham	11 July 2018
3.	Buddhist primary cluster school at Wat Thmey	Buddhist monastic school	Kampong Cham	11 July 2018
4.	Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University	Buddhist monastic university	Battambang province	16 August 2018

Table 2: Islamic schools/schools with Cham students

No.	School	Expertise	Province	Date
1.	Roka Popram primary school	State school with 70% Cham Muslim student population	Kampong Cham	10 July 2018
2.	Madrasah An Nikmah Al Islamiah Cambodia	Islamic school	Phnom Penh	6 August 2018
3.	Da Lol I-San school	Islamic school	Battambang province	15 August 2018
4.	Al Ha Ro Mai school	Islamic school	Battambang province	15 August 2018

Table 3: Floating schools

No.	School	Expertise	Province	Date
1.	Cholsa primary school	Floating school	Krako district, Pursat province	13 August 2018
2.	Oakal primary school	Floating school	Krako district, Pursat province	14 August 2018
3.	Kampong Prak primary school	Floating school	Krako district, Pursat province	14 August 2018

Annex 1 – Photo essay



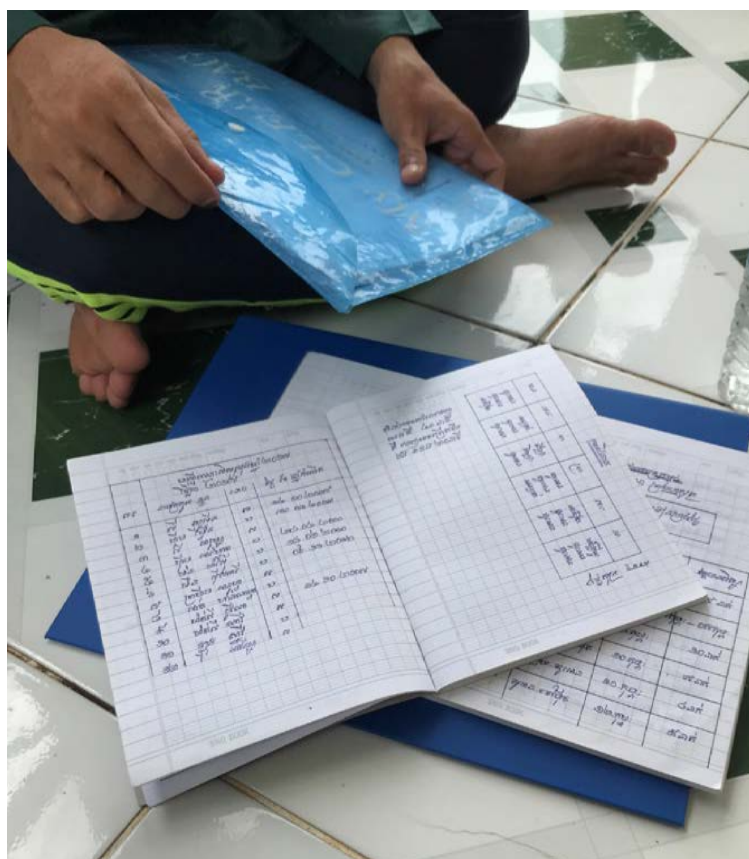
©UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Meredith Lunsford

An Islamic classroom in remote area, Battambang Province



©UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Meredith Lunsford

The research team with students, Islamic teachers and Khmer Islamic provincial leaders, Battambang Province



©UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Solyda Say

An Islamic teacher showing student attendance records and study time table. He learned about teaching methods from nearby public primary school director, Battambang Province



©UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Theavy Leng

Student of Ou Akol floating primary school, Pursat Province



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The slogan behind student reads, "Education for All and All for Education", Pursat Province



©UNICEF Cambodia/2018/Meredith Lunsford

Students boarding on boats at the end of their school day, Pursat Province

Annex 2 – Data collection tools

A. Individual interview guide for Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA)

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Buddhist monastic education. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of Buddhist monastic schools.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working at BSDA?
2. What are the current projects that you are working on?
3. Could you tell us why BSDA was established?
4. Why did you decide to become a monk?

III. School background:

5. How long did you study at a Buddhist monastic school?
6. Generally, how many students were in your class? Were they all monks? Were they all male?
7. Were the teachers all male?
8. Was this a day school or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attended your school?
10. What have some of the alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?
11. Do a lot of your school alumni leave the monkhood after they finish school?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

12. From your knowledge and own experience, could you share with us the procedure of recruiting directors for Buddhist monastic schools in general?
13. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained?
14. In your opinion, what are other additional supports that teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

15. What curriculum does Buddhist monastic schools use? How is it similar or different to the state school curriculum?
16. Do you know how often the curriculum is changed?
17. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
18. Do you think there are enough materials for the teacher to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
19. Are teachers well trained to teach all the subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?
20. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?

VI. Educational outcomes:

21. What are the key challenges that you think Buddhist monastic students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VII. Funding and fees:

22. How do schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do you know if the school received support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support a school's operations?

VIII. School environment:

23. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity?
24. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills?
25. How accessible is the school for children with disabilities?

IX. Closing questions:

26. What additional information should we know about Buddhist monastic schools we may not think to ask?
27. In your opinion, how do you think UNICEF should engage with Buddhist monastic schools? In what ways could UNICEF be most impactful?

Individual interview guide for Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Islamic education system in Cambodia. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of Islamic schools.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. We would like to know more about what you are currently working on. Would you mind sharing with us?
2. Can you tell us more about your background?
 - Where are you from?
 - Family?
 - Educational background?
 - Gender bias that you may have experienced?
 - Ethnic bias that you may have experienced?
3. What is your educational history? What type of school did you attend for primary and secondary school?

III. School background:

4. We understand that there is no centralized Islamic education system. Can you tell us more about that?
5. What are the challenges and strengths of this style of education system, in your opinion?
6. From your knowledge, do Cham parents prefer to send their children to state schools or Cham schools? Why?
7. From your knowledge, has Cham Muslim school attendance remained steady, declined or increased in recent years?
8. Do you think that private Cham Muslim schools should be regulated by the state/MoEYS?
9. What are the primary funding sources of Cham Muslim schools? Are there any school fees associated with attending Cham Muslim schools?

10. In your opinion, do Cham Muslim schools equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the job market today?

IV. Curriculum / pedagogy:

11. Are other languages used during school hours?
12. What curriculum does the school use? How is it similar or different to the state public school curriculum? Who determines the curriculum?
13. Aside from religious studies, what other courses are taught in Cham Muslim schools?
14. How are teachers recruited for Cham Muslim schools? Where are they certified? Are the teachers well trained to teach all subjects offered?
15. Are teachers typically male or female?
16. Are there any rules/customs around inter-mixing of students and teachers?
17. Typically, are Cham Muslim schools day schools or boarding schools? If they are boarding schools, how are students treated after classes are over? What services are provided? What extracurricular activities are there? What religious obligations do the students have?
18. In your opinion, do you think that Cham Muslim students should be integrated into Cambodian state schools? Or should they remain in solely Cham Muslim schools? If they should be integrated, how can state schools attract and meet the needs of Cham Muslim students?
19. Are students required to wear uniforms?
20. Are there specific seating arrangements? Classroom arrangements?
21. In terms of resources, what are the strengths and challenges of Cham Muslim schools?
- Infrastructure
 - WASH; separate facilities for girls and boys?

V. Educational outcomes:

22. Do Cham Muslim schools have assessments?
23. How many students from primary school continue on to secondary school?
24. What challenges do students encounter regarding regular attendance?
25. If students complete secondary school, do they receive some sort of certification? Is this recognized at the state level?

VI. Closing questions:

26. What additional information should we know about Cham Muslim schools that we may not think to ask?
27. In your opinion, how do you think UNICEF should engage with Cham Muslim schools? In what ways could UNICEF be most impactful?

Individual interview guide for Mufti in Cambodia

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Islamic schools in regard to quality, curriculum, teacher training and assessments, as well as the challenges of Cham Muslim students are facing.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. What is your position at the council?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. We would like to know more about your work. What are your current projects/initiatives?

III. Student background:

4. Do you know how many Islamic schools are currently operating in Cambodia?
5. From your knowledge, has Cham Muslim school attendance remained steady, declined or increased in recent years?
6. From your knowledge, do Cham parents prefer to send their children to state schools, Islamic schools, or another type of school? Why?
7. How do Islamic schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do they receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support school operations?
8. In your opinion, do Islamic schools equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the job market today?

IV. School environment:

9. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
10. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

11. Typically, are Islamic schools day schools or boarding schools?
12. Are students required to wear uniforms?
13. Are there specific seating arrangements? Classroom arrangements?
14. Typically, what curriculum do Islamic schools use? Is it similar or different to the state public school curriculum? Who determines the curriculum?
15. Are there any extracurricular activities (religious activities, sports, etc.) offered to students outside of academic classes?
16. How are teachers recruited for Islamic schools? Where are they certified?
17. Are teachers typically male or female?
18. Are there any customs around inter-mixing of students and teachers?

VI. Educational outcomes:

19. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
20. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
21. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
22. What are the key challenges that your students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VII. Closing questions:

23. What additional information should we know about Cham Muslim students and/or Islamic schools that we may not think to ask?
24. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be the most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?
25. Can you recommend some schools in the area that we can visit to interview school directors, teachers and students?

Individual interview guide for Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE)

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Islamic schools in regard to quality, curriculum, teacher training and assessments, your current and past programs for Cham Muslim communities as well as the challenges of Cham Muslim students are facing.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. What is your position at KAPE?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. We would like to know more about your work. What are your current projects/initiatives?

III. Minority outreach in education:

Intervention A: Locally mediated multicultural education curricular programming

4. According to the Log Frame of Minority Outreach in Education you shared with us, there were three main interventions. One activity from Intervention A is to introduce multicultural education.
 - a. Can you tell us more about multicultural education?
 - b. How does multicultural education work in practice?
 - c. How long was the multicultural education training? Who were the participants? Khmer teachers? Cham teachers?
5. Did the Thursday technical meeting happen every week? How long was the meeting? Typically, where did the meetings take place?
6. Were there any challenges to implementing Activity 1, Intervention A?
7. Can you tell us a little bit more about the community participation in designing extra-curricular add-ons? Who were those community members? What exact cultural life skills were taught?

Intervention B: Building bridges between state and private Cham schools

8. Was there resistance or tension that occurred when discussing teaching shifts?
9. Did POE and DOE provide any other technical assistance in addition to administrative work?
10. Was the Islamic school grant assistance provided by KAPE?
11. Who decided on the minimum standard of educational performance assessment tool that was used to assess Islamic schools?
12. Before that, did Islamic schools have a curriculum or timetable?

Intervention C: Support for affirmative action in local teacher recruitment and bilingual learning environment

13. During programme implementation, at least 8 per cent of the annual intake to the Provincial Teacher Training College was Cham ethnicity. How about now?
14. Who were the Provincial Teacher Training College scholarship recipients? Were all recipients from the Cham Muslim community? Who administered the scholarships?
15. Regarding bilingual education, were those student trainees a mixture of Khmer and Cham Muslim?

IV. Cham Muslim students:

16. From your knowledge, has Cham Muslim student attendance remained steady, declined or increased in recent years?
17. From your knowledge, do Cham parents prefer to send their children to state schools, Islamic schools, or another type of school? Why?
18. How do Islamic schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do they receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support school operations?
19. In your opinion, do Islamic schools equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the job market today?
20. From your knowledge, what are the main challenges that Cham Muslim students face in receiving a quality and inclusive education?

IV. Closing questions:

21. What additional information should we know about Cham Muslim students and/or Islamic schools that we may not think to ask?

Individual interview guide for Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Islamic education system in Cambodia. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of Islamic schools.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. We would like to know more about what you are currently working on. Would you mind sharing with us?
2. Can you tell us more about your background?
 - Where are you from?
 - Family?
 - Educational background?
 - Gender bias that you may have experienced?
 - Ethnic bias that you may have experienced?
3. What is your educational history? What type of school did you attend for primary and secondary school?

III. School background:

4. We understand that there is no centralized Islamic education system. Can you tell us more about that?
5. What are the challenges and strengths of this style of education system, in your opinion?
6. From your knowledge, do Cham parents prefer to send their children to state schools or Cham schools? Why?
7. From your knowledge, has Cham Muslim school attendance remained steady, declined or increased in recent years?
8. Do you think that private Cham Muslim schools should be regulated by the state/MoEYS?
9. What are the primary funding sources of Cham Muslim schools? Are there any school fees associated with attending Cham Muslim schools?

10. In your opinion, do Cham Muslim schools equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the job market today?

IV. Curriculum / pedagogy:

11. Are other languages used during school hours?
12. What curriculum does the school use? How is it similar or different to the state public school curriculum? Who determines the curriculum?
13. Aside from religious studies, what other courses are taught in Cham Muslim schools?
14. How are teachers recruited for Cham Muslim schools? Where are they certified? Are the teachers well trained to teach all subjects offered?
15. Are teachers typically male or female?
16. Are there any rules/customs around inter-mixing of students and teachers?
17. Typically, are Cham Muslim schools day schools or boarding schools? If they are boarding schools, how are students treated after classes are over? What services are provided? What extracurricular activities are there? What religious obligations do the students have?
18. In your opinion, do you think that Cham Muslim students should be integrated into Cambodian state schools? Or should they remain in solely Cham Muslim schools? If they should be integrated, how can state schools attract and meet the needs of Cham Muslim students?
19. Are students required to wear uniforms?
20. Are there specific seating arrangements? Classroom arrangements?
21. In terms of resources, what are the strengths and challenges of Cham Muslim schools?
- Infrastructure
 - WASH; separate facilities for girls and boys?

V. Educational outcomes:

22. Do Cham Muslim schools have assessments?
23. How many students from primary school continue on to secondary school?
24. What challenges do students encounter regarding regular attendance?
25. If students complete secondary school, do they receive some sort of certification? Is this recognized at the state level?

VI. Closing questions:

26. What additional information should we know about Cham Muslim schools that we may not think to ask?
27. In your opinion, how do you think UNICEF should engage with Cham Muslim schools? In what ways could UNICEF be most impactful?

Individual interview guide for Mufti in Cambodia

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Islamic schools in regard to quality, curriculum, teacher training and assessments, as well as the challenges of Cham Muslim students are facing.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. What is your position at the council?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. We would like to know more about your work. What are your current projects/initiatives?

III. Student background:

4. Do you know how many Islamic schools are currently operating in Cambodia?
5. From your knowledge, has Cham Muslim school attendance remained steady, declined or increased in recent years?
6. From your knowledge, do Cham parents prefer to send their children to state schools, Islamic schools, or another type of school? Why?
7. How do Islamic schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do they receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support school operations?
8. In your opinion, do Islamic schools equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the job market today?

IV. School environment:

9. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
10. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

11. Typically, are Islamic schools day schools or boarding schools?
12. Are students required to wear uniforms?
13. Are there specific seating arrangements? Classroom arrangements?
14. Typically, what curriculum do Islamic schools use? Is it similar or different to the state public school curriculum? Who determines the curriculum?
15. Are there any extracurricular activities (religious activities, sports, etc.) offered to students outside of academic classes?
16. How are teachers recruited for Islamic schools? Where are they certified?
17. Are teachers typically male or female?
18. Are there any customs around inter-mixing of students and teachers?

VI. Educational outcomes:

19. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
20. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
21. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
22. What are the key challenges that your students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VII. Closing questions:

23. What additional information should we know about Cham Muslim students and/or Islamic schools that we may not think to ask?
24. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be the most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?
25. Can you recommend some schools in the area that we can visit to interview school directors, teachers and students?

Individual interview guide for Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE)

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Islamic schools in regard to quality, curriculum, teacher training and assessments, your current and past programs for Cham Muslim communities as well as the challenges of Cham Muslim students are facing.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. What is your position at KAPE?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. We would like to know more about your work. What are your current projects/initiatives?

II. Minority outreach in education:

Intervention A: Locally mediated multicultural education curricular programming

4. According to the Log Frame of Minority Outreach in Education you shared with us, there were three main interventions. One activity from Intervention A is to introduce multicultural education.
 - a. Can you tell us more about multicultural education?
 - b. How does multicultural education work in practice?
 - c. How long was the multicultural education training? Who were the participants? Khmer teachers? Cham teachers?
5. Did the Thursday technical meeting happen every week? How long was the meeting? Typically, where did the meetings take place?
6. Were there any challenges to implementing Activity 1, Intervention A?
7. Can you tell us a little bit more about the community participation in designing extra-curricular add-ons? Who were those community members? What exact cultural life skills were taught?

Intervention B: Building bridges between state and private Cham schools

8. Was there resistance or tension that occurred when discussing teaching shifts?
9. Did POE and DOE provide any other technical assistance in addition to administrative work?
10. Was the Islamic school grant assistance provided by KAPE?
11. Who decided on the minimum standard of educational performance assessment tool that was used to assess Islamic schools?
12. Before that, did Islamic schools have a curriculum or timetable?

Intervention C: Support for affirmative action in local teacher recruitment and bilingual learning environment

13. During programme implementation, at least 8 per cent of the annual intake to the Provincial Teacher Training College was Cham ethnicity. How about now?
14. Who were the Provincial Teacher Training College scholarship recipients? Were all recipients from the Cham Muslim community? Who administered the scholarships?
15. Regarding bilingual education, were those student trainees a mixture of Khmer and Cham Muslim?

III. Cham Muslim students:

16. From your knowledge, has Cham Muslim student attendance remained steady, declined or increased in recent years?
17. From your knowledge, do Cham parents prefer to send their children to state schools, Islamic schools, or another type of school? Why?
18. How do Islamic schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do they receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support school operations?
19. In your opinion, do Islamic schools equip students with the skills necessary to compete in the job market today?
20. From your knowledge, what are the main challenges that Cham Muslim students face in receiving a quality and inclusive education?

IV. Closing questions:

21. What additional information should we know about Cham Muslim students and/or Islamic schools that we may not think to ask?

Individual interview guide for Ministry of Cults and Religions Under Secretary of State

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Buddhist monastic education. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of Buddhist monastic schools.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working at MoCR?
2. Where did you work before joining MoCR?

III. General school background:

3. How many Buddhist schools are there at all levels throughout Cambodia? (If cannot answer on the spot, will ask to send the number later)
4. How many students in total? Are they all monks? Are they all male?
5. Do you have data on how many monks have left the monkhood in the last five years?
6. What is the method of collecting relevant statistics?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

7. From your knowledge, could you share with us the procedure of recruiting directors for Buddhist monastic schools in general? How are the school directors trained?
8. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained? May we access your teacher training materials, if any?
9. How many teachers are there? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
10. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status? How many teachers are monks?
11. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback? In your opinion, what additional supports do teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

12. Do you think the subjects being taught respond to all the students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
13. How often does the curriculum change?
14. Do you think there are enough materials for the teacher to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
15. Are the teachers well trained to teach all subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?

VI. Funding:

16. Besides providing salaries to teachers, what other financial supports does MoCR provide to the school to operate?

VII. Policy and partners:

17. Are there inter-ministerial collaborations between MoEYS and MoCR regarding the Buddhist monastic education system? If yes, could you tell us what they are?
18. In your opinion, what opportunities are there for UNICEF to engage with MoCR to improve the Buddhist education system?

Individual interview guide for Kampong Cham Provincial Department of Cults and Religion

I. Introduction:

Good morning / afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Buddhist monastic education. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of Buddhist monastic schools.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working in MoCR?
2. Where did you work before joining MoCR?

III. General school background:

3. How many Buddhist schools are there at all levels in Kampong Cham? (If cannot answer on the spot, will ask to send the number later)
4. How many students are there in total? Are they all monks? Are they all male?
5. Do you have data on how many monks left the monkhood in the last five years? Is this a day school or boarding school?
6. What is the method of collecting relevant statistics?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

7. From your knowledge, could you share with us the procedure of recruiting directors for Buddhist monastic schools? How are the school directors trained?
8. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained? May we access your teacher training materials, if any?
9. How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
10. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status? How many teachers are monks?

- 11. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
- 12. In your opinion, what additional supports might teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

- 13. Do you think all subjects being taught respond to students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
- 14. How often does the curriculum change?
- 15. Do you think there are enough materials for the teacher to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
- 16. Are teachers well trained to teach all subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?

VI. Funding:

- 17. Besides providing salaries to teachers, what other financial supports does MoCR provide to the school to operate?

VII. Policy and partners:

- 18. Are there inter-ministerial collaborations between MoEYS and MoCR regarding the Buddhist monastic education system? If yes, could you tell us what they are?
- 19. In your opinion, what opportunities are there for UNICEF to engage with MoCR to improve the Buddhist education system?

Individual interview guide for Kampong Cham Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Islamic schools. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and the challenges of Islamic schools operating in your province.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working at MoEYS?
2. Where did you work before joining MoEYS?

III. General school background:

3. How many Islamic schools are there at all levels in Kampong Cham? (If cannot answer on the spot, will ask to send the number later)
4. How many students are there in total?
5. What is the method of collecting relevant statistics?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

6. Could you share with us the procedure of recruiting school directors for Islamic schools in general? How are the school directors trained?
7. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained? How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status? How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
9. In your opinion, what additional supports do teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

10. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
11. How often does the curriculum change?
12. Do you think there are enough materials for the teacher to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
13. Are teachers well trained to teach all subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?

VI. Funding:

14. Besides providing salaries to teachers, what other financial support does MoEYS provide to Islamic schools to operate?

VII. Policy and partners:

15. In your opinion, what opportunities are there for UNICEF to engage with MoEYS to improve the Islamic school education system?

Individual interview guide for Save the Children

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on floating school in regard to quality, curriculum, teacher training and assessments, as well as the overview of Save the Children's current program for floating communities/schools.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. What are your positions at Save the Children?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. We would like to know more about your work. What are your current projects/initiatives?

III. School background:

4. How do you define floating schools? How many primary schools are there? How many lower secondary schools?
5. Typically, what are the student ratios (boys to girls)? What are the teacher ratios (male to female)?
6. What are the school hours/seasons? Are flexible hours offered for working children?
7. Typically, are they day schools or boarding schools?
8. What types of students and families attend floating schools?
9. Do you know how many water-based community schools are currently operating in Cambodia?
10. How do floating schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do they receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support school operations?

IV. School environment:

11. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of floating schools? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
12. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?

V. School directors and teachers

13. How are teachers and school directors recruited? How many female and male teachers are in the school? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
14. How are teachers trained?
15. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
16. Do teachers have consistent salaries?
17. What are teachers' perceptions of the quality, consistency (such as teacher absenteeism or other factors), type of education and educational outcomes?
18. What other roles, if any, do teachers have in the community?
19. In what ways could teachers be better supported?
20. Do all teachers at this school have civil service status?

VI. Curriculum and pedagogy:

21. Typically, what age groups and grade levels do schools offer?
22. What curriculum do schools use? How often does the curriculum change?
23. What is the language of instruction?
24. Are other languages used during school hours?
25. How are students awarded or disciplined? Is corporal punishment practiced?
26. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?
27. Are there any extracurricular activities (religious activities, sports, etc.) offered to students outside of academic classes?

VII. Educational outcomes:

28. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
29. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
30. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
31. What are the key challenges that students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VIII. Funding and fees:

32. How do floating schools manage to meet their operating costs? Do they receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support school operations?
33. Who decides how the funding is allocated and used?
34. Do families pay fees to send their children to school? If so, what are the fees for and how much are they (annually)?

- 35. Are children from low-income families exempt from paying fees? Do schools offer scholarships?
- 36. Do many schools participate in a cash transfer or food for education programme?
- 37. Do many schools have incentives to attract and keep girls or ethnic minority students in school?

IX. Closing questions:

- 38. What additional information should we know about floating schools that we may not think to ask?
- 39. Typically, are floating schools interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that they do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be the most impactful?

Interview Guide for school director at Wat Thmey Buddhist monastic school

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Buddhist monastic education. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of your school.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working in the education field?
2. How long have you been working as this school's director?
3. Why did you decide to become the director of this school?

III. School background:

4. How many classrooms does your school have?
5. How many grades?
6. How many students in total? Are they all monks? Are they all male?
7. How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. Is this a day or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attend your school?
10. What have some of the alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?
11. Do a lot of your alumni leave the monkhood after they finish school?

IV. School directors and teacher recruitment:

12. From your knowledge and own experience, could you share with us the procedure of recruiting directors for Buddhist monastic schools in general?
13. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained? May we access your teacher training materials, if any?
14. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status? How many teachers are monks?

15. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
16. In your opinion, what additional supports do teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

17. What are the subjects currently being taught in your school? What curriculum does the school use? How is it similar or different to the state school curriculum?
18. What is the language of instruction?
19. How often does the curriculum change?
20. Do you think the subjects being taught respond to all students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
21. Do you think there are enough materials for the teacher to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
22. Are the teachers well trained to teach all subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?
23. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?

VI. Educational outcomes:

24. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
25. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
26. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
27. What are the key challenges that your students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VII. Funding and fees:

28. How does your school manage to meet its operating costs? Do you receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support your school's operations?

VIII. School environment:

29. What basic resources does the school have? What resources would the school like to have, that it does not currently have?
30. What are the infrastructure needs of the school?
31. Is the school building used for other purposes (religious ceremonies, community events, etc.)?
32. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
33. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?
34. How accessible is the school for children with disabilities?

IX. Policy and partnerships:

- 35. Do you work with local and/or central education authorities? If so, how?
- 36. Do you work with the local and/or central organizations of your religious/ethnic denomination to deliver education? If so, how?
- 37. Do you work with other schools? If so, how?
- 38. Have you been invited to be part of national or local education policy-making initiatives, or education budget planning processes?
- 39. How often are changes made to school policies?
- 40. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?

Interview guide for Roka Popram primary school director

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on school's ability in accommodating students from Cham Muslim communities.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working in the education field?
2. How long have you been working as this school's director?
3. Why did you decide to become the director of this school?

III. School background:

4. How many classrooms does your school have?
5. How many grades?
6. How many students in total? How many are from Cham Muslim community?
7. How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. Is this a day or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attend your school?
10. What have some of the alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?

IV. Teacher recruitment:

11. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained?
12. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
13. In your opinion, what additional supports do teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

14. What are the subjects currently being taught in your school? What curriculum does the school use?

15. What is the language of instruction?
16. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all students particularly Cham Muslim students are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
17. Do you think there are enough materials for the teacher to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
18. Are the teachers well trained to teach all subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?

VI. Educational outcomes:

19. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
20. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
21. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
22. What are the key challenges that your students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VIII. School environment:

23. What basic resources does the school have? What resources would the school like to have, that it does not currently have?
24. What are the infrastructure needs of the school?
25. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
26. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?
27. How accessible is the school for children with disabilities?

IX. Policy and partnerships:

28. Do you work with local and/or central education authorities? If so, how?
29. Do you work with the local and/or central organizations of your religious/ethnic denomination to deliver education? If so, how?
30. Do you work with other schools? If so, how?
31. Have you been invited to be part of national or local education policy-making initiatives, or education budget planning processes?
32. How often are changes made to school policies?
33. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?

Interview guide for Samdach Chungath Buddhist secondary and high school, school director

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Buddhist monastic education. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of your school.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working in the education field?
2. How long have you been working as this school's director?
3. Why did you decide to become the director of this school?

III. School background:

4. How many classrooms does your school have?
5. How many grades?
6. How many students in total? Are they all monks? Are they all male?
7. How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. Is this a day school or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attend your school?
10. What have some of the alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?
11. Do a lot of your alumni leave the monkhood after they finish school?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

12. From your knowledge and own experience, could you share with us the procedure of recruiting directors for Buddhist monastic schools in general?
13. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained? May we access your teacher training materials, if any?

14. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status? How many teachers are monks?
15. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
16. In your opinion, what additional supports do teachers need to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

17. What are the subjects currently being taught in your school? What curriculum does the school use? How is it similar or different to the state school curriculum?
18. What is the language of instruction?
19. How often is the curriculum changed?
20. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
21. Do you think there are enough materials for teachers to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
22. Are the teachers well trained to teach all subjects? If not, what could be done improve their teaching?
23. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?

VI. Educational outcomes:

24. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
25. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
26. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
27. What are the key challenges that your students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VII. Funding and fees:

28. How does your school manage to meet its operating costs? Do you receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support your school's operations?

VIII. School environment:

29. What basic resources does the school have? What resources would the school like to have, that it does not currently have?
30. What are the infrastructure needs of the school?
31. Is the school building used for other purposes (religious ceremonies, community events, etc.)?
32. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?

- 33. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?
- 34. How accessible is the school for children with disabilities?

IX. Policy and partnerships:

- 35. Do you work with local and/or central education authorities? If so, how?
- 36. Do you work with the local and/or central organizations of your religious/ethnic denomination to deliver education? If so, how?
- 37. Do you work with other schools? If so, how?
- 38. Have you been invited to be part of national or local education policy-making initiatives, or education budget planning processes?
- 39. How often are changes made to school policies?
- 40. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?

Interview guide for Samdach Chungath Buddhist secondary and high school, student focus group

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your opinions of Buddhist monastic education in general and also your own experience as student in this Buddhist Monastic School.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. Can you introduce yourself a little bit? What is your name? Which grade are you in and what subjects are you learning?
2. Where is your hometown?
3. How long does it take you to commute to school daily?

III. Classroom environment:

4. How many students are in your class(es)?
5. Can you tell us a little bit about the seating arrangement?
6. Are the chairs and tables in good condition?
7. Are your classmate monks? If so, how many?
8. Do you have classmates with disabilities?

IV. Curriculum:

9. How many hours do you study per day?
10. What are the subjects that you are currently studying? How long for each subject?
11. What are your favourite and least favourite subjects? Why?
12. Are there any ICT subjects?

V. Teachers:

- 13. How many teachers do you have this semester? Are they all monks? Are they all male?
- 14. Do they come to class on time?
- 15. How are students awarded or disciplined? Is corporal punishment practiced?
- 16. Do you think that your teachers are well prepared and knowledgeable of the subjects that they teach you?

VI. Challenges:

- 17. Do you face any financial challenge in coming to study here?
- 18. Do you think what you learn will prepare you to get a decent job when you graduate and leave the monkhood?
- 19. Do you have enough learning materials?

Interview guide for Samdach Chungath Buddhist secondary and high school, teacher focus group

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions of Buddhist monastic education. We are interested in learning more about the quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges of your school.

This interview will take about one hour. Do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, which includes myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. Can you introduce yourself a little bit? Which grade and subjects do you teach? How long have you been teaching in this school? Why did you choose to become a teacher?
2. Where is your hometown? How long does it take you to commute to school each day?
3. Did you receive any pre-service training before starting teaching? If yes, for how long? Who provided it?
4. Have you received any in-service professional development training? If yes, for how long? Who provided it?

III. Classroom environment:

5. How many students in your classroom?
6. Can you tell us a little bit about the seating arrangement?
7. Are the chairs and tables in good condition?
8. Do you have students who are not monks?
9. Do you have students with disabilities?
10. Are you satisfied with your classroom environment?

IV. Curriculum:

11. How many hours do you teach per day?
12. What are the subjects that you are currently teaching? How long for each subject?
13. Are there any ICT subjects in this school? (computer class, etc.)

- 14. Have you received any training on how to use the current curriculum?
- 15. What are the difficulties in following this curriculum?
- 16. Besides textbooks, do you have access to teacher guidebooks or any other supplementary documents to assist in your teaching?
- 17. Do you feel like you have enough material to effectively teach your subjects? If not, what additional supports do you need?
- 18. Have you ever received feedback on your teaching?
- 19. What professional challenges are you currently facing?

V. In-service and pre-service teacher training:

- 20. Did you receive any pre-service training before teaching? If yes, for how long? Who provided it? What were the subjects offered?
- 21. Have you received any in-service professional development training? If yes, for how long? Who provided it? If not, would you like to have such training? On what areas?

Interview guide for Wat Hanchey Buddhist primary school, school deputy director

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

Currently, we are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Buddhist monastic education in regard to quality, curriculum, teacher training, assessments and challenges that you are facing as the school deputy director.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, we will be taking notes and recording. Do you mind if we record this interview? It will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can change your mind and stop at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you been working in the education field?
2. How long have you been working as this school's deputy director?
3. Why did you decide to become the deputy director of this school?

III. School background:

4. How many classrooms does your school have?
5. How many grades?
6. How many students in total? Are they all monks? Are they all male?
7. How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. Is this a day school or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attend your school?
10. What have some of the alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?
11. Do a lot of your alumni leave the monkhood after they finish school?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

12. From your knowledge and own experience, could you share with us the procedure of recruiting directors for Buddhist monastic schools in general?
13. How about teacher recruitment? How are teachers trained? May we access your teacher training materials, if any?

14. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status? How many teachers are monks?
15. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and provided feedback?
16. In your opinion, what additional supports are needed for teachers to perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

17. What are the subjects currently being taught in your school? What curriculum does the school use? How is it similar or different to the state school curriculum?
18. What is the language of instruction?
19. How often is the curriculum changed?
20. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
21. Do you think there are enough materials for the teachers to teach all subjects? If not, what materials are needed?
22. Are the teachers well trained to teach all the subjects? If not, what could be done to improve their teaching?
23. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?

VI. Educational outcomes:

24. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
25. Does the school participate in student learning assessments? If so, which ones?
26. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
27. What are the key challenges that your students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)? Specifically, do students face any challenges regarding recognition of private school qualifications?

VII. Funding and fees:

28. How does your school manage to meet its operating costs? Do you receive support from private and/or public sources? How sustainable is this funding to support your school's operations?

VIII. School environment:

29. What basic resources does the school have? What resources would the school like to have, that it does not currently have?
30. What are the infrastructure needs of the school?
31. Is the school building used for other purposes (religious ceremonies, community events, etc.)?
32. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?

- 33. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?
- 34. How accessible is the school for children with disabilities?

IX. Policy and partnerships:

- 35. Do you work with local and/or central education authorities? If so, how?
- 36. Do you work with the local and/or central organizations of your religious/ethnic denomination to deliver education? If so, how?
- 37. Do you work with other schools? If so, how?
- 38. Have you been invited to be part of national or local education policy-making initiatives, or education budget planning processes?
- 39. How often are changes made to school policies?
- 40. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?

Interview guide for Islamic school teachers

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

We are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Islamic education with regard to quality, curriculum, school operations, teacher training, leadership training and assessments. We would also like to understand the challenges you are facing as a teacher.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. Can you please introduce yourself and share a bit about your background? How long have you been teaching at this school? What were your motivations for becoming a teacher?
2. Where is your hometown? How long is your commute to school each day?

III. Classroom environment:

3. Which grade and subjects do you teach?
4. How many students do you have in your classroom?
5. What communities do your students come from? (Are they from the Cham community?)
6. Can you tell us a little bit about the seating arrangement?
7. Are the chairs and tables in good condition?
8. Are you satisfied with your classroom environment? If yes, could you elaborate a little bit more? If not, why?

IV. Curriculum:

9. What is your schedule? How many hours do you teach per day?
10. What are the subjects that you are currently teaching? How long for each subject?
11. Does the school offer ICT subjects or access to ICT equipment?
12. Do you experience any difficulty in following this curriculum? If so, what difficulties have you experienced?
13. Aside from textbooks, do you have access to teacher guidebooks or any other supplementary materials to assist in your teaching?

14. Do you feel that you have enough material to effectively teach your subjects? If not, what additional support would be most impactful?
15. Has the Mufti come to observe your teaching? Have you ever received feedback on your teaching and/or classroom management?
16. Currently, what professional challenges are you experiencing?

V. Teacher training:

17. Did you receive any pre-service training? If yes, for how long? Who provided it? What subjects were offered?
18. Have you received any in-service professional development training? If yes, for how long? Who provided it? If not, would you like to be offered in-service training opportunities? What areas would be most impactful?

Interview guide for Islamic school directors

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

We are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on Islamic education with regard to quality, curriculum, school operations, teacher training, leadership training and assessments. We would also like to understand the challenges you are facing as the school director.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. How long have you worked in the education sector?
2. How long have you worked as a school director? How long have you been the director here?
3. What were your motivations for becoming the director of this school?

III. School and student background:

4. How many classrooms does this school have?
5. How many grade levels?
6. How many students in total? How many male and how many female students?
7. How many teachers? How many male and how many female teachers? Are there minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. Is this a day school or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attend your school?
10. Has the number of student drop outs increased or decreased over the last three years?
11. What are some of the reasons that students drop out or attend irregularly?
12. What have some of the alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

13. From your knowledge and own experience, could you share the school director recruitment process for Islamic schools?
14. Have you received any professional development opportunities since becoming school director?
15. In your opinion, what additional support would help school directors perform better?
16. What is the teacher recruitment process? Do teachers receive any training?
17. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status?
18. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?

19. Does your school experience any difficulty retaining teachers?
20. In your opinion, what additional support would help teachers perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

21. What subjects are currently offered at this school? What curriculum does the school use?
22. What is the language of instruction?
23. How often is the curriculum changed?
24. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all the students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
25. Are there enough materials for teachers and students? If not, what materials are needed?
26. Are teachers trained in all subjects? If not, what would improve their teaching methods?
27. How often does the Mufti visit the school for monitoring?
28. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?

VI. Educational outcomes:

29. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
30. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
31. What are the key challenges that students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)?

VII. Funding and fees:

32. How does your school manage to meet its operating costs? Do you receive support from private and/or public sources?

VIII. School environment:

33. What basic resources does the school have? What resources would the school like to have, that it does not currently have?
34. What are the infrastructure needs of the school?
35. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
36. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills?
37. How accessible is the school for children with disabilities?

IX. Policy and partnerships:

38. Do you work with local and/or central education authorities? If so, how?
39. Has your school ever worked with local NGOs or international organizations?
40. Do you work with other schools? If so, how?
41. Have you been invited to participate in national or local education policy-making initiatives, or education budget planning processes?
42. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?

Interview guide for floating school directors

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

We are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on education with regard to quality, curriculum, school operations, teacher training, leadership training and assessments. We would also like to understand the challenges you face as the school director.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background questions:

1. How long have you worked in the education sector?
2. How long have you worked as a school director? How long have you been the school director here?
3. What were your motivations for becoming the school director at this school?

III. School and student background:

4. How many classrooms does this school have?
5. How many grades?
6. How many students in total? Are they all from Khmer households?
7. How many teachers? Are they all male? What are the minimum male-to-female ratio requirements?
8. Is this a day school or boarding school?
9. What types of students and families attend this school?
10. Is student attendance regular?
11. Has the number of student drop outs increased or decreased over the last three years?
12. What are some reasons why students drop out or attend irregularly?
13. Typically, how do students travel to and from school?
14. What have some of the school alumni done after school? Do they stay in the community or move?

IV. School director and teacher recruitment:

15. From your knowledge and own experience, could you share the school director recruitment process in floating schools?
16. Have you received any professional development opportunities since becoming School director?
17. In your opinion, what additional support would help School directors perform better?
18. What is the teacher recruitment process? Do teachers receive any training?
19. How many teachers are contract teachers? How many have civil service status?
20. How are teachers remunerated? How are teachers evaluated and given feedback?
21. Does your school experience any difficulty in retaining teachers?
22. In your opinion, what additional support would help teachers perform better?

V. Curriculum and pedagogy:

23. What subjects are currently offered at this school? What curriculum does the school use?
24. What is the language of instruction?
25. How often is the curriculum changed?
26. Do you think all the subjects being taught respond to all students and are relevant to current social needs? What subjects do you think are missing and should be taught?
27. Are there enough materials for teachers and students? If not, what materials are needed?
28. Are teachers trained to teach all subject offerings? If not, what would improve their teaching methods?
29. How often does DOE visit the school for monitoring?
30. Are there facilities or services for children with disabilities?

VI. Educational outcomes:

31. What are the learning benchmarks associated with each grade?
32. How are these education evaluations administered? How is testing organized?
33. What are the key challenges that students face in progressing to higher education (secondary school or university)?

VII. Funding and fees:

34. How does your school manage to meet its operating costs? Do you receive support from private and/or public sources?

VIII. School environment:

- 35. What basic resources does the school have? What resources would the school like to have, that it does not currently have?
- 36. What are the infrastructure needs of the school?
- 37. What are the water, health and sanitation challenges of the school? Is there running water at all times? Electricity? Separate toilets for girls and boys?
- 38. Do students and teachers have access to computers? Internet? Other technology? Would teachers like more training on working with and teaching ICT skills to students?
- 39. How accessible is the school for children with and without disabilities? (School accessibility)

IX. Policy and partnerships:

- 40. Do you work with local and/or central education authorities? If so, how?
- 41. Has your school ever worked with local NGOs or international organizations?
- 42. Do you work with other schools? If so, how?
- 43. Have you been invited to participate in national or local education policy-making initiatives, or education budget planning processes?
- 44. Are you interested in working with UNICEF or another organization that you do not currently work with? If so, in what ways could UNICEF or another partner be most impactful to your school (policy, curriculum, gender equality, WASH)?

Interview guide for floating school teachers

I. Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this discussion and share your understanding and experiences with us. My name is Meredith Lunsford and this is my colleague, Solyda, who will help with translation.

We are conducting research on Buddhist monastic schools, Islamic schools and floating schools to generate baseline knowledge of these three education systems. We are here to discuss your knowledge and opinions on education with regard to quality, curriculum, school operations, teacher training, leadership training and assessments. We would also like to understand the challenges you are facing as a teacher.

This interview will take about one hour. During this time, do you mind if we take notes? They will not be shared with anyone outside of our research team, myself, Solyda, Safa and Katheryn. As part of the research ethics followed by UNICEF, it is important to point out that it is not compulsory for you to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

II. Personal background:

1. Can you please introduce yourself and share a bit about your background? How long have you been teaching in this school? What were your motivations for becoming a teacher?
2. Where is your hometown? How long is your commute to school each day? What is your means of transportation?

III. Classroom environment:

3. Which grade and subjects do you teach?
4. How many students do you have in your classroom?
5. What communities do your students come from? (Are they from Khmer, Vietnamese or another community?)
6. Can you tell us a little bit about the seating arrangement?
7. Are the chairs and tables in good condition?
8. Are you satisfied with your classroom environment? If yes, could you elaborate a little bit more? If not, why?

IV. Curriculum:

9. What is your schedule? How many hours do you teach per day?
10. What are the subjects that you are currently teaching? For how long do you teach each subject?
11. Does the school offer ICT subjects or access to ICT equipment?
12. Do you experience any difficulty in following this curriculum? If so, what difficulties have you experienced?

- 13. Aside from textbooks, do you have access to teacher guidebooks or any other supplementary materials to assist in your teaching?
- 14. Do you feel that you have enough material to effectively teach your subjects? If not, what additional support would be most impactful?
- 15. Has the DOE come to observe your teaching? Have you ever received feedback on your teaching and/or classroom management?
- 16. Currently, what professional challenges are you experiencing?

V. Teacher training:

- 17. Did you receive any pre-service training? If yes, for how long? Who provided it? What were the subjects offered?
- 18. Have you received any in-service professional development training? If yes, for how long? Who provided it? If not, would you like to be offered in-service training opportunities? What areas would be most impactful?

