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A roadmap for teacher policy development in Cambodia: learning from international experience, application and best practice

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Abstract

This paper aims to consider strategic actions and policies for teachers based on international trends, issues and good practices. It attempts to give recommendations for the development of teachers for Cambodia based on the author's consideration and discussion with experts in education sector in Cambodia and abroad. Cambodia became a member of the International Teacher Task Force (ITTF) in 2015. The membership encourages Cambodia to take serious actions on teacher issues towards enhancing quality of teaching and learning environment. As a result, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGoC) made a strong attempt to develop teacher policy reform measures in order to upgrade competencies of teachers to improve school-based performance. In this paper, a desk review was used to examine teacher capacity improvement and the skills required to achieve it, by focusing on: good international practices in teacher policies in Asia the Pacific Region and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries as well as good practices from the 10 policy dimensions of the World Bank's SABER-Teachers program. The paper is structured around these 10 policy dimensions: the requirements for teachers to enter and remain in teaching; initial teacher preparation; recruitment and employment; teacher workloads and autonomy; professional development; compensation; retirement rules and benefits; monitoring and evaluation of teacher quality; teacher representation and voice; and school leadership. Finally,

the paper provides reflections and recommendations for better teacher policy development and implementation based on the experiences, lessons learned, and best practices of the SABER-Teacher's 10 teacher policy dimensions.

Keywords Teacher policy, Teacher competency, and Teacher Quality Assurance System.

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1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, Cambodia has made vigorous attempts at effective education reform to restore, reconstruct and develop the country since it was crippled due to the great loss of resources during the civil war in the 1970s (Phin, 2014a). In 1979, the rebirth of education sector in Cambodia represented a historically unique experience from that of any other nation. In the early 1980s, all levels of schooling were re-opened from kindergarten to university. Many teachers were trained and quality gradually enhanced (Dy, 2004). It is a fact that competent teachers do help contribute to student learning and promote the level of education quality (Phin, 2014b). At the same time, it is very important to provide teacher-educators with support in terms of enhancing their qualifications as well as providing them with field experiences (Zein and Haing, 2017).

Cambodia became a member of the International Teacher Task Force (ITTF) in November 2015 after the RGoC adopted its Teacher Policy in May 2013 and the Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP) in January 2015. Cambodia's commitment to teacher reforms was recognized by its election to be a member of the Steering Committee and co-chair of Asia and the Pacific Region of the ITTF mandated for two years, 2016 and 2017 (MoEYS, 2016). Based on its commitment, Cambodia was voted by the Steering Committee members to host the ITTF annual meeting and the 9th Policy Dialogue Forum in Siem Reap in December 2016. The Forum brought in over 300 international and national participants from over 100 countries and organizations from all over the world. The TPAP was shared to all participants to demonstrate Cambodia's development experience of teacher reform and its

commitment to improve the quality of teachers and teacher training under the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals number 4C¹ (SDG#4C) (MoEYS, 2016).

The competent teachers need to effectively teach the knowledge and skills that our young people demand in this rapidly changing world. Teacher issues are of huge concern to many education leaders. Schleicher (2012) raises several questions in his recently published book such as, what can teacher preparation and continuing professional development do to prepare graduates to teach well in a 21st century classroom? The question draws our attention to seriously look into many aspects of our education systems: quality of teacher recruiting systems; the type of education recruits obtain before they start working; how they are monitored and what education and support they get; how their compensation is structured; how to improve performance of struggling teachers; and, to enhance development among the best teachers.

Like other countries, Cambodia fully understands that teachers are key to ensuring effective teaching and learning in the classroom. The 2008 World Bank study on teaching in Cambodia observed that the important and pending assignment for Cambodia was the upgrading teacher skills levels, improving teacher performance and raising teacher's pay (Adelman *et al.*, 2007). With growing concern on quality of teachers and a belief that quality teaching brought children into school and kept them there for their desired period of schooling – Hence, Cambodia embarked on the process of making a teacher policy to guide comprehensive teacher management and development towards improvement of its education system and to stay abreast with the rapid changes in Asia's 21st Century as well as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) integration in 2015.

¹SDG#4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Major progress has been made in access to education, specifically at the primary school level, for both boys and girls. However, access does not always mean quality of education, or completion of primary school. Currently, 103 million youth worldwide still lack basic literacy skills, and more than 60% of those are women. Target 1 of Goal 4 is to ensure that, by 2030, all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education. For detail: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.

As the leading institution in this work, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) established an implementation committee for the teacher reform comprising a Steering Committee and a Technical Working Group to guide the development of the policy (MoEYS, 2016). The mission of the Steering Committee is to give general directions and decisions on the implementation milestones and approval of the strategic policy documents.

The Teacher Policy Action Plan was prepared based on the situations of Cambodia applying the guiding principles of the 10 policy dimensions identified by the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)-Teachers program. The SABER-Teacher's 10 teacher policy dimensions are: (1) requirements to enter and remain in teaching; (2) initial teacher preparation; (3) recruitment and employment; (4) teachers' workload and autonomy; (5) professional development; (6) compensation (i.e., salaries and non-salary benefits); (7) retirement rules and benefits; (8); monitoring and evaluation of teacher quality; (9) teacher representation and voice; and (10) school leadership.

Accordingly, this paper aims to draw best practice, experience and application of World Bank's SABER-Teachers program in developed countries for teacher reform planning and policy implementation in Cambodia. The research is based on a desk review of relevant recent publications in the form of books and articles in academic peer-reviewed journals to gain understandings on capacity of teachers, their skills and support required. The review pays particular attention to (a) international good practices in teacher policies in Asia and the Pacific Region as well as OECD countries (i.e., Sweden and Finland); (b) prepares a synthesis of good practices around the World Bank's SABER-Teachers' 10 policy dimensions; and, (c) prepares a set of policy recommendations under each dimension and each policy goal to be considered for drafting Cambodia's teacher policy reform measures.

2. The tractice of the World Bank's SABER-Teachers program

2.1. Entering and remaining in teaching

Many education systems in the Asia Pacific Region have faced tremendous challenges in recruiting high-quality graduates as teachers, particularly in disadvantaged areas, and retaining them once they are hired. Only very few countries have succeeded in matching the supply of

high-quality to the demand, sometimes through mutual pledges and effective support systems of motivation and compensation.

High quality schooling depends chiefly on qualified teachers and their performance. Teaching qualifications, however, are administratively defined by relatively objective assessments of skills, abilities and knowledge that are recognized as key elements to enhance quality of teaching (UNESCO, 2005). Teacher preparation and retention of qualified teachers remain huge challenges for many developing countries like Cambodia for various reasons, including lack of professional status and low compensation. Currently, in many countries despite an overall overproduction and oversupply of new teachers, there nevertheless appear to be substantial numbers of students without access to qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2008).

The quality of teaching is closely associated with the qualification standards required of newly-recruited teachers. Upgrading the qualifications of teachers has a very high positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers are placed at the front line to deliver effective teaching, provide needed learning support and share knowledge and experience of the world to their respective students and colleagues. A review on educational systems in some selected developed and developing nations has revealed a growing concern about the quality and relevance of education provision to both teachers and students. Required competence (i.e., knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) of teachers in all the schooling systems is given much attention, especially in high-performing countries like Japan, Korea, Singapore, Finland and China. Table 1 compares teacher preparation and qualifications in six countries. Some countries in ASEAN such as Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam, have applied these successful experiences to their own school's upgrade.

In general, a minimum educational requirement for entering into the teaching force is a high school certificate or baccalaureate plus 1–2 years of pre-service training. Upon the successful completion of the pre-service training, trainees appear to be qualified as pre-school and elementary school teachers. However, these entry requirements have reduced the number of candidates from ethnic minority groups and those who live in socioeconomically deprived areas who get into the system. As a consequence, those who should serve in remote or hard-to-access areas are those who fail to meet the desired qualification standards. Hence, targeted interventions are strongly encouraged to support the teacher candidates from rural, disadvantaged and ethnic minorities.

Obtaining at least an associate degree is quite common in China, Hong Kong and Singapore as a minimum educational qualification to become elementary school teachers. However, the challenge for these countries is how to make teaching jobs at elementary schools attractive to high-performing and professionally motivated associate degree holders.

On the issue of educational requirements, a four-year bachelor's degree is a common standard for joining the teaching force in industrialized countries including the United States, Japan, Korea and Thailand. The growing trend for professional qualifications in these countries is to have more master's degree holders to become high school teachers through effective licensing and testing systems.

Table 1. A comparative study of teacher preparation and qualifications in six nations

Educational Qualifications				Professional Qualifications			
	High school diploma	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Minimum years after secondary education	Subject area/ped agogy	Certification /license	Test/exam
China							
-Elementary	√			0	√	√	√
-L. Secondary		√		2	√	√	√
-U. Secondary			√	4	√	√	√
Japan							
-Elementary			√	4	√	√	√
-Secondary			√	4	√	√	√
Korea							
-Elementary			√	4	√	√	√
-Secondary			√	4	√	√	√
Singapore							
-Elementary		√		2	√	√	
-Secondary			√	4+1	√	√	
Thailand							
-Elementary			√	4+1	√	√	√
-Secondary			√	4+1	√	√	√
United States							
--Elementary			√	4	√	√	√
--Secondary			√	4	√	√	√

Source: (Ingersoll, 2008)

2.2. Initial teacher preparation

Initial teacher training can take a variety of forms. Its duration, curriculum focus, teaching practice and other aspects differ strongly from country to country (UNESCO, 2005). Mounting concern is on teacher preparation programs. What can teacher preparation programs do to prepare graduates who are ready to teach well in a 21st century classroom? Education systems generally struggle with finding answers to this question and there is no agreement across countries regarding which important attributes the 21st century learning environment should provide (Schleicher, 2012).

During this era of rapidly changing societies, of modernization and globalization, teacher preparation programs are needed to prepare graduates who are ready to teach well in the classrooms of the future. In general, teacher preparation programs are designed to equip teachers with what students need to learn. According to OECD (2012) students need to learn from school throughout the schooling system on ways of thinking (i.e., creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making), ways of working (i.e., communication and collaboration), tools for working (i.e., information and communications technology and information literacy), and skills for living in the world (i.e., citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility). Which skills teachers themselves need to acquire to effectively teach in 21st century classroom is a complex issue in many countries in the Asia Pacific Region.

Today, when most learners can afford to access content using search engines on the internet, where routine rule-based knowledge is being digitized or outsourced, and where jobs are changing rapidly, teachers need to enable their students to become lifelong learners, to manage non-ruled based complex ways of thinking and complex ways of working that computers cannot take over easily. For example, Singapore and Finland are well-known to have created cultures of high performance in their schools. Their common practices and policies are about preparing their students well to communicate in several languages, identify and solve problems, take personal responsibility for their actions, learn to learn, work with others and use a variety of technological tools (Sclafani, 2008).

2.3. Recruitment and employment

Most teachers are employed in the public sector in either career-based or position-based systems. In career-based systems, teachers enter when they are young and the entry criteria are usually demanding. Teachers are normally allocated to posts according to internal rules and promotion is based on a system of grades attached to the individual rather than to the specific position. Position-based public services select the best candidate for each position, by external recruitment or internal promotion. Entry from other careers is relatively common. Personnel selection and management is often decentralized to schools or local authority offices. Despite major differences between these public service traditions, countries in the Pacific Region share some common policy priorities, for instance, they emphasize teacher quality over teacher quantity and make teacher education more flexible.

Practice in many OECD countries is that schools are provided with more responsibility for teacher personnel recruitment and management. Many countries respond to teacher shortages in the short term in ways that raise concerns about the quality of teaching and learning. They tend to ensure that classrooms have teachers by lowering qualification requirements for entry to the teaching profession and assigning teachers to teach in subject areas in which they are not fully qualified (UNESCO, 2005). Challenges faced by many countries in Asia and the Pacific include how to attract high-performing graduates to join the teaching profession and how to retain effective teachers. Teacher policies tend to address the issues of recruiting competent people into the profession, and providing support and incentives for professional development and on-going high performance.

Countries needing the most new teachers also currently have the least qualified teachers. The Report stresses that policies must address both teacher quantity and quality. Countries like Niger or Cambodia cannot achieve universal primary education simply by hiring more teachers but by training them well and by supporting them in the classroom. Quality teaching brings children into school and keeps them there. UNESCO-UIS (ILO, 2006: p.33).

In Japan, teacher recruitment and employment are made by the prefectural boards of education and teachers are rotated among schools in their respective prefecture usually every seven or eight years. In the case of Singapore, the selection of teachers is made by the Ministry of

Education that first selects new teachers and then sends them for pre-service education at its National Institute of Education. In general, the recruitment of teachers in Singapore is based on the following criteria: (1) strong academic achievement (top 30.0% of age cohort); (2) high overall level of literacy and numeracy (assessment tests); (3) Communication skills (interviews); and (4) Motivation for teaching (interviews and contract teaching). In South Korea, the Ministry of Education is responsible for recruiting national and public-school teachers through concise examination or test stipulated by law. Moreover, superintendents of Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education are devolved this authority to employ national and public-school teachers. The method used to hire teachers is through examination consisting of (a) pedagogy and subject matter knowledge; (b) teaching demonstration and (c) an in-depth interview.

2.4. Teachers' workload and autonomy

Teachers want policies that promote professionalism, pedagogical autonomy, provide more help and less control from local and central authorities, as well as opportunities for career development. Countries with decentralized education systems are progressively leaving personnel decisions to the schools and beginning to offer different salaries for different skills. Countries with a more centralized civil service tradition have to align their personnel management policies to teaching competencies needed today (Duthilleul, 2004).

Visible workloads deal with large classes and number of teaching hours. In South Korea, number of students per teacher in 2017 was 30 in middle school, 34.3 in general high school, and 30 in vocational high school. The weekly instructional hours were 20 hours for middle school and 17.7 hours for high school teachers, depending on region and class size. In Thailand, number of students per teacher was 21 for lower and upper secondary school and 31 for upper vocational secondary school. However, a teacher shortage in basic education is a major problem in Thailand. There are more teachers in higher education while there is a shortage in primary and secondary education. The weekly instructional hours are between 22 and 29.5 hours for lower secondary school teachers.

In addition to classroom instruction, teachers take on numerous other duties such as student guidance, participation in school management, document processing, and parental consultation. Teachers

are also responsible for administration, student supervision, attending meetings, training and other activities. According to OECD (2005), the various responsibilities of teachers (Table 2) included the following:

Table 2. Roles and responsibilities of teachers

No.	Indicator
1	<p><i>At the individual student level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating and managing learning processes • Responding effectively to the learning needs of individual learners • Integrating formative and summative assessment
2	<p><i>At the school level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working and planning in teams • Evaluation and systematic improvement planning • ICT use in teaching and administration • Management and shared leadership
3	<p><i>At the classroom level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching in multi-cultural classrooms • New cross-curricular emphases • Integrating students with special needs
4	<p>At the level of parents and the wider community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing professional advice to parents • Building community partnerships for learning

2.5. Professional development

Professional development refers to those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might in turn improve the learning of students. Major models of professional development include training, observation/assessment, and involvement in a development/improvement process, study groups, inquiry/action research, individually guided activities and mentoring (Guskey, 2000). Global changes together with societal stakeholder pressures, are encouraging or requiring teachers to improve their performance in order to match growing expectations from the communities and parents. In-service education and training for educators and school administrators are key factors influencing the quality of their services.

In Korea, though neither professional development nor in-service training is required for retention in the teaching profession, various in-

service training programs are offered, such as (a) new teacher training; (b) qualification training for promotion (high-level teachers or vice-principals) or specific qualifications (school counselors); and (c) general training for professional development (knowledge and skills). These programs are offered by different institutions: (a) 14 central government institutes; (b) 72 university-affiliated institutes; (c) 16 provincial government institutes; (d) 61 institutes operated by distance education; and (e) about 1,200 private training institutes.

In Finland, further training or professional development of teachers is organized or financed by their employers, usually municipalities that organize the training or send their staff to participate in further education centers. The Finnish Ministry of Education has established an Advisory Board for Professional Development of Education Personnel taking part in various activities of teacher further development from estimating the needs for change, developing responsive programs and assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the programs. The commitment to furthering capacity of teachers is strong in order to keep Finnish student performance outstanding on the world stage.

In Japan the special characteristics of teacher training are the frequency and variety of in-service teacher training programs organized at different levels. There are five levels of teacher training including (a) the national level which is classified into regular teacher training and ad-hoc training; (b) the prefectural board of education level (training for newly appointed teachers, training for all teachers with 10 or 20 years of experience and training for curriculum coordinators, student guidance coordinators, vice principals and principals, long-term training programs in universities, research centers or private companies); (c) the municipal board of education level (training based on specific education issues); (d) the school level (workshops and seminars); and (e) the voluntary educational associations and groups. It is believed that continuous professional upgrading for educational providers is key to better performance of both teachers and students.

2.6. Compensation (salaries and non-salary benefits)

Decent compensation for high teaching performance is thought to be both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for teachers and to ensure higher professionalism in society.

In Sweden, the wages or salaries for a teacher in compulsory school and upper secondary for each month are not publicly standardized,

meaning that it is based on individual negotiation. According to the wage brackets for teachers in Sweden, in spring 2009, the salary scale of teaches can be ranked from 1,947 Euro to 3,013 Euro (Niklasson, 2011).

In Singapore, teachers are considered as full-civil-servant employees so they receive full monthly salary including Central Provident Fund Contributions, year-end bonuses, National Institute of Education (NIE) tuition grant, and other benefits and the salary ranges from S\$1,020 to S\$2,060 depending on qualifications, pedagogical training, working experience and gender once they are first recruited as teacher trainees by the Ministry of Education (Tan et al., 2007).

In Thailand, according to Siribanpitak and Boonyananta (2007), the teacher classification framework is based on six levels of academic status: (a) assistant teacher; (b) teacher; (c) experienced teacher; (d) higher experienced teacher; (e) expert teacher; and (f) specialized teacher. The salary scales of the teachers are based on educational qualification and prior experience, and the civil service salary structure. According to the Ministry of Education (2006), the salary scales of teachers range from 8,360 Thai Baht for assistant teachers to 27,450 Thai Baht for specialized teachers. Teachers are given other benefits including: (1) free medical assistance at government hospitals for three generations including teachers' parents, spouse, and children; (2) children's education assistance; and (3) transportation and housing (in some rare cases). The basic level salary for teachers in Thailand with a four-year bachelor's degree is 7,630 Baht (equivalent to US\$190) and for those with a master's degree is 9,320 Baht (US\$233) whereas other professionals such as medical doctors and engineers earn about 30,000-50,000 baht (US\$750–1,250) (Siribanpitak,2008).

In South Korea, the salary structure for teachers is made up of basic salaries and assorted allowances. The salary scale for teachers, vice-principals, and principals of elementary and secondary schools is based on a single salary schedule (same academic credential and seniority belonging to the same salary step). There are various types of allowances and pensions provided to teachers. For example, benefits to enhance the financial status of teachers include support for the tuition of their children in secondary schools, non-interest loans for the tuition for their children in universities, and loans for living expenses. Additional allowances are given to teachers when they are appointed to posts requiring special responsibilities such as the department head or homeroom teachers. An important indicator used to assess teacher compensation is teacher salary

expressed as a ratio of GDP per capita. Teacher promotion is made based on (a) length of service (45.0%); (b) teacher evaluation by principal and vice principal (40 %); (c) results of in-service training (15 %) and (d) extra credits (those who experience in special school, research schools and remote areas) (Kim, 2007).

2.7. Retirement rules, benefits, representation and voice of teachers

Almost all countries consider public school teachers to be government public servants. Their professional tenure is long-term and permanent with different retirement age and benefits based on the number of years of service. Individual national governments or states determine teachers' retirement benefits. According to the ILO/UNESCO Recommendations Concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), teachers should be protected by social security measures in respect of all contingencies included in the 1952 ILO Social Security Convention, namely for medical care, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age benefits, employment injury benefits, family benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity and survivors' benefits.

According to Kim (2007), the purpose Korea's national teacher monitoring and evaluation scheme, introduced in 2004 as a pilot study and later on implemented nationwide, is to improve the capacity of teachers in teaching as opposed to providing necessary information for promotion practiced in the old monitoring and evaluation approach. The results of the evaluation are used for making recommendations for better in-service training. The evaluators are principals, vice principals, peer teachers, students and parents. The monitoring and evaluation tools include observation of teaching practices, visiting classes at work and questionnaires containing checklists and open-ended questions.

According to Atagi (2011) teachers in Thailand are evaluated on three standards: (i) ethics and morality of profession; (ii) quality of teaching performance and (iii) academic performance such as research papers. Evaluation and monitoring on teaching performances are important elements to determine promotional opportunities and teacher education reform policies.

The 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendations Concerning the Status of Teachers, paragraph 62, emphasizes the rights of teachers and that teachers and their organizations should participate in the development of

new courses, textbooks and teaching aids. Hence, teachers themselves need to be actively involved in policy development and implementation and feel a sense of “ownership” of reform – otherwise it is unlikely that substantial changes will be successfully implemented.

In South Korea, teacher voice is expressed through various representative groups and associations including the Korean Federation of Teachers Association, the Korean Teachers and Education Workers’ Union, and Teacher-Parent Associations.

According to OECD (2007), teachers in Ireland are highly unionized, with 98% of primary teachers and 91% of post-primary teachers belonging to a teacher union. There are three main teacher unions in Ireland namely: (1) The Irish National Teachers Organization (INTO) founded in 1868 represents virtually all primary teachers and principals in the Republic of Ireland as well as some primary and second-level teachers in Northern Ireland; (2) the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) founded in 1909 represents second-level teachers in voluntary secondary schools and in some community and comprehensive schools; (3) and the Teachers Union of Ireland represents teachers in Vocational Schools and in some community and comprehensive schools.

2.8. School leadership

According to the Education Act 1999 of Thailand, school principals are expected to perform the following roles: (a) academic administration (curriculum leadership, academic and instructional leadership, critical thinking and problem solving, and innovative leaders); (b) school administration (effective management of services, programs, operations and resources; accountability of budget management and being moral and ethical leaders); (c) staff development (strong interpersonal skills and necessary competencies to develop and manage the program effectively); and (d) strategic planning (establishing school visions and missions by involving participation and contribution of concerned stakeholders and ensuring the success of implementation of school visions-missions).

In Singapore, school leaders take on the following roles and responsibilities: (a) defining school vision/direction; (b) managing instructional program; (c) curriculum leaders; (d) innovation and entrepreneurship of learning environment; (e) staff performance management; and (f) strategic leaders.

Table 3. Recruitment, preparation and development of school leadership

No.	Indicator
1	<p>Recruitment of school leaders among Southeast Asian countries is based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniority or experience - usually vice-principals or assistant principals are promoted to principalship and this practice is very common among countries in the region; • Educational qualifications or formal school leadership preparation programs – this is found in <i>Singapore and Malaysia</i> while <i>Brunei and Vietnam</i> have recently introduced school leadership program but not a formal requirement yet; • Teaching force or competent teachers – this practice is practiced in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Brunei that some school principals are recruited from teaching forces without any administrative experience based on the assumption that competent teachers or effective teachers can be effective or competent school leaders.
2	<p>Preparation and development of school leaders practiced among Southeast Asian countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-service school leadership preparation is not available in Southeast Asia. • Formal in-service school leadership preparation – Formal preparation and development is practiced in Singapore (Leaders in Education Program at National Institute of Education) so that school leaders have to go through a leadership program before holding principalship. Brunei (School Leadership Program at Institute for Leadership Innovation and Advancement), Malaysia (Education Leadership Center and Institute of Principalship Studies); and Vietnam have recently introduced and have spelt out clear strategies to make it a requirement for school leaders nationwide. • Short-term via workshops/seminars as in-service school leadership preparation – This is common in Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and Thailand; school leaders are provided short and irregular training with prescribed objectives to effectively respond to some related diagnostic findings.

- 3 Roles and responsibilities of school leaders
 - Thai school leaders take the following roles and responsibilities: (a) management and control (administration, delegation, monitoring and evaluation); (b) leadership and innovation (school vision, community partnership, curriculum leadership and effective communication); (c) human resource development (professional development, collegial support and team building) (Sakulsampaopol, 2010: p. 75)
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3. Policy reflections and recommendations: *implications for teacher development in Cambodia*

The next section provides discussions, reflections and recommendations in terms of the SABER-Teacher's 10 teacher policy dimensions in order to adapt them to Cambodia. They are (1) requirements to enter and remain in teaching; (2) initial teacher preparation; (3) recruitment and employment; (4) teachers' workload and autonomy; (5) professional development; (6) compensation (i.e., salaries and non-salary benefits); (7) retirement rules and benefits; (8); monitoring and evaluation of teacher quality; (9) teacher representation and voice; and (10) school leadership. The recommendations aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning of teachers and school-performance improvement based on the review. Some of the recommendations have been taken recently in the reform agenda of MoEYS since 2015 under the framework of the TPAP.

3.1. *Entering and remaining in teaching*

- Educational and professional qualifications of the teaching force rely heavily on the quality and relevance of their high school education. Qualifying interested high school diploma or associate degree holders for 1–2 years through subject-area and pedagogic education/training to become kindergarten or elementary school teachers is a common practice in many countries.
- Cambodia is encouraged to consider increasing the educational qualification requirement for entry to the teaching profession. For instance, pre-school and primary school teachers must hold a baccalaureate and lower secondary school teachers must obtain at least associate degrees or equivalent qualifications from a university or teacher training institution. Upper secondary school teachers must

at least hold a bachelor's degree from any university recognized by the government plus one year of pedagogical training including teaching practice in real classrooms.

- To be qualified for the teaching force in secondary education, particularly in mathematics and science, many high-performing countries have adopted a minimum level of bachelor's degree as the educational qualification for entry into pre-service training.
- As Cambodia attempts to comply with related ASEAN policies for human resource development towards improved service and industrial sectors, Cambodia may consider improving both socioeconomic status and professional qualifications of teachers so as to attract high-performing students in science studies to join the teaching force.
- For equitable access of students to become qualified teachers, based on the successful experiences in East-Asian countries, educational requirements to enter the teaching profession as primary school teachers should be a minimum of baccalaureate or associate degree. Owing to Cambodia's growing high school graduate enrollments in Higher Education Institutions and its attempt to keep abreast with ASEAN standards, basic educational requirements for secondary school teachers should be at bachelor's degree or equivalent levels in urban and some rural areas.
- Cambodian staff in teacher-preparation institutions have to be qualified to teach in their own disciplines at a level equivalent to that of higher education. Cambodia may consider professional capacity building and development for teacher trainers in the fields of teaching and research through appropriate direct funding to the institutions to ensure the quality of new teachers.

3.2. Initial teacher preparation

- Teacher preparation programs in Cambodia may need to consider attracting high-performing high school graduates and qualified university graduates. Once they are recruited, induction training and on-going support for their adaptation to a new school environment, especially during their first year on the job, will be required.
- Cambodia's teacher preparation institutions (particularly the RTTCs) should be equivalent to higher education institutions and subjected to assessment of quality by the existing Accreditation Committee of

Cambodia. Certificates issued from the accredited teacher preparation institutions or professional schools for teachers could be teaching licenses.

3.3. Recruitment and employment

- Cambodia could consider delegating significant authority to some provincial/municipal departments (PoE) to recruit pre-school and basic education teachers based on selection criteria and guidelines to be established by the MOEYS.
- Cambodia may consider a requirement that teachers renew their teacher certificates/teaching licenses every 5 to 7 years to demonstrate that they are still meeting professional standards of performance.
- Cambodia may consider ensuring an open, fair and transparent system of teacher evaluation for their promotion involving well-trained and resourced teaching peers, school leaders and external experts.
- Cambodia may consider making a requirement for completion of a probationary period of 1 to 2 years teaching, before full certification or a permanent teaching post is awarded.

3.4. Teachers' workload and autonomy

- Cambodia should consider balancing class sizes and school location in urban and rural areas, in line with compensation for teachers. In several cases in several schools, primary school teachers shoulder class sizes of 70–80 students and some teachers in rural schools face poor classroom conditions with limited support.
- Cambodian teachers should be given more authority to decide on the adjustment of curriculum, the development of extracurricular activities, choices of teaching methods, and internal criteria for student assessment.
- Cambodian school teachers' terms of reference need to be clearly indicated for all the teaching force from the time that they are trained until they become teachers. At the level of parents and communities, Cambodian teachers should be reminded and encouraged to fulfill their roles and responsibilities sufficiently as this will support slow

learners and could help identify students who are at risk of dropping out or those who may want to come back to school.

- Providing professional advice to parents and building community partnerships for learning.

3.5. Professional development

- Professional development for school teachers and administrators in Cambodia should be institutionalized with strong financial support and regulations to ensure that career paths are earned based on competence and performance evaluation by a team of the school support committee. The RTTCs and PTTCs may consider introducing long-term teacher development programs.
- Cambodia may consider using/contracting universities or institutes that are competent to provide short-term or long-term capacity development training for teachers and school principals.
- Cambodia's professional qualification development and training should be linked to promotions and benefits of school teachers and administrators such as incentives and scholarships for special courses.
- Cambodia may consider engaging teachers in school policy formulation, strategic planning and implementation. School environment has to be supportive and conducive to creating opportunities for professional and personal development for teachers.
- Cambodia's teacher policy should consider developing professional learning communities or societies for teachers to share their knowledge and experiences for their mutual professional growth through annual meetings or conferences.

3.6. Compensation

- Balancing teachers' inputs and commitments with compensation in terms of both salary and non-salary benefits should be considered for Cambodia to improve their socio-economic status and to attract highly competent graduates to join the teaching force.
- Introducing career paths for teachers and academic rankings should be considered along with enhanced good governance and transparency at all levels.

- Cambodian teachers' salary scale and structure should be based on educational and professional qualifications, school-based performance, competitive awards, research publications, seniority and other credible relevant professional development.
- Other benefits for qualified teachers that Cambodia may consider are to provide shared medical insurance packages for three generations including teachers' parents, spouse, and children. This special social security benefit will encourage teachers to perform better and become more committed to their teaching and support disadvantaged learners and school improvement activities.

3.7. Retirement rules and benefits

- Cambodia's teachers should be required to undergo periodical medical examinations, which should be provided free.
- Old-age benefits should be related to final earnings so that the teacher may continue to maintain an adequate living standard.

3.8. Monitoring and evaluation of teacher quality

- A Cambodian national teacher evaluation mechanism could be developed and strengthened to make sure that teachers are doing their job effectively and responding well to their roles and responsibilities as prescribed in their terms of reference.
- Teachers could do self-assessments against their codes of conduct, terms of reference, annual work plans and then report to the school leaders for their advice or guidance, and these could be encouraged by Cambodian education authorities and MoEYS.
- The purpose of evaluation should be clear, whether evaluation is for promotion or further professional development.

3.9. Teacher representation and voice

- Consider enhancing the effectiveness of Cambodian teacher representation in policy dialogues and their related training program designs to help improve education systems as a whole.
- Cambodian teachers could be given freedom to create or take part in any professional/academic associations/societies or unions in relevant fields/expertise (complying with the existing government laws and regulations) so that they can express their voice and make greater

contribution to national development and effective education systemic reform.

- MoEYS could consider supporting or facilitating an annual teacher forum (or world teacher's day) so that teachers can participate and share their views on issues related to them.

3.10. School leadership

- Cambodia may consider having minimum criteria and requirement guidelines (experience, potential, and educational and professional qualifications) to become school leaders and the guidelines should be made accessible to all teachers for their promotional planning.
- Cambodia should consider developing formal long-term school leadership training programs for identified principal candidates to focus on institutional management, instructional leadership, coordination and facilitation roles in schools and outside schools. Roles and responsibilities of school leaders need to be clearly identified in line with the Teacher Professional Standards.
- MoEYS should encourage establishment of a School Leader Association to connect school leaders in a professional network and promote inclusive professional growth.

With regards to the above discussion on the 10 policy dimensions: trends, issues, reflections and recommendations, this paper suggests Cambodia's policy makers could consider framing its teacher policy goals in line with SABER - Teacher's Eight Core Teacher Policy Goals (See diagram).

4. SABER - teacher's eight core teacher policy goals

4.1 Setting clear expectations for teachers

- Reiterate that a teaching job is professional and well respected in society as a long-term state employee and highly valued by local communities and the government.
- Clear set of opportunities for promotion through both management and academic paths.
- Decent and honorable living conditions and as second parent to school children.



1. Setting clear expectations for teachers
2. Attracting the best into teaching
3. Preparing teachers with useful training and experience
4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs
5. Leading teachers with strong principals
6. Monitoring teaching and learning
7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction
8. Motivating teachers to perform

Figure 1: SABER-Teachers 8 Teacher Policy Goals

Source: <http://web.worldbank.org/>

4.2. Attracting the best into teaching

- Encourage high-performing graduates to enter the teaching profession as a profound contribution to the quality of human resources for the country.
- Reasonable compensation for outstanding performance and a transparent promotion system
- High-performing graduates receive special consideration while under training and selection of prospective work place (or school location).
- Making known to all that teaching is a proud job and the right choice to help the nation produce human capital for sustainable development.

4.3. Preparing teachers with useful training and experience

- Friendly and supportive environment at teacher preparation institutions (NIE, RTTC and PTTC) could be enhanced and responsive to the basic needs of the teacher trainees.
- Teamwork during their training and practicum with warm support and encouragement from the trainers and leaders of the teacher preparation institutions.
- Linking theory and practice during training and extending the practicum period to enable teacher trainees to learn how to help slow learners and to make direct contact with parents or communities to prevent dropout.
- Inviting experts from neighborhood schools, universities and other institutions as guest speakers for both trainers and trainees to get exposure to external intellectual knowledge and perspectives of professional work and changing trends in education.

4.4. Matching teachers' skills with students' needs

- Enhance understanding of flexible teaching methods, classroom managements and interactions with students.
- Output-outcome based teaching – a focus on what students gain from teaching after class.
- Assign teachers to teach the subjects in their specializations or strong interests so that the intrinsic motivation and confidence of teachers would enhance the quality of their teaching.

4.5. Leading teachers with strong principals

- Principals should be model high-level teachers with knowledge, skills and competence in management and leadership – selection of school principals should be based on competence and proven effective strategies for school improvement, regardless of sex, age, socioeconomic status or ethnic background.
- Teachers should have the authority to make final decisions about principal candidates to be appointed or endorsed by the PoE and MoEYS.

- Principals should have task-oriented, relation-oriented and change-oriented attitudes to enhance their skills in school strategic planning and improvement.
- Principals should be granted special status and privilege to ensure their leadership in making school operational and strategic plans for each school year.
- School self-evaluation guidelines should be followed by principals and the results of the evaluations against the school strategic and operational plans reported to all school stakeholders, including teachers and students, to raise the school profile and prepare for upcoming school years.

4.6. Monitoring teaching and learning

- Self-evaluations of teachers' performance should be encouraged for all. Their performance should be checked by end of the school year against their strategic planning for their teaching classes. Annual plans for each class will help teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses of their students and teachers themselves so that they can identify needs for professional support or training opportunities.
- Peer monitoring support and evaluation among same-subject areas should be encouraged at all school levels.
- Effective management will enhance a sense of professionalism among teachers and principals to avoid absenteeism of teachers and students and to ensure compensation for lost teaching hours.

4.7. Supporting teachers to improve instruction

- Professional training through an in-service training system.
- Peer observation and support mechanism in both classroom teaching, laboratory work and lesson planning.
- Learning and research materials and opportunities are made freely available for all teachers.

4.8. Motivating teachers to perform

- Enabling program for best teacher of the year at school level, at DoE level, at PoE level and at MoEYS level – the criteria of selection to be developed and enforced by MoEYS

- Create working space at school during non-teaching hours for teachers' lesson planning and consultation with students.
- Introduce merit-based promotion and pay system, and make it known to all teachers so that they can prepare for their participation and involvement in school-related development activities.
- Create enabling environment for teachers to discuss their issues relative to classroom management, curriculum, teaching and learning, etc.

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