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ASEAN-UK SAGE | Supporting the Advancement of Girls' Education

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RAPID SCAN
EDTECH IN CAMBODIA

INTRODUCTION

This country scan outlines the prospects of using EdTech in Cambodia as part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and UK Supporting the Advancement of Girls' Education programme (ASEAN-UK SAGE). The programme is a UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) programme for ASEAN and Timor-Leste. Other partners in the programme include EdTech Hub, the ASEAN Secretariat, the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Office (SEAMEO), the British Council, and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- Cambodia is a lower-middle-income country shifting from a primarily agricultural economy to an industrial one. This process has led to changing economic demands for skills and knowledge.
- The government's Pentagonal Strategy is designed to meet Cambodia's '2050 Vision' of becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income nation by 2050. The strategy sets out goals for quality education, technical skills training, and building 'digital government' and 'digital citizens' (↑Royal Government of Cambodia, 2023).

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CAMBODIA

A top-level summary of policy, partnerships, and challenges

POLICY

The Education Strategic Plan 2019–2023 (↑Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports [MOYES], 2019) is centred around activities to improve teacher professional development and various education reforms, including higher education reform and improving assessment and the curriculum. It focuses on two key mid-term policies:

1 Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

2 Ensuring effective leadership and management of education staff at all levels.

PARTNERSHIPS

Key development partners in education include (but are not limited to) UNICEF, UNESCO, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and the World Bank. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has also partnered with the private sector to support EdTech usage.
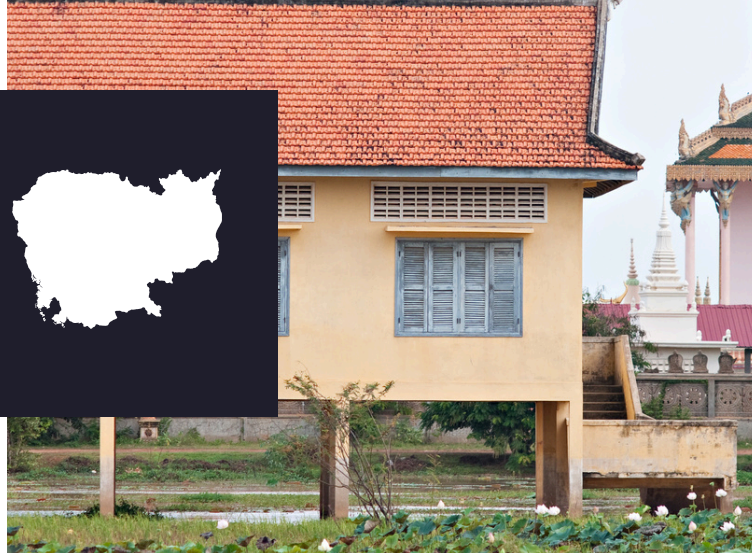
CHALLENGES

Digitalisation is a central theme in Cambodia's plans for education development. For instance, digital education and technology for education management are cross-cutting themes in the Teacher Policy Action Plan for 2023–2030 (↑MOYES, 2023). However, a lack of information and communication technology (ICT) competencies hinders achieving these goals. Compared to Southeast Asian neighbours, such as Vietnam and Singapore, ↑International Telecommunication Union (2023) data suggests that ICT skills in Cambodia are sparse.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN & YOUTH (OOSCY)

- The World Bank reports that over 13% of children of primary school age in Cambodia are out of school, and dropout rates tend to increase at higher levels of education. Significant divides exist between rural and urban areas, with children from urban areas more likely to finish schooling (↑World Bank, 2023).
- Cambodia provides both formal and non-formal pathways to vocational training. Although some programmes use technology to reach OOSCY and provide flexible learning options, there is little evidence to suggest these are more successful than traditional educational methods.

GIRLS' EDUCATION

- In 2020, Cambodia ranked 144th on the Gender Inequality Index.
- While girls have higher rates of enrolment and lower rates of dropout compared to boys, gender inequality issues remain a continuing challenge. Unpaid domestic and care work disproportionately falls to women, which often prevents them from completing their education. According to ↑UNESCO (2023), in rural communities, girls' education is less valued than boys', and girls are not taught life skills.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- ↑International Telecommunication Union (2023) data suggests that mobile phone ownership and mobile-cellular network coverage are high in Cambodia. Cellular networks are the primary way to access the internet. Computer ownership is low nationwide.
- The urban–rural divide should be considered when designing educational programmes. According to the 2019 census, 76% of households in rural areas have electricity, and 38.8% have access to the internet, compared to 87% and 56.4% of urban households, respectively (↑Royal Government of Cambodia, 2020).

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ABOUT ASEAN-UK SAGE

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

LICENCE

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