



Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport  
Education Research Council

*Editorial*

### **Why is School-based Management (SBM) in Cambodia?**

Chankoulika BO

Department of Policy,

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

(Correspondence: [bo.chankoulika@moeys.gov.kh](mailto:bo.chankoulika@moeys.gov.kh))

**Citation:** BO, Ch.K. (2019). Why is School-based Management (SBM) in Cambodia? *Cambodia Education Review*, 3(1), 1 – 3.

---

School-based management (SBM) has been discursively permeated in policies in many countries around the globe as a concretized form of decentralization and an instrument for ensuring education quality since the 1980s. Decentralization in this case is the process of transferring authority or decision-making from the central level of the government to the local government (council) or line of bureaucracy (e.g., school). In educational decentralization, the school has transferred or devolved certain authorities and responsibilities to make decisions on significant matters related to the school operation in line with the nation's policies and frameworks on curriculum and instruction, standards and assessment, transparency, and accountability (Caldwell, 2005, p. 13).

SBM has been implemented in many developed and developing countries in many forms. Some countries have set out SBM in national policies and laws and impose the implementation of SBM across the entire nation. Some countries have still incrementally and cautiously

implemented SBM through piloting projects in some targeted schools. Although the concept underlining SBM is the managerial/structural reform of neoliberal policies, SBM takes many forms based on national, social, political and cultural contexts. The form of SBM generally differs in terms of the levels of responsibility and authority and to whom the authority is devolved. The devolution of authority may cover several or all elements of school operation, such as allocating the school budget, hiring and firing school directors and teachers, setting the curriculum, selecting textbooks and instructional materials, and improving the facility's infrastructure. Some SBM programs entail the devolution of a few insignificant authorities that have minimal impact on the student learning outcomes and significant policies.

There are many anecdotes and research findings on the effect of SBM on the education system (Blank, 2004; Caldwell, 2005; Conley, 1993). The proponents of SBM assert that SBM increases participation in decision-making, which affects the teaching and learning at school. The opponents of SBM argue that SBM seems to have a minimal effect on teaching and learning; it merely results in a change in governance structure strengthened by the principles of accountabilities and transparency claimed by neoliberal policies. Another dimension to consider is to whom the authority is devolved. All SBM results in restructuring the governance of the school to a greater or lesser extent. Whatever its aspect and form, SBM at least consists of the devolution of authority to school directors or to school directors, teachers, parents and the community through a parent committee. The comprehensive aspect of SBM is the devolution of authority to a school management committee, which consists of school directors, teachers and various types of communities.

Based on the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2014–2018, the vision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) is “to establish and develop human resources of the very highest quality and ethics in order to develop a knowledge-based society within Cambodia” (MoEYS, 2014, p. 12). The envisioned knowledge-based society is a society with fast and sustainable development in which people have comprehensive knowledge of technology, a deep understanding of culture and decent living standards, living with happiness, peace and dignity. This envisioned society is in line with the Rectangular Strategy Phase III and the Industrial Development Policy 2015–2025, which aims to shift Cambodia from a low-income country to an upper medium-

income country in 2030 and a high-income country in 2050. MoEYS has introduced policies on decentralization and deconcentration to sub-educational authorities, particularly schools, through the implementation of SBM in order to achieve educational goals and local ownership (MoEYS, 2014, p. 12). Cambodia is subscribed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to achieve Goal 4 of SDGs, the MoEYS has adopted Cambodian Education Roadmap 2030 and the National Policy on Lifelong Learning that are required more roles of schools to make the learning happening at school.

A large proportion of MoEYS's annual budget will be allocated for SBM and all educational stakeholders are called upon for strong involvement and support in improving student learning at school. The internal actors in the schools, such as school directors, administrative staffs and teachers, are under pressure to improve the outcomes of schooling, which seems relatively simple and straightforward in theory but, however, is complex in practice. This issue will cover articles related to several aspects of teaching and learning at school under the SBM reform, such as the initial teacher education for teachers, continuous professional development, school directorship and concept-based learning. These articles may shed light for policy makers, educational practitioners, school directors and teachers in policy formulation and the practice of SBM.

### **References:**

- Blank, M. J. (2004). *How community schools make a difference. Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 62-65.
- Caldwell, B. J. (2005). *School-based management (Vol. 3)*: Citeseer.
- Conley, D. T. (1993). *Roadmap to Restructuring: Policies, Practices and the Emerging Visions of Schooling*: ERIC.
- MoEYS. (2014). *Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018*. Phnom Penh