

Improving inclusive education in Cambodia and Laos: exploring pilot opportunities

Final Report

9 March 2022

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FCDO Cambodia and Laos

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASLO	Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
BEQUAL	Basic Education Quality and Access in Lao PDR
CCOSC	Cambodian Consortium for Out of School Children
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CPRD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CwD	Children with disabilities
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan / Education Sector Plan
ESSDP	Education and Sports Sector Development Plan
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GPIA	Adjusted parity indices for gender
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
IE	Inclusive Education
IEPC	Inclusive Education Promotion Centre
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
KPL	Khang Panya Lao
LPPIA	Adjusted parity indices for location
LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOEYS	Ministry of Education Youth and Sport

MOLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
NCDE	National Committee for Disabled People and Elderly
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NISE	National Institute of Special Education
OOS	Out-of-school
OOSC	Out of school children
OOSCI	Out of School Children Initiative
PED	Primary Education Department
PHC	Population and Housing Census
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SDG	Sustainable development goal
SEA-PLM	Southeast Asia-Primary Learning Metrics
SED	Special Education Department / Secondary Education Department
SHD	School Health Department
SRGBV	School-related Gender-based Violence
UK Government	Government of the United Kingdom
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WPIA	Adjusted parity indices for wealth of households

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Executive Summary

This review is intended to provide guidance to the Government of the United Kingdom (UK Government) through the UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) as it seeks to review its Girls Education and Inclusive Education (IE) programmes and to re-engage in countries within the Indo-Pacific region.

The review focuses on a situational analysis of out-of-school (OOS) girls and children with disabilities (CwD) in Cambodia and Laos. Evidence is drawn from a desk review of quantitative and qualitative data, and from key informant interviews to describe the inclusive education landscape to inform the FCDO, the UK Embassies in Cambodia and Laos, the Governments of Cambodia and Laos, and other key stakeholders. The report maps out government policy and programmes and donor funded interventions for inclusive education.

The study identifies approaches that contribute to bring girls and disabled children into school, to keep them safe and ensure they learn – programmes that have been effective and those that are scalable. The impacts of the COVID pandemic are analysed in relation to restrictions to education access and learning caused by school closures and how this exacerbates the vulnerabilities faced by girls and children with disabilities. The study identifies entry points, partners and approaches to inclusive education that could be piloted and expanded in future either at sub-national, national or regional level.

Key Findings

The key findings from this study of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in Cambodia and Laos are summarised in separate At-a-Glance Tables under the headings of Characteristics (Table 1), Barriers (Table 2), Interventions (Table 3) and Entry Points (Table 4).¹ The detailed description and analysis corresponding to each heading is provided in the respective main report Sections 3-5 with recommendations for entry points, approaches and partners presented in Section 6.

Characteristics of OOS Girls and CwD

Table 1 Characteristics of Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities²

	Cambodia	Laos
Out-of-School Girls	• More girls than boys enrolled in Early Childhood Education (ECE) / age 5 years. • Gender parity at primary level.	• More girls than boys enrolled in ECE / aged 5 years.

¹ See Main Report Section 1.1.2 for Data Limitations

² Source: Findings referenced in Main Report section of this study

	● Gender Parity Index (GPI) 0.82 at secondary level. ● Girls and boys at risk of dropping out at primary/secondary transition. ● High risk of dropout for girls (56.6%) and boys (55.8%) after age 14 years - migration for work.	● Gender parity close to being achieved at primary, secondary and tertiary level. ● Girls more likely than boys to drop out at primary-secondary transition, with high risk of dropout for girls (36.9%) and boys (32.3%) after age 14 years.
Out-of-School Children with Disabilities	● Education exclusion is a higher risk among poor households, ethnic minorities / non-Khmer speakers, migrants, CwD and those in remote areas. ● CwD disproportionately out of school in all education levels and out-of-school dimensions. ● Up to 57% of CwD are out of school; CwD who attend school are more likely to drop out early. ● There is a lack of reliable and consistent quality data about CwD and their needs.	● Education exclusion is a higher risk among poor households, ethnic minorities / non-Lao/Tai speakers, CwD and those in remote areas. ● Girls with disabilities were less likely to be attending school than girls without disabilities at all school levels. ● 43.1% of 6–10-year-old CwD have never attended school compared to 9.6% of 6-10-year-olds without a disability.

Incomplete primary schools: Lack of access to complete schools (i.e. lacking upper grade classes) in some communities leads to higher levels of dropout. In Cambodia there were 382 incomplete schools in 2020-21 (5.5% of all primary schools). In Laos there were 1,564 incomplete schools in 2020-21 (17.8% of all primary schools).

Barriers to Inclusive Education

Table 2 Barriers to Inclusive Education for Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities in Cambodia and Laos

The below used abbreviation CwD equals children with disabilities

Categories	Girls	CwD
FAMILY LEVEL		
Household poverty		
● Direct costs (fees, uniforms, meals, transport)	Girls OK	CwD OK
● Opportunity costs / loss of labour (including for carers of CwD)	Girls OK	CwD OK
● Low return on investment for CwD and girls (early marriage)	Girls OK	CwD OK

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• Higher school costs for CwD	Girls not OK	CwD OK
Social Norms		
• Low perceived value of education	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Low aspiration and stigma for CwD	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Gender stereotyping (for girls)	Girls OK	CwD not OK
• Lack of awareness raising / advocacy campaigns	Girls OK	CwD OK
Safety of girls and CwD		
• At school - School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV)	Girls OK	CwD OK
• On the way to school	Girls OK	CwD OK
• In school and dormitories	Girls OK	CwD OK
Language		
• Language of instruction for non-Khmer speakers (Cambodia) and non-Lao-Tai speakers (Laos)	Girls OK	CwD OK
Intersectional barriers		
• gender, disability, ethnicity, poverty, location	Girls OK	CwD OK
SCHOOL LEVEL		
Access		
• Incomplete schools and distance to school	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Inadequate Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Inadequate and unsafe school environment	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Inaccessible transport and buildings for CwD	Girls not OK	CwD OK
Quality		
• Curriculum, teaching resources and teachers' guides do not meet the needs of girls and CwD	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Pedagogical approaches not geared to needs of girls and CwD	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Shortage of trained / specialist teachers	Girls not OK	CwD OK
• Lack of assistive devices for CwD	Girls not OK	CwD OK
Learning		
• Low levels of learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy skills	Girls OK	CwD OK

• Low quality and lack of relevance of education for over-age children, girls and CwD	Girls OK	CwD OK
• No system for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of learning outcomes for CwD	Girls not OK	CwD OK
COVID-related barriers		
• Girls and CwD from poor households not able to access online learning (e.g. Khang Panya Lao (KPL) in Laos)	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Girls and CwD at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, and of dropping out	Girls OK	CwD OK
SYSTEM LEVEL		
Policy and Funding		
• Lack of policy, legislation, and funding	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Inadequate school operational budgets to improve IE provision	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Challenges for international Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of centralised and regulated funding	Girls OK	CwD OK
Capacity Gaps		
• At national and sub-national levels for implementation of IE	Girls OK	CwD OK
• Insufficient IE officers and information / knowledge gaps	Girls OK	CwD OK
Lack of Data		
• Lack of reliable / consistent data on out of school children (OOSC) (girls, boys, CwD)	Girls OK	CwD OK
• CwD invisible on data records / Education Management Information System (EMIS)	Girls not OK	CwD OK
• No system for M&E of learning outcomes for CwD	Girls not OK	CwD OK
Coordination Issues		
• Education, health and welfare ministries working in silos (CwD) impacts planning, funding, data collection and M&E	Girls not OK	CwD OK
• Weak system of screening and referral / support services for CwD	Girls not OK	CwD OK

Marginalised children in Islamic schools, monastic schools and floating schools in Cambodia highlight specific barriers to inclusive education for girls and children with disabilities, such as access to facilities, no provision for multilingual education, shortage of learning materials, lack of inclusivity awareness campaigns and poor monitoring and data collection.

Existing Interventions and Approaches

Table 3 Interventions and Approaches to Inclusive Education for Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities in Cambodia and Laos

	Cambodia	Laos
Government	Special Education Programme (in 5 selected provinces) Inclusive Education Programme (in 5 selected provinces) Integration Class Programme (in 4 selected provinces) • Annual ear, mouth, eye examinations supported by NGOs • Road and school compound construction for CwD access • Latrines for girls and CwD • IE teacher training / PD in schools and in pre-service training • Scholarship programmes with DPs prioritising girls and ethnic groups • Programmes to prevent SRGBV through Children's Council, Youth Council and School Management Committee • Self-Data collection – school, district, province data collection tool to monitor IE provision (linked to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reporting)	Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) IE programmes funded and implemented by INGOs/NGOs/CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) • Information campaigns <i>to improve ECE enrolment</i> • Stipends, scholarships and school meals <i>to increase demand for schooling</i> • Early grade reading methodology <i>to improve learning outcomes</i> • Learning materials and textbooks <i>to improve quality of education</i> • Complete incomplete schools <i>to increase supply and prevent dropout</i> MOES Inclusive Education Promotion Centre (IEPC) plans to develop National IE strategy and improved CwD EMIS
Donor Funding	Multiple small-scale NGO / CSO projects and several large-scale INGO and multi-donor funded interventions, for example: • Scholarship and school meals (Cambodian	Several large INGO projects with IE component and multiple small-scale NGO / CSO projects • Mainstreaming IE through integrated system approach (curriculum, teacher training, infrastructure,

	Consortium for Out of School Children (CCOSC), Save the Children Fund (SCF), Asian Development Bank (ADB)) • Girls Counselling programme • Accelerated learning / catch-up programmes • Participatory community mapping campaigns to identify OOSC • Extensive screening and referral programmes for CwD (GPE2/ACR)	awareness raising, spoken Lao pilot (Gr.1) (BEQUAL) • SOS IE Project – capacity building for CSOs and parents to identify CwD, bring CwD to school and train interns to support (EU) • Learn to Read Project training teachers to identify and provide for CwD in the classroom - a pilot component of IE for CwD (SCF) • Community-based child protection model for CwD to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation (UNICEF) • KPL digital teaching and learning platform (UNICEF supported by Microsoft)³
Effectiveness - examples	At family level: need and merit-based scholarships in high schools (ADB); flexible classes (Aide et Action) At community level: Commune Investment Plans (KHEN); counselling and youth groups (CCOSC); multi-lingual radio broadcasts (Aide et Action) At school level: funding for school construction and school building standards, mother-tongue based schooling (Plan International); gender-responsive schools (CCOSC) At school level for CwD: accessible child friendly school environment – slopes, bathrooms, etc (Plan International); hearing screening and needs-based support (Krousar Thmey)	At family level: conditional cash transfers, scholarships, stipends (transport and dormitory costs), and provision of school lunches where household poverty is a barrier to education – benefits ethnic girls in rural /remote areas of Laos (SCF, ADB) At community level: information campaigns through village councils, only effective where education quality is acceptable At school level: increase school safety (girls & CwD); provide mother tongue instruction and Lao language skills for early grades (BEQUAL G1 pilot) At school level for CwD: capacity building of teachers, inclusive learning environment, accessibility and support services

³ KPL learning platform developed as a COVID response; potential for CwD and gender-sensitive component for girls being explored

At system level: Awareness raising for govt officers, parents and teachers to increase enrolment and retention (SCF)	At system level: advocacy for sustained political commitment and investment, and multi-disciplinary approach across ministries; strengthen transition mechanisms between special / mainstream schools, and between school levels.
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Potential Entry Points and Approaches

Potential entry points and approaches are summarised in Table 4. These are drawn from the evidence, aligned to UK-government strategies and priorities and presented as recommendations for FCDO consideration. Potential entry points and approaches include a number of discreet interventions, but it is recommended that wherever possible synergies and linkages are sought to multiply the impact of interventions and to contribute to an analysis of possible systemic responses.

Table 4 Entry points and approaches to Improve Inclusive Education for Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities in Cambodia and Laos

Potential Entry Points	Potential Approaches
------------------------	----------------------

to identify out-of-school girls and children with disabilities more accurately – to support improved budgeting and resource planning for inclusive education, and for SDG reporting	● Identify MOES/MOEYS priorities and key partners (e.g. UNICEF / GPE / SCF). ● Identify major information gaps (e.g. OOS CwD, SDG reporting) including lack of accurate disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity and disability. ● Identify capacity gaps in data collection and data analysis (e.g. school and district level officers) and capacity development strategies. ● Support NGO participatory community mapping campaigns to identify OOSC ● Review and improve quality issues in data collection, analysis and use and perverse incentives in data collection
to raise awareness of the right to access quality education and services, parents and children's routes and opportunities for securing those rights; promote value of education and child protection against SRGBV,	● Support MOES/MOEYS and NGOs in production of video/radio and print (e.g. comics) to provide information in multiple languages on IE and the right to education of girls and CWD . ● Sponsor intra-regional conference attendance and knowledge sharing seminars. ● targeting schools, teachers, parents and education officers to bring girls and children with disabilities into school,

to improve the match between learning needs and inclusive education service delivery

- Work with MOES/MOEYS and key DPs to build capacity at national and sub-national levels in (i) screening (e.g. in/ex country training, diagnostic equipment, etc) of OOS CwD; (ii) improving levels of achievement in early grade reading and mathematics and (iii) quality indicators of literacy and numeracy levels
- Work with teachers, parents and communities to support their ability to diagnose learning needs and access services for OOS girls and CwD
- Identify opportunities (i) to assist in strengthening referral services and school-based provision for CwD; and (ii) to provide targeted support to enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities
- Support NGO programmes:
 - capacity building for CSOs and parents in identifying CwD, bring CwD into school and support them with trained interns (EU funded SOS project);
 - SCF pilot to train teachers to identify and provide for CwD in the classroom

1 Introduction

“The economic and social costs of exclusion from education are high as it pushes people into long-term poverty through loss of opportunity, foregone income, lack of access to other services and the high cost of out-of-school children.”⁴

1.1 Objectives and scope of the review

The aim of this review is to identify entry points, partners and approaches that could be piloted and in future expanded either at sub-national or national level to increase inclusive education. This will be done by providing the FCDO and UK government with a clear picture of the inclusive education landscape in Cambodia and Laos to inform the design of future investment opportunities. The study explores the reasons why girls and children with disability are excluded from education particularly in the more vulnerable and marginalised communities.

The overall objectives of this review are therefore:

1. to understand the challenges facing the most marginalised girls and children with disability in Cambodia and Laos to inform planning of future programmes.
2. to identify which policies and programmes have been effective and why and are most likely to be scalable.
3. to synthesise the evidence-base around girls' education and children with disability in Cambodia and Laos in order to develop more targeted programmes to contribute towards global targets.

In this study the characteristics of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in Cambodia and Laos are described, for those who have never attended school, those who dropped out during primary school and those who dropped out at secondary school level. The barriers and challenges to school presence, participation and performance for this group of out-of-school children are mapped out at family and community level, school level and system level. The interventions and approaches of governments and donors are analysed to identify the factors that are effective in improving inclusive education and what works as possible future entry points. Evidence is synthesised from quantitative data analysis, documentary evidence, and key informant interviews.

1.1.1 Conceptual Framework for the review

Inclusive education encompasses a wide range of specific needs including gender, disabilities or abilities, ethnicity, language and socio-economic status, relating directly to the characteristics, barriers and challenges of exclusion from education for out-of-school children. Issues relating to intersectionality of individual learning needs are

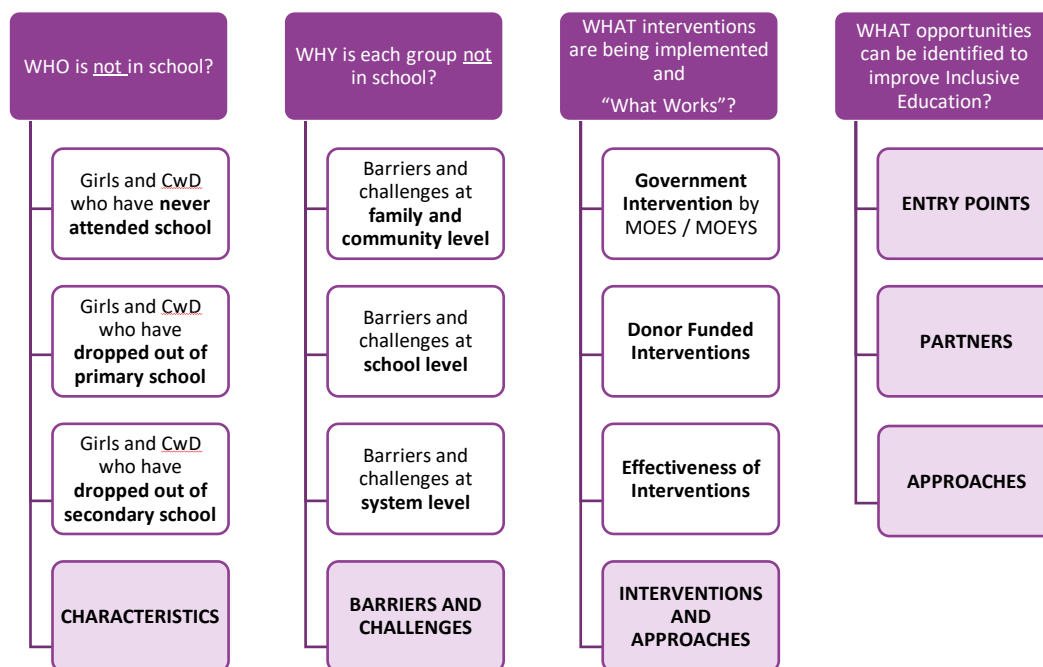
⁴ World Bank. 2019. *Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities*

included in the analysis (see Section 2.4). For this study, a useful description of inclusive education is provided by UNESCO:

“Inclusive education is a transformational process of constant change and improvement within schools and the wider education ecosystem to make education welcoming and participatory achievement oriented for all students. Inclusive education is concerned with identification and removal of barriers that exclude learners within each unique situation/context. Inclusive education likewise calls for addressing the needs of all children, irrespective of range of abilities or disabilities.”⁵

The conceptual framework for this review (Figure 1) outlines the components and their linkages to build the storyline. The framework forms the foundation of the decision-making process by structuring the evidence leading to the identification of entry points as opportunities for improving inclusive education.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework for the Review



1.1.2 Data limitations

Unless otherwise stated, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS Cambodia, 2014) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS Laos, 2017) **datasets** have been used in this study as a comprehensive and accessible source of quantitative data available on out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in Cambodia and Laos.⁶ Where available, EMIS data from each country has been referenced and statistical analysis incorporated from a range of global, regional and country specific reports, as referenced.

⁵ EENET (n.d.) What Is Inclusive Education? UNESCO (2016). Reaching Out to All Learners—A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusion.

⁶ See Annex B for summary of Laos MICS 2017 and Cambodia DHS 2014

Many of the reports and studies of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities acknowledge data limitations such as missing or old data, inconsistency across various data sources and variation in estimates of the number of out-of-school children due to differences in data sources, countries included in estimates, and data gaps. Due to the lack of a robust data collection system, there is limited information on the number and status of children with disability in Cambodia, and in Laos it is difficult to make estimates of children with disabilities due to lack of data reliability.⁷ It is rare to find data that is disaggregated by age, gender and disability let alone ethnicity, sexual orientation or other marginalising factors.⁸

Data limitations relevant to the Cambodia and Laos contexts include the following:

- Under-reporting of disability globally, in some cases due to the stigma of having a child with a disability. National household surveys grossly underestimate the number of children with disabilities in part because many children born with disabilities are not registered in developing countries, and a range of ‘invisible’ disabilities (i.e. non-physical) are not known or diagnosed.
- Under-estimated numbers of school-age children with disabilities impacts the calculation of enrolment rates of children with disabilities in school.
- Lack of disaggregated data makes it impossible to track the progress and learning outcomes of children with disabilities.
- Differences in data collection methodologies and definitions for identification of persons with disabilities affects reliability and accuracy for comparison of evidence across data sets.⁹

⁷ FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

⁸ Plan International. 2020. Leaving no girl behind. The impact of COVID-19 on girls and young women with disabilities

⁹ World Bank. 2019. *Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities*

2 Key Issues for Inclusive Education Policy

Inclusive education requires access to school/learning opportunities as well as the acquisition of foundational literacy, numeracy and broader life skills and generic competencies.

2.1 Global and ASEAN¹⁰ regional perspectives

Gender equality in education. Across the Asia Pacific region government policies and plans indicate widespread commitment to gender equality in education, reflecting collective buy-in to global agreements, most recently the [SDG target 4.5](#) to “eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.” For system strengthening to deliver targeted interventions on inclusive education for girls requires (i) reliable disaggregated data to understand who is excluded and why, and (ii) achievable and affordable strategies to address the barriers that prevent girls from enrolling in and attending school.¹¹

“Girls living in the poorest families in rural areas are the most likely to be out of school and if they do attend school, they are the least likely to learn and to complete a cycle of education. When disaggregated further, girls from linguistic and ethnic minorities and those whose mother tongue is different from the language taught at school are even more likely to be over-represented in those out of school and not learning.”¹²

Disability-Focused Inclusive Education Policy: Most countries make explicit reference to the right of persons with disabilities to education in their constitutions, laws and or policies. Where inclusive education is defined in education sector plans, a disability stocktake study found that the language is heavily influenced by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Article 24, and / or Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action. Few countries explicitly included definitions of terminology related to disability and inclusion. Implementation has been dominated by segregated or special schools, and the general trend has been for interventions that focus on infrastructure, specific curricula, educational resources, training of teachers in special education and raising awareness. A process of assessment is used by most countries to determine eligibility of children with disabilities for admission to regular schools which contravenes the prescripts of Article 24 of the CRPD, that is the right of all children to access inclusive education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity.¹³

¹⁰ Association of Southeast Asian Nations

¹¹ GPE, UNGEI, UNICEF. 2017. Guidance for developing gender-responsive education sector plans

¹² Sperling, G., Winthrop, R. and Kwauk, C., 2015, In: FCDO. 2018. *Thematic review: Understanding and Addressing Education Marginalisation – Part 2: Education marginalisation in the GEC.*

¹³ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities. References to Lang, R. et al. 2017 and GPE. 2018. *Disability and Inclusive Education – A stocktake of Education Sector Plans and GPE-Funded Grants (Working Paper #3)*

Inclusive Education in ASEAN: Across the ASEAN region there are wide inequalities in income and wealth between sub-regions and countries and this impacts on education opportunity and education attainment. In over half of the 21 ASEAN countries household wealth and residence in rural locations were identified as two critical factors in access to secondary education. However, there are regional variations, for example: in Myanmar women have higher chances of completing secondary and higher education all else being equal; students in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar face particular wealth and income related inequalities in relation to secondary education attainment and access to decent work; boys are disadvantaged relative to girls among the poorest families in Cambodia and Vietnam but not among wealthier families. This illustrates some of the multi-dimensional factors at play when comparing regional evidence, and the need for more disaggregated data to understand intersectional dimensions of exclusion. Though data on children with disabilities is limited and not readily comparable due to difficulties in measuring it, regional data on children with disabilities from various sources, shows high levels of exclusion: in Vietnam a household self-reporting survey found that 87% of children of primary school age were out-of-school; in Myanmar 47% of primary school age children with disabilities were reported as out-of-school; in Cambodia 44% of children with disabilities aged 14 to 16 years old had completed primary school; and in Laos, data from 2007-2008 is used due to limited information on number and status of children with disability, to report that only 4% of school-aged children with disability were enrolled in any type of school or education programme.¹⁴

Several regional initiatives are working to address the gaps in inclusive education provision, highlighting areas of progress for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in ASEAN. For example, the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP) Thematic Review highlights the transition being made from segregated schooling of children with disabilities to inclusive education.¹⁵ The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-Of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY) sets out the commitments of member states including legislation and policy requirements, programmes and practices, coordination, capacity building, information and monitoring, and adequate allocation of resources.¹⁶

The SEAMEO SEN Regional Centre for Special Educational Needs in Malaysia provides a hub for global networking, training, and research. Seminars, conferences and in-country training programmes and courses are conducted to disseminate and share best practice in special educational needs. The programmes contribute significantly to capacity building and upscaling skills and knowledge of special education teachers in the South-East Asia region.¹⁷ The SEAMEO Regional Centre of Excellence in Laos caters for the regional needs in promoting community education development and providing opportunities for cooperation in the field of community education development. Activities include building capacities of school principals,

¹⁴ FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

¹⁵ FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

¹⁶ [ASEAN-Declaration-on-OOSCY_ADOPTED.pdf](#)

¹⁷ SEAMEO. 2020. SEAMEO SEN Annual Report FY 2019/20. [FY20192020.pdf \(seameosen.edu.my\)](#)

teachers and community leaders in border schools, evaluation of a nutrition and school gardening project, and research into access to sexual and reproductive health services for vulnerable adolescents in rural Laos. The SEAMEO Regional Centre for Technical Education Development (TED) in Cambodia assists SEAMEO member countries in identifying technical education problems and finding alternative solutions for sustainable human resource development through technical education.¹⁸

Ethnic Minority Education in ASEAN: Education and the language of minorities is one of the four thematic priorities of the Human Rights Council mandate. A regional forum was convened in Thailand in September 2019 to develop a set of recommendations on the topic of education, language, and the human rights of minorities. The recommendations address human rights, public policies, and practices – learning, teaching, curricula, assessment and finance.¹⁹ Children and adolescents from ethnic minorities are over-represented in the out-of-school population in countries such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam due to cultural and language barriers, discriminatory practices and remoteness.²⁰ SDG thematic indicator 4.5.2 encourages member states to report "Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction."

Specific analysis of out-of-school children by ethnicity in Cambodia and Laos is included throughout this report. In north-east Cambodia for example, ethnic minorities make up the majority of the population. They speak their own indigenous languages and have limited command of the national language Khmer. Ethnic minority populations in Laos face similar barriers to learning. In both countries projects are being implemented to improve early grade literacy and basic education opportunities for marginalised rural populations through multi-lingual curriculum development and teacher training, flexible learning opportunities and classroom resources, for example.

2.2 Inclusive Education Policy - Cambodia

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2019-2023 Strategy 1.4 outlines three priority areas of focus to strengthen Inclusive Education across each level of education:

- Expand inclusive education programmes for children with disabilities at public and community pre-schools,
- Implement the Multilingual Education National Action Plan in 80 selected primary schools as a contributor to inclusive education, and
- Develop an Inclusive Education Action Plan 2019-2023 by the secondary education department.

The ESP emphasises gender mainstreaming including continued investment in interventions and measures to ensure the retention of female students in transition

¹⁸ Website: [SEAMEO Centres - Seameo Spafa \(seameo-spafa.org\)](http://seameo-spafa.org)

¹⁹ UN. 2019. Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities. Website: [REC-Asia-Pacific-2019.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Education/Asia-Pacific/2019.pdf)

²⁰ FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

from primary to secondary education and training for principals and girl counsellors on the Establishment and Management of Girl Counselling.²¹

Cambodia's **Policy on Inclusive Education (2018)** covers kindergarten to higher education level of public and private education institutions. It responds to regional and global educational trends while reflecting Cambodia's educational and cultural contexts. The 9 strategies to achieve inclusive education for girls and children with disabilities, include: procedures for early identification of disabilities; data collection and information system; access to quality education for female students; universal design standards for the construction of school buildings and WASH facilities; capacity building for teachers and school management; and awareness raising (eg. media strategy and enrolment campaigns).²²

The **Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in Education 2021-2025** for Cambodia highlights some major achievements as outcomes of the 2016-2022 plan. Gender parity at secondary level has risen in the past five years with 52.5% of female students completing lower secondary education in 2019-2020 compared to 42.4% of male students and girls slightly outperforming boys at upper secondary level. Gender responsive strategies include strengthening of data and information management on the education needs and status of in- and out-of-school children and youth and education quality, especially vulnerable children, disabled children, ethnic minority children, and disadvantaged children; and raise gender awareness. Interventions for promoting gender in the education sector include improved WASH facilities for girls and disabled students, scholarships for priority students, gender-sensitive awareness training, and mainstreaming gender into teacher training curriculums. Two remaining challenges identified for gender mainstreaming in education are: retention of poor students, particularly female students in dormitories due to safety concerns, and lack of WASH infrastructure such as standard toilets, clean water system, and electricity.²³

The **National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023** includes Strategic Objective 5 to "Ensure persons with disabilities have equal access to quality education and vocational training services". Five ministries, the Disability Action Council, development partners, INGO/NGOs and self-help groups are listed as having responsibility for implementation of this objective.²⁴

2.3 Inclusive Education Policy - Laos

The Laos **Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESSDP) 2021-2025** identifies EMIS data collection as a priority from the 8th ESDP mid-term review for the period 2018-2020:

"EMIS data needs to be reconciled with other data sets, including the international Out-of-School-Children Study (2017), the 2015 population census and the LSIS 2017, to obtain better data on out-of-school children. Data is lacking on children with disabilities,

²¹ MOEYS. 2019. Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023. Cambodia.

²² MOEYS. 2018. Policy on Inclusive Education.

²³ MOEYS Cambodia. 2021. Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan in Education 2021-2025.

²⁴ National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023 [National Disability Strategic Plan \(un.org\)](#)

both in- and out-of-school. The ESSDP recommends that EMIS should use the Washington Group Child Functioning Questions to gather data on children with disabilities.”

High Level Outcome 1 of the Lao ESSDP 2021-2025 states as a target “Number of learners from ECE to lower secondary Grade 9 increases with special focus on the disadvantaged and ensuring gender equity.” Seven departments have joint responsibility for achievement of this outcome, including the IEPC. High Level Outcome 6 highlights the need for the mandate of the IEPC to be reviewed and strengthened to better implement the Inclusive Education Policy including links with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.²⁵

In Laos efforts have been made to improve the situation of children with disabilities, including ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the promulgation of national laws and legislations. However, challenges remain in translating policies into practice.²⁶ MOES developed a **National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education 2011-2015**. A second **Education Action Plan for Learners with Disabilities 2016-2020** is awaiting adoption. In 2015 MOES and the Ministry of Planning and Investment, with support of UNICEF, conducted the Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI) survey to identify suitable strategies to ensure all children complete the full cycle of basic education. As of 2016 three special schools provided education for children with disabilities in Luang Prabang province, Vientiane Capital and Savannakhet managed by the Ministry of Health. Screening of disabilities for children aged 0 to 18 is the responsibility of the Centre for Medical Rehabilitation.²⁷

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW), through National Committee for Disabled People and Elderly (NCDE), developed a **National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities for 2017-25** (not yet validated), which has 8 key areas of intervention: 1) data and statistics; 2) raising public awareness and information sharing; 3) accessibility of the physical environment; 4) health; 5) work and employment, and vocational training; 6) social protection; 7) recreation and sports; 8) disability governance. Low priority is given to funding of programmes for persons with disabilities. Sub-national government offices are financially constrained to allocate budget for activities targeting persons with disabilities. Disability programmes and actions are still highly dependent on foreign development aid and external donors.²⁸

The MOES **IEPC** is responsible for development of Inclusive Education policy. In the past this responsibility was shared by MOES and the Ministry of Public Health. There are capacity gaps at central level and at province and district level there is no assigned person for inclusive education. Inclusion of children with disabilities needs to be addressed as a long-term issue at system level through awareness raising with government stakeholders, institutional capacity building and advocacy for greater

²⁵ MOES. 2020. Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025. MOES, Lao PDR. lao_education_development_plan_2011-2025_en.pdf (unesco.org)

²⁶ UNICEF. N.d. Children with disabilities. Access for all, no matter what. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

²⁷ UNESCO / PEER. 2021. Lao: Inclusion (GEM report) Lao People's Democratic Republic | INCLUSION | Education Profiles (education-profiles.org)

²⁸ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau.

involvement of stakeholders. There is limited awareness of inclusive education practices within the government. The Ministries of Education, Health and Social Welfare do not work effectively together for Inclusive Education. For example, development partners must negotiate three Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), one with each of the three separate Ministries to set up an inclusive education project.²⁹

2.4 Intersectionality

Characteristics of out-of-school children can be broadly mapped out by education level, family economic status, disability status, ethnicity, and geographical location. These characteristics combine to present multiple barriers to education inclusion among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, for example a primary aged girl with disabilities from a poor ethnic minority household in a mountainous rural area who has never attended school. This highlights that a more complex level of analysis is needed to understand intersectionality of multiple characteristics. However, very little reliable and consistent data exists, and most governments deal with each factor separately.³⁰ Some findings on characteristics and barriers from the limited available evidence on intersectionality are presented in Sections 3 and 4.

²⁹ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

³⁰ UNESCO. 2021. 5-year progress review of SDG 4 – Education 2030 in Asia-Pacific
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379173>

3 Key Findings – Characteristics

Initial Research Questions

Qu.1a What are the characteristics of girls not in primary or secondary education? E.g., ethnicity, geography, family's economic status and education.

Qu.1b What are the characteristics of children with a disability not in primary or secondary education? E.g., ethnicity, geography, family's economic status and education.

The characteristics of out-of-school children is collated from secondary document reviews, data analysis and key informant interviews to describe these children – who they are, where they are and some conditions that relate directly to their marginalisation and exclusion from school.

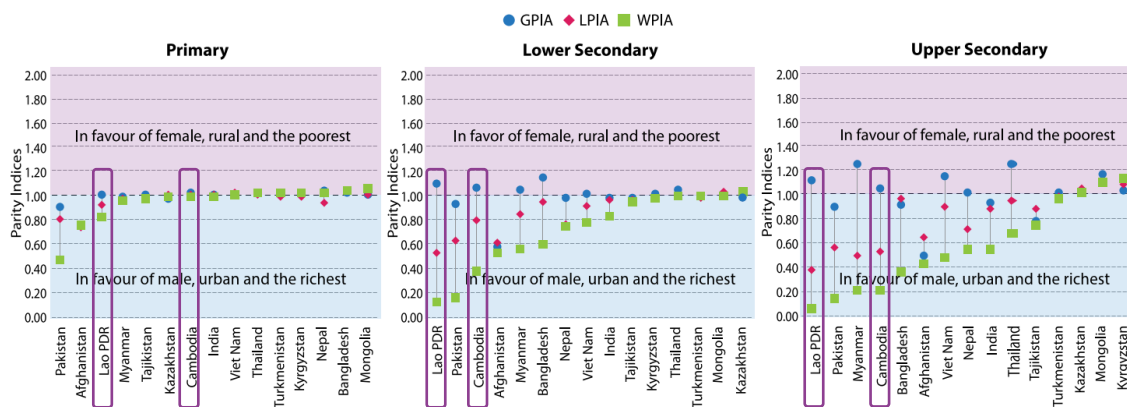
3.1 Characteristics of Out-of-School Children – A Regional Snapshot

Analytical tools have been developed to track performance and progress of countries within the Indo Pacific region towards achievement of SDG Target 4.5.³¹ Adjusted parity indices for gender (GPIA), location (LPIA) and wealth of households (WPIA), have been used to highlight disparities in access to and participation in schooling from primary to upper secondary levels.³² Significant disparities are evident in Cambodia and Laos from analysis of net attendance rates by location and wealth for children in lower and upper secondary education, while parity across gender, location and wealth are largely maintained in primary education (Figure 2).³³

³¹ SDG 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations.

³² GPIA = Adjusted Gender Parity Index, LPIA = Adjusted Location Parity Index, WPIA = Adjusted Wealth Parity Index

³³ UNESCO Bangkok Office (2018, p.69) in FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

Figure 2 Adjusted parity indices of net attendance rate by education level based on household survey data, 2016 or latest year available – Cambodia and Laos³⁴

Characteristics of Out-of-School Children with Disability – Global / Regional

Children with disabilities are a diverse group. Across the East Asia and Pacific region, definitions of disability, data collection methods and purposes differ from one country to another; hence there are no internationally comparable data sets and in general, disability prevalence is far below global estimates. The lack of one clear definition of disability across the region makes disability identification and screening systems weak. School attendance rates for children with disabilities vary by disability type. Children that have difficulty remembering and children with mobility impairments have lower attendance rates than children with sight impairments. Children that have difficulty remembering and children that have difficulties with self-care are far less likely to complete primary school than children with other types of impairments.³⁵ School inclusion within any country varies by disability type, by level of service provision and a multitude of other factors, broadly summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Summary data on out-of-school children with disabilities³⁶

³⁴ Source: Extracted from UNESCO. 2018. Paving the Road to Education. A target-by-target analysis of SDG4 for Asia and the Pacific, (p.69) in FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development [Paving the road to education: a target-by-target analysis of SDG 4 for Asia and the Pacific - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

³⁵ UNICEF. 2019. Education for Every Ability. A review and roadmap of disability-inclusive education in East Asia and Pacific region.

³⁶ UNICEF. 2021. Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities - UNICEF DATA

Compared to children without disabilities, children with disabilities are:

49% more likely to have **never attended** school

47% more likely to be **out of primary** school

33% more likely to be **out of lower-secondary** school

27% more likely to be **out of upper-secondary** school

A recent analysis of 49 countries by UNESCO-UIS (2018) reveals that:

*“Children with disabilities are **less likely ever to attend school**. They are **far less likely to complete schooling**, have **fewer years of education**, and are **less likely to possess basic literacy skills**.”³⁷*

Initial access to education for children with disabilities is a significant challenge. In one study, more than 85% of primary school age children with disabilities had never attended school in 7 out of 8 countries examined.³⁸

Improvements in **primary school completion rates** have been smaller for children with disabilities than for children without disabilities. Boys with disabilities are 17.6% less likely than boys without disabilities to complete primary school. For girls the gap between those with disabilities and those without disabilities who complete primary school is 15.4%. The gap in **secondary completion rate** between children with and without disabilities has grown (14.5% for boys and 10.4% for girls).³⁹ Another study of disaggregated data for 35 countries found that average completion rates for primary school for children with disabilities and children without disabilities were 48% and 70% respectively. On secondary school graduation, the figures were 21% and 32% respectively.⁴⁰

As a consequence of exclusion, the **literacy gap** between girls and boys with disabilities and their non-disabled peers has widened over time because of exclusion from education. A 16.2% difference in literacy rates is found between boys with and without disabilities, and 15.5% between girls with and without disabilities.⁴¹

3.2 Characteristics of Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities in Cambodia

Analysis of out-of-school children in Cambodia is based on the DHS 2014 dataset with supplementary data sources referenced. For this study, a detailed quantitative data analysis is provided in Annex B.⁴² The Cambodia DHS provides data for the period

³⁷ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

³⁸ Mizunoya, S. Mitra, S. Yamasaki, I. 2017 in World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

³⁹ Male and Wodon (2017) in World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

⁴⁰ Leonard Cheshire (2018) in World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

⁴¹ Male and Wodon (2017) in World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

⁴² Cambridge Education. 2021. DHS-MICS Survey Data Analysis Summaries: Annex C FCDO Lao-Cambodia Inclusive Education

2000 to 2014, from which the overall trend can be mapped. While positive, it does waiver although there is a clear trend of improvement over the reporting period with evidence that girls have been improving more (i.e. reaching parity). Evidence of post-2014 trends is limited due to the lack of reliable and comprehensive datasets. However, it may be assumed that the "easiest to reach" populations of out-of-school children have been reached and that the positive trend has continued though at a slower rate with efforts to target harder to reach populations. Steady progress has been made in enrolment of children in primary education but a quarter of children starting primary school don't finish the last grade (grade 6). Many children in Cambodia are at risk of marginalisation and exclusion from education including those living in poverty and children from ethnic minority populations, migrant children, children with disabilities and those living in remote areas.⁴³

3.2.1 Characteristics: Out-of-School Girls - Cambodia

In the 2021 Gender Gap Index, Cambodia ranked 103rd globally out of 156 countries and 128th on educational attainment.⁴⁴ While gender parity has been achieved for enrolment in primary education, the gender parity index for enrolment in secondary education is 0.82, and for literacy rate it is 0.87.⁴⁵

Primary school drop-out rates rose to 6.8% in school years 2018/19 and 2019/20 after some years of decline. While drop-out rose for both girls and boys, male rates rose fastest to reach 7.7% and female rates reached 5.9%. A study of students and caregivers in Cambodia found that boys are perceived to be more vulnerable to dropping out of school than girls (17% versus 14%) due to the impacts of COVID-19.⁴⁶

EMIS data indicates that only about one third of adolescents in the 12 to 15 age range enrol in lower secondary education. The vast majority of students leave the system after completion of primary education. Transition rates from grade 6 to grade 7 are weak and one of the key drivers of lower secondary school dropout is migration for work. Adolescent girls are identified as being particularly vulnerable in this context.⁴⁷

Chart 1 shows that at the time of the 2014 DHS 4.4% of girls in the 6-to-11-year age group had not entered primary school which included 6- and 7-year-olds who are likely to enter at some point (i.e. late entry). Dropout rates for primary age girls were also low at 1.5%. Relatively few children were out of school at this level, though this includes a concentration of children with disabilities. In the lower secondary 12–14-year age group, 23.4% of girls had dropped out while only 2% had never entered education, again likely to represent a concentration of disabled children. At upper secondary level, 56.6% of 15–17-year-old girls had dropped out of school and 3.2% of this age range

⁴³ Save the Children. 2019. Mainstreaming Inclusive Education: Sharing Good Practices.

⁴⁴ Metric of Educational Attainment based on literacy rate (%), enrolment in primary education (%), enrolment in secondary education (%) and enrolment in tertiary education (%) in World Economic Forum. 2021. Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Insight Report.

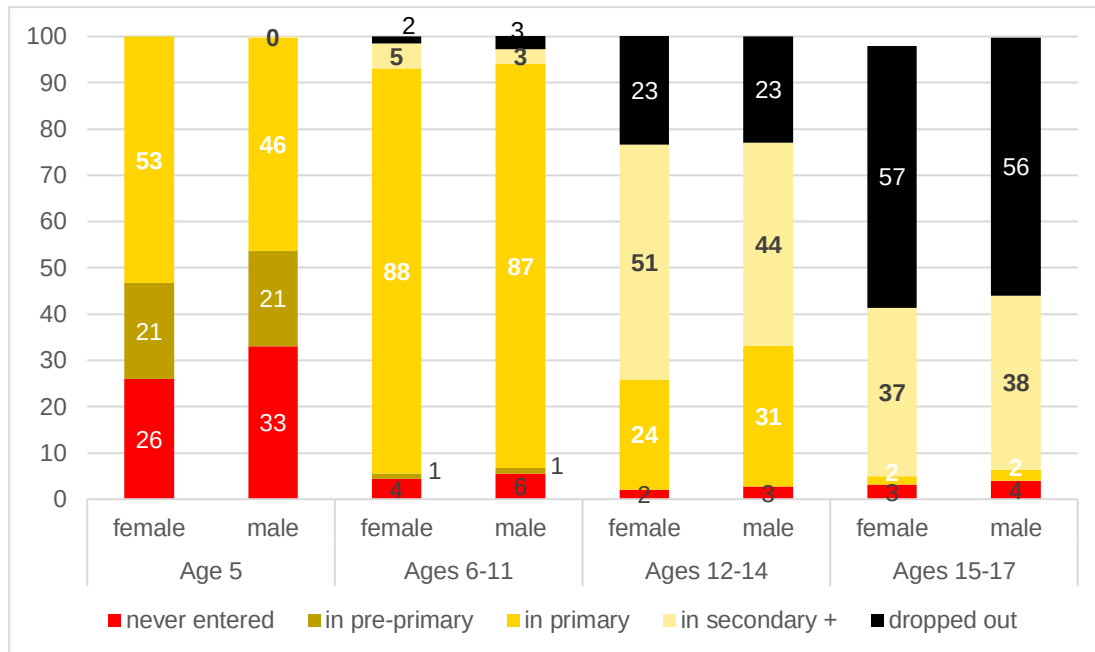
⁴⁵ World Economic Forum. 2021. Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Insight Report.

⁴⁶ Joint Government Development Partners Education Sector Review, Annex B: Cambodia Education Sector Analysis: ECE, Primary, Lower and Upper Secondary Education Analysis, June 2020 (unpublished) cited in UNICEF. 2021. Cambodia COVID-19 Joint Education Needs Assessment

⁴⁷ KAPE. 2019. Girls' Education Initiative. Girls' Education Initiative (GEI) - KAPE (kapekh.org)

had never entered school, again likely to include over-representation of children with disabilities.⁴⁸

Chart 1 Educational participation by age group and by survey year, Cambodia⁴⁹



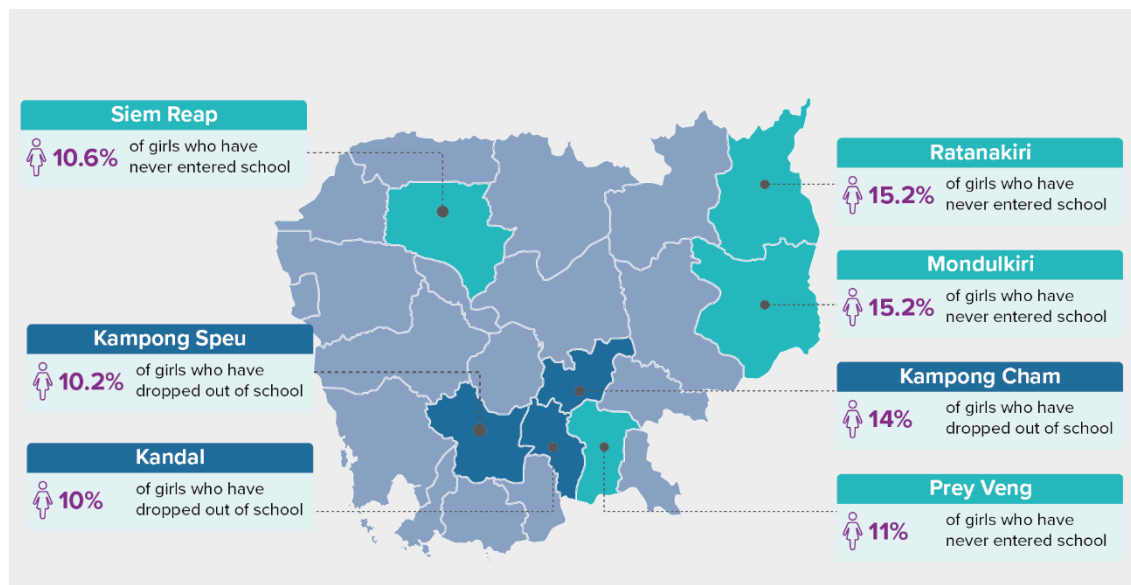
Out-of-School Girls by location: Of the 12–17-year-old out-of-school girls who had never entered school a high proportion were concentrated in four provinces – Monduliri and Ratanakiri (15.2%), Prey Veng (11%) and Siem Reap (10.6%). Of the girls who had dropped out in the 12–17-year age range, they represent a larger overall number and were more widely distributed across all provinces, with a concentration in Kampong Cham (14%), Kampong Speu (10.2%) and Kandal (10%).⁵⁰ This is represented in Map 1.

⁴⁸ For full details see Annex B Tables App 1-3

⁴⁹ DHS, 2014

⁵⁰ For full details see Annex B Table App 1

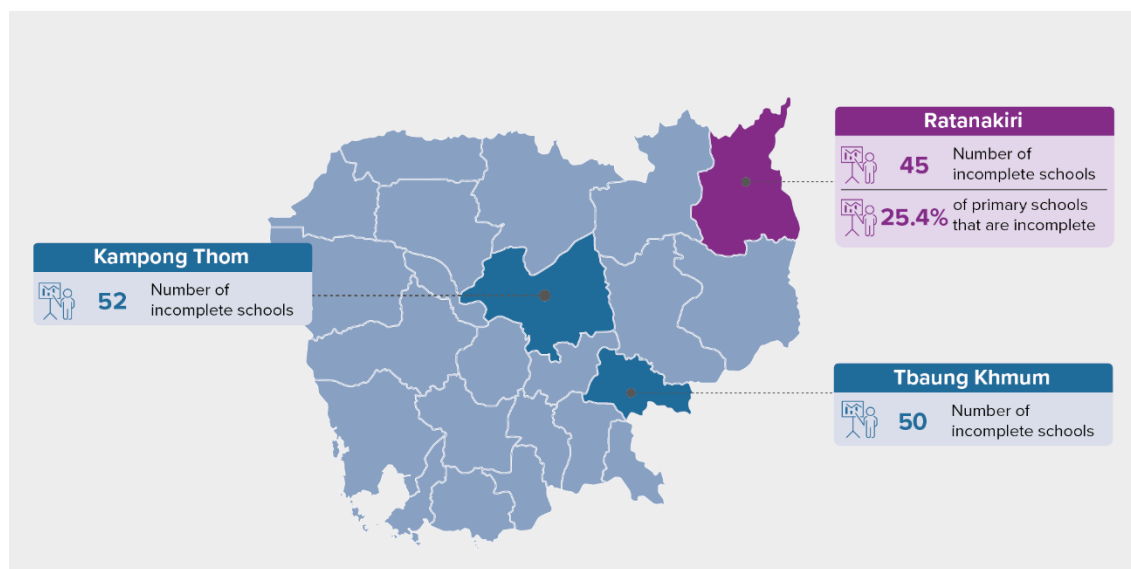
Map 1 Provinces in Cambodia reporting highest % of girls who have dropped out of school and who have never entered school



Incomplete Schools: In 2020-21 there were 382 incomplete schools (i.e. schools that do not offer all six primary grades) representing 5.5% of all primary schools.⁵¹

Provinces with the most incomplete schools are Kampong Thom (52), Tbaung Khmum (50) and Ratanakiri (45). Monduliri does not report any incomplete schools. As a percentage of the total primary schools Ratanakiri stands out: 45 out of 177 schools (25.4%) are incomplete.⁵²

Map 2 Provinces in Cambodia reporting highest number of incomplete schools



⁵¹ MOEYS. 2021, EMIS Data Cambodia

⁵² For full details see Annex B Section 6

3.2.2 Characteristics: Out-of-School Children with Disabilities - Cambodia

Efforts have been made by MOEYS to develop inclusive education, with support from donors such as UNICEF. In the 1990s a small number of segregated schools were set up by NGOs, with individual schools focusing on specific disabilities such as vision, hearing, intellectual or physical disabilities. Progress has been limited due to lack of infrastructure, specialised personnel and legislation. The Special Education Department (SED) was established in 2016 and the National Institute of Special Education (NISE) was set up in 2017 for teacher preparation in segregated and inclusive education.⁵³ Almost half of all people with disabilities in Cambodia are persons under the age of 20.⁵⁴

Data on the enrolment of children with disabilities in inclusive schools is absent from current Cambodia EMIS reporting. Data on enrolment of children with disabilities from other sources is either inconsistent and unreliable, or the sample size is small (e.g. DHS data).⁵⁵ Children with disabilities are ‘invisible’ in mainstream development programming, which is exacerbated by a lack of quality data about them and their needs.⁵⁶

Children and adolescents with disabilities are much more likely to be disproportionately out of school in all education levels and out-of-school dimensions (i.e. never having attended school or dropped out of school before completing a level).⁵⁷ Less than 1% of children of primary school age in Cambodia were identified as being disabled.⁵⁸ Up to 57% of children with disabilities in Cambodia are out of school, a rate 8-10 times greater than children without disabilities. In other words, 1 in 2 children with disabilities is out of school whereas 1 in 14 children without disabilities is out of school. Approximately 50 percent of children aged 5-17 years old with some or a lot of difficulty (disability) attend school in Cambodia (DHS 2014), with similar levels of attendance across urban and rural locations. Only 20% of urban children and 12% of rural children with complete disability aged 5-17 years old attend school.⁵⁹ Children with more severe disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities, are most likely to not enrol in school.⁶⁰

It is likely that children with disabilities who have specialist support needs attend segregated school environments or integrated classrooms of which there are at least 73 supported by Krousar Thmey (KT). In the government’s Inclusive Education Action Plan (2019-2023) the goal is to support an additional nine such integrated classes each year throughout the country.⁶¹

⁵³ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

⁵⁴ Save the Children. 2019. Mainstreaming Inclusive Education: Sharing Good Practices.

⁵⁵ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

⁵⁶ UNICEF. 2019. UNICEF in Cambodia Country Programme 2019–2023

⁵⁷ FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls’ education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

⁵⁸ DHS. 2014. In UNESCO. 2018. Education and Disability: Analysis of Data from 49 Countries. Information Paper No.49

⁵⁹ For full details see Annex B Figure App 11. No data was found on children with disabilities disaggregated to provincial level

⁶⁰ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

⁶¹ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

Even if they attend school, children with disabilities are more likely to drop out early while the level of schooling they receive is frequently below that of their peers.⁶² UIS 2018 analysis shows that of those children who access primary and lower secondary school in Cambodia significantly fewer children with disabilities complete the level compared to children without disabilities (Table 5).

Table 5 Comparison of completion rates for children with and without disabilities: Cambodia⁶³

	Children without disabilities	Children with disabilities
Primary school completion	73%	56%
Lower secondary school completion	53%	36%

UIS 2017 data shows that 44% of children with disabilities, aged 14 to 16 years of age, completed primary education, compared to 72% for non-disabled children in Cambodia. Only 4% of disabled young people, aged 17 and 19 years, completed lower secondary education, compared to 41% for their non-disabled equivalents. However, it is noted that the DHS sample size of out-of-school children with disabilities was too small for statistical reliability.⁶⁴

3.2.3 Intersectionality - Cambodia

School Inclusion by Poverty Status: Multidimensional analysis of child poverty in Cambodia shows that 22.5% of children aged 5-14, are deprived in the education dimension, linked to the high rate of incomplete primary education among children who are beyond primary school age (ages 12, 13, 14 years). 16.8% of children in this age group are two or more years behind in school, and 44.7% of children beyond primary school age (12-14 years) have not completed the six grades of primary school education. School quality, living conditions that keep children from finishing school such as low family income, a school/labour trade-off or late school enrolment are the likely causes of underachievement. Children living in the north-east of Cambodia experience higher deprivation rates than other regions. There is no significant difference by gender and disability status for children of all ages in terms of multidimensional poverty.⁶⁵

Intersectionality of girls and disabilities: Analysis of out-of-school children in Cambodia points to intersectional disadvantages where girls with disabilities were less likely to attend or complete school and those girls who did attend underperformed compared to boys. Girls with or without disabilities were less likely to be seen to be worthy of education compared to boys.⁶⁶

⁶² UNICEF. 2021. Cambodia COVID-19 Joint Education Needs Assessment

⁶³ UNESCO-UIS 2018 in World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

⁶⁴ UNESCO Bangkok Office, 2018, (p.69) in FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Planning / UNICEF. 2018. Child Poverty in Cambodia.

⁶⁶ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

Ethnicity, language, gender and disabilities: Both girls and boys from rural ethnic minorities in Cambodia are at risk of never entering school or of dropping out of primary school before achieving skills in literacy and numeracy. Children from ethnic groups who speak their own indigenous language are effectively excluded from school as they struggle to learn in Khmer as the language of instruction in mainstream education. Indigenous language refers to Charay, Phnorng, Kuoy, etc., used by Indigenous People mostly living in mountainous areas in some parts of Cambodia. Minority language mainly refers to Cham, Vietnamese, and Laos used by minority groups/communities living throughout Cambodia. There are some Cham and Vietnam associations that officially open schools in their communities (*no data available on school numbers*). Laos language is used by some minority Lao people who live mainly in north-east provinces of Phnom Penh municipality (Steung Treng, Rottanakiri, and Mondul Kiri) (*no data available on school numbers*). Girls and children with disabilities from ethnic communities will be further disadvantaged by language limitations and the extent of intersectional vulnerabilities is poorly understood. Children with disabilities from ethnic and linguistic minorities are vulnerable due to lack of government support and their limited language proficiency in the national language of Khmer as well as geographic isolation and food insecurity. Language of instruction and multilingual education interventions have expanded over the past two decades though the extent to which children with disabilities have benefitted remains unclear.⁶⁷

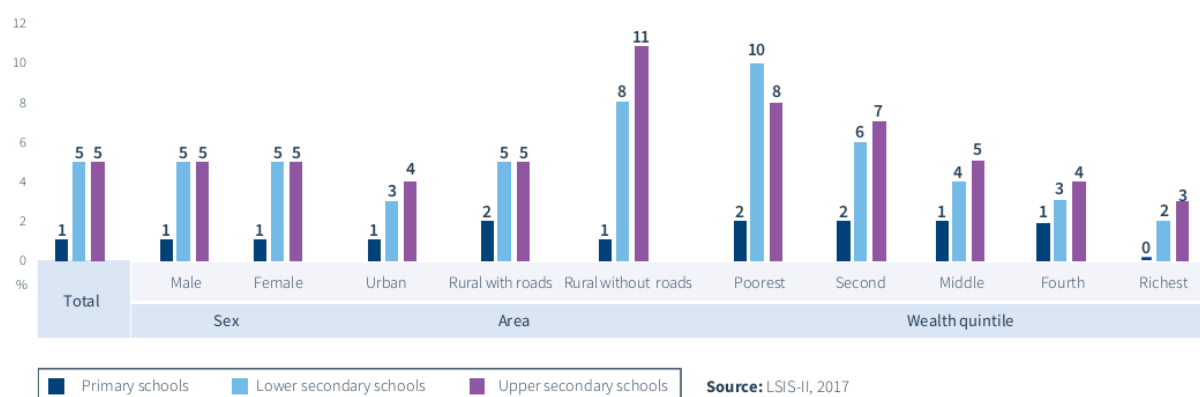
3.3 Characteristics of Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities in Laos

Analysis of out-of-school children in Laos is based on the MICS 2017 dataset with supplementary data sources referenced. For this study, a detailed quantitative data analysis is provided in Annex B.⁶⁸ For Laos the MICS data shows a clear improvement trajectory over ~20 years to 2017 with more improvement for girls than boys. Comprehensive data on post 2017 trends is limited and while the trend in improved participation especially for girls has continued to some extent, continued linear improvement cannot be assumed. The trajectory will have slowed as the harder to reach children remain out of school and there is emerging evidence that COVID has further impacted progress for marginalised groups. Despite good progress made in expanded primary school access and enrolment in Laos, the problem of out-of-school children persists for children who have never enrolled and for those who have dropped out. The dropout rate is low in primary education, at less than 2%, and although it increases to almost 5% in secondary school, it remains very low. Most children who drop out complete an education level but do not transition to the next level either at the end of primary or end of lower secondary education. Behind these statistics are a range of factors that increase the risk and likelihood of school dropout including gender, rurality (including road access) and poverty (Chart 2).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

⁶⁸ Cambridge Education. 2021. DHS-MICS Survey Data Analysis Summaries: Annex C FCDO Lao-Cambodia Inclusive Education

⁶⁹ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/mics-education-analysis-for-global-learning-and-equity/>

Chart 2 Dropout rates in Laos, by sex, area and wealth quintile⁷⁰

3.3.1 Characteristics: Out-of-School Girls – Laos

In the 2021 Gender Gap Index, Laos ranked 36 out of 156 countries and 112th on educational attainment. While gender parity is close to being achieved for enrolment in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, the gender parity index for literacy rate it is 0.88.⁷¹

Laos has made good progress in girls' school attendance and gender parity in education, but deeply rooted gender inequalities persist.⁷² There is relative parity throughout the primary grades but after age 11 there is clear divergence. Girls are more likely than boys to drop out earlier starting from the end of primary school at age 10-11, with significant differences after the age of 14 years.

Early marriage Education and sports plays a critical role in preventing early marriage for both boys and girls, with early marriage closely linked to literacy skills, and evidence that sports empowering and motivating girls to remain at school. 57% of young women and 35% of young men who did not attend primary school marry early. Girls and boys from the Hmong-Mien ethnic group have almost twice the rate of early marriage below the age of 15 than children from other ethnic groups. Girls' who do not marry early are 25% more likely to be literate than girls who marry before they are 15 years old.⁷³

At the time of the 2017 MICS only 6.5% of 6- to 10-year-old girls had not entered primary school (Chart 3). This includes a sizeable number of 6- and 7-year-olds who are likely to enter at some point (i.e. late entry). Dropout rates for primary age girls are also low at 2.1%. The high entry (eventually including over-age children), and the low dropout rate during primary grades leaves relatively few children out of school at this level, though this includes a concentration of children with disabilities. In the lower secondary 11-14 age group, 14.5% of girls had dropped out, while 3.8% had never entered education, again likely to represent a concentration of disabled children. At upper secondary level, 36.9% of 15–17-year-old girls had dropped out of school and

⁷⁰ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 (Fig.31)

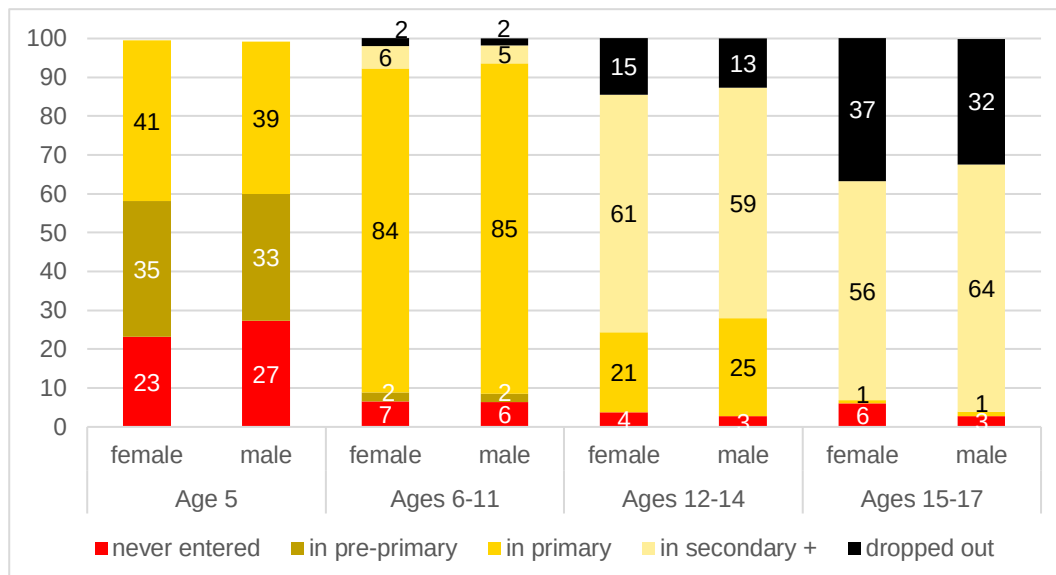
⁷¹ World Economic Forum. 2021. Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Insight Report.

⁷² UNICEF Laos website <https://www.unicef.org/laos/gender>

⁷³ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/mics-education-analysis-for-global-learning-and-equity/>

6% of this age range had never entered school, again including over-representation of children with disabilities.⁷⁴

Chart 3 Educational participation by age group and by survey year, Laos⁷⁵



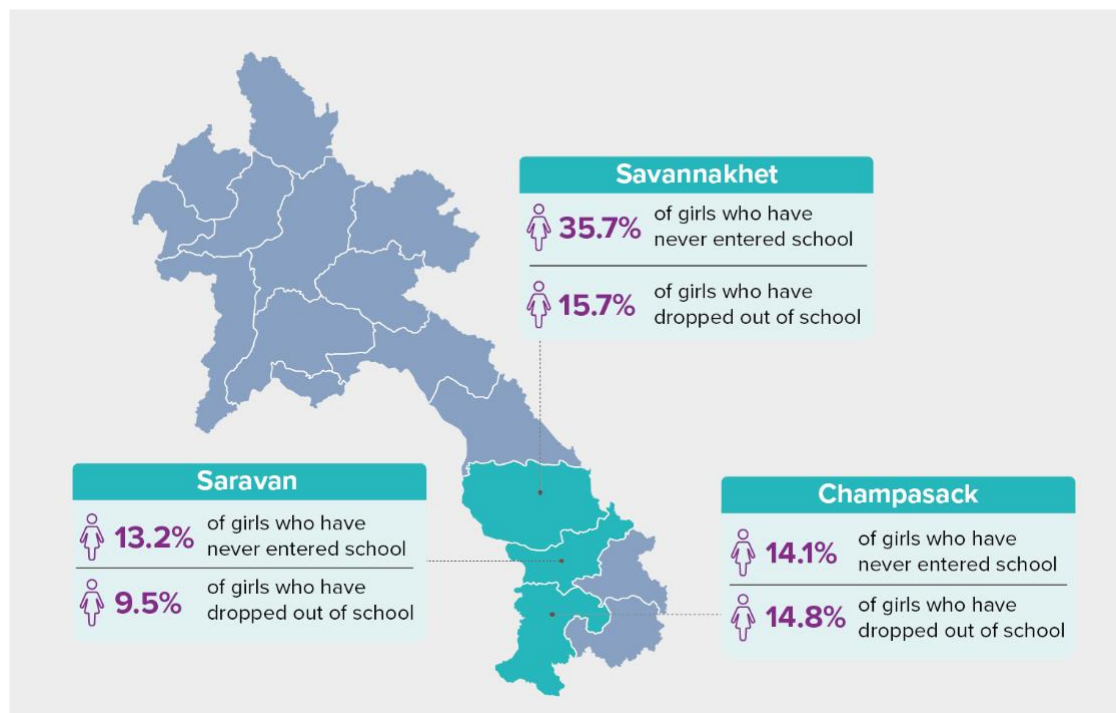
Out-of-School Girls by location: The 11–17-year-old out-of-school girls who had never entered school were concentrated in three southern provinces – Savannakhet (35.7%), Saravan (14.1%) and Champasack (13.2%). Girls who had dropped out in the 11–17-year age range represent a larger overall number and were more widely distributed across all provinces, also with a concentration in Savannakhet (15.7%), Champasak (14.8%) and Saravan (9.5%) (Map 3).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ For full details see Annex B Tables App 1-3

⁷⁵ MICS 2017

⁷⁶ For full details see Annex B Table App 1

Map 3 Provinces in Lao PDR reporting highest % of girls who have dropped out of school and who have never entered school



Out-of-School Girls by ethnic group: The majority of 11–17-year-old girls who had never entered school were from Mon-Khmer (58.6%), Hmong-Mien (18.5%) and Lao-Tai (17.7%) ethnic groups. The majority of 11–17-year-old girls who had dropped out of school were of the predominant ethnicity Lao-Tai (49.1%) followed by Chinese-Tibetan (33%) ethnicity.⁷⁷ Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien children are clearly disadvantaged even when controlling for socioeconomic background, location and gender.⁷⁸

Incomplete Schools: In 2020-21 there were 1,564 primary schools (17.8% of all primary schools) reported as incomplete.⁷⁹ On the basis of grade 1 student population the incomplete schools represent 8.4% of total enrolment.

The incomplete schools are concentrated in six provinces: Phongsaly (200) and Huapanh (161) in the north, and Savannakhet (183), Champasack (152), Khammuane (151), and Saravan (142) in the south. As a percentage of all primary schools the incomplete schools are most prevalent in Phongsaly (41.5% of primary schools in the province are incomplete), Luangnamtha (23.8%), and Huapanh (22.5%), in the north, and Saravan (23.5%), Khammuane (23.2%), and Champasack (20.4%) in the south (Map 4).⁸⁰

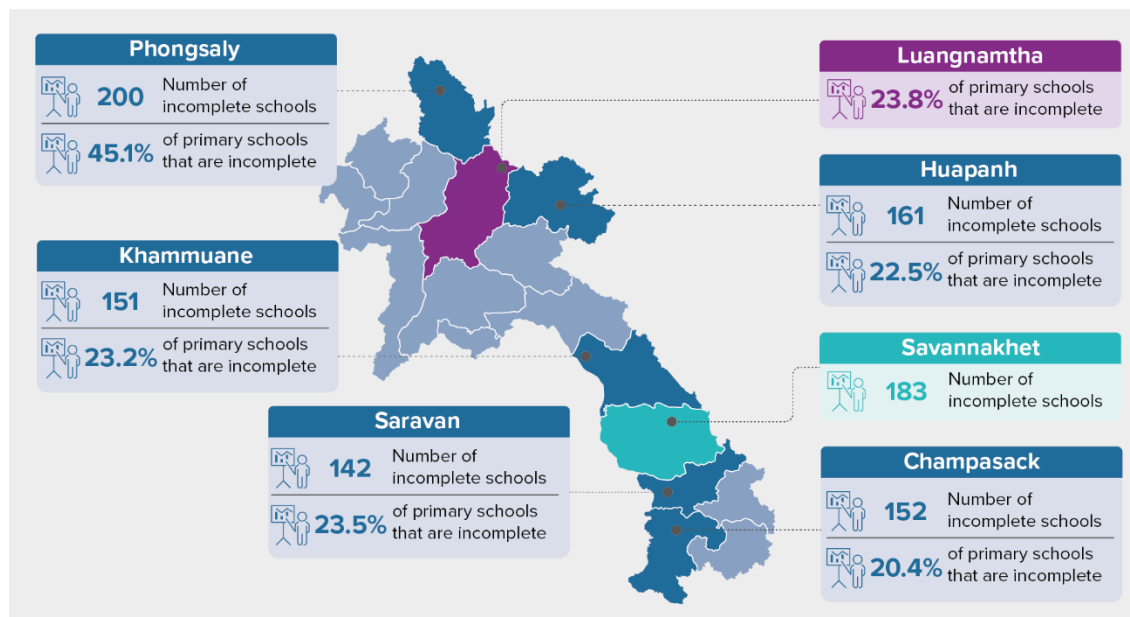
⁷⁷ For full details see Annex B Figure App 5

⁷⁸ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/mics-education-analysis-for-global-learning-and-equity/>

⁷⁹ MOES. 2021, EMIS Data Laos

⁸⁰ For full details see Annex B Section 6

Map 4 Provinces in Lao PDR reporting highest number of incomplete schools



Access to complete schools remains an issue for some remote communities in Laos where roughly 40% of children who left school after completing grade 3 were studying in an incomplete school that did not offer grade 4, while 30% of children who left after grade 4 had no grade 5 to progress to.⁸¹

3.3.2 Characteristics: Out-of-School Children with Disabilities - Laos

There is limited information on the number and status of children with disability in Laos due to the lack of a data collection system. The MICS data in Laos does not provide any information on children of school age with disabilities.⁸² Analysis of Population and Housing Census (PHC, 2015) data on disabilities in Laos reports on total population aged 6+ with disabilities, and specific data on school-age children with disabilities is limited.⁸³ The 2017 Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS II) data indicates that 2% of children aged 2 to 4 have functional difficulty in at least one domain (seeing, hearing, walking, fine motor, communicating, learning, playing, controlling behaviour). In rural areas without road, 3.8% of children have functional difficulty in at least one domain. There are disparities between the North (1.7%) and the South (4.3%). In the Sekong province, the percentage increases up to 22%.⁸⁴

The PHC (2015) data provides some analysis of children with disabilities within the wider analysis of all persons with disabilities aged 6+. Survey findings show that the level of education of persons with disabilities is lower than in the overall population. 53% of persons with disabilities reported being literate compared to 86% of the overall

⁸¹ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

⁸² Cambridge Education. 2021. DHS-MICS Survey Data Analysis Summaries: Annex C FCDO Lao-Cambodia Inclusive Education

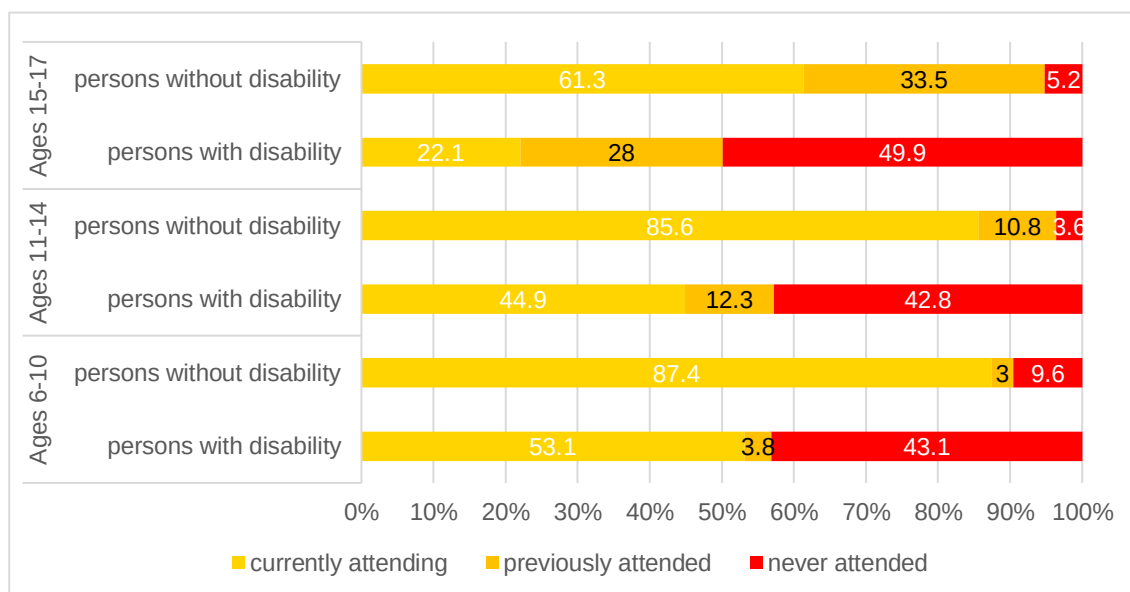
⁸³ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau

⁸⁴ UNICEF. N.d. Children with disabilities. Access for all, no matter what. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

population, and 40% of women with disabilities reported being literate. Only 3.7% of all persons with disabilities had attended school.⁸⁵

Of school-age children aged 6 to 17 years, the PHC (2015) data showed that 43.2% of children with disabilities had never enrolled in primary school compared to 9.6% of the rest of the population. Of those children with disabilities who attended school, retention rates were low with 53.1% going to primary school compared to only 22.1% going to high school (Chart 4). PHC data is disaggregated by province, district, urban, rural with road and without road access, and by gender, disability and poverty for the population aged 6+ years (i.e. including children and adults through to old age) but with very limited data disaggregation for the population of school-age children aged 6 to 17 years.⁸⁶

Chart 4 Children school attendance rate, by age cohort (population 6-17) - Laos⁸⁷



While the gender parity index comparison across school levels shows a similar decline with age, girls with disabilities were less likely to be attending school than girls without disabilities at all school levels (Chart 5).⁸⁸

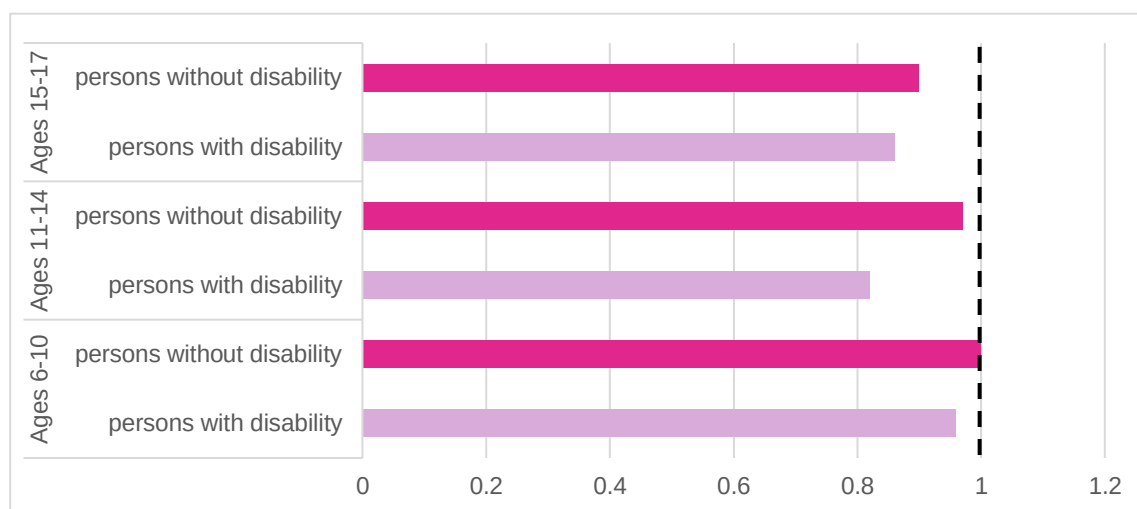
⁸⁵ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau

⁸⁶ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau

⁸⁷ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau (Fig 22)

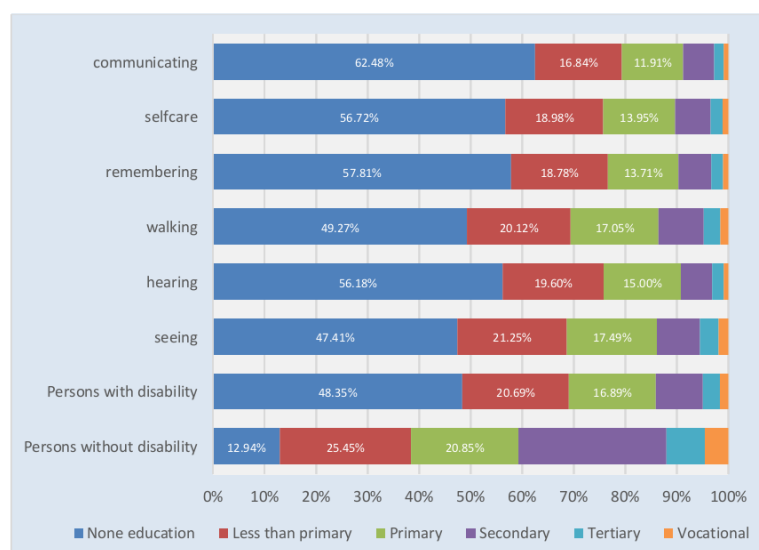
⁸⁸ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau

Chart 5 Gender Parity Index: ratio of girls to boys in children currently attending school, by age cohort (population 6-17) - Laos⁸⁹



The PHC (2015) found that, for all persons with disabilities aged 6+ who enrol in primary school, more than 20% dropped out before completing the cycle, and only 16.9% completed the cycle (compared to 20.9% of the rest of the population). Only 9.1% went to high school against almost 28.7% of persons without disability, indicating that dropout at school transition points is a structural issue of the Lao educational system (Chart 6).⁹⁰

Chart 6 Education completion of persons with disabilities (age 6+), by functional domain - Laos⁹¹



⁸⁹ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau (Fig 23)

⁹⁰ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau

⁹¹ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau (fig 24)

3.3.3 Intersectionality and School Exclusion - Laos

Out-of-school children tend to be from the poorest households (quintile 1), live in rural areas especially remote areas, and from non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups. The characteristics for those who never attended primary school and those who dropped out of primary school are similar.⁹²

School Exclusion by Poverty Status: In Laos net enrolment by poverty status for children aged 6-10 has increased from 65% in 2013 to 72.9% in 2019; and for children aged 11-14 it has increased from 20% in 2013 to 32.5% in 2019. The net primary school enrolment gap between the poor and the non-poor contracted from 17.8% in 2012/13 to 13.7% in 2018/19. In contrast, the net lower secondary school enrolment gap widened. Enrolment among non-poor children aged 11-14 years increased by 20.9% to 66.2%, compared to a 12.4 percentage point increase to 32.5% among poor children. Overall, average years of schooling remain at around 6 years in Laos, with the poor on average having just 3.7 years of education. The incidence of deprivations among the multidimensionally poor improved across all indicators, especially in school attendance and housing. In 2018/19, only 8% of the population were multidimensionally poor and did not have their children enrolled in school, compared to 21% in 2012/13.⁹³

Girls from poor families living in some rural areas are at high risk of exclusion. Among the rural poor nearly 27% of non-Lao Tai girls aged 6-9 have never attended school compared to only 10% of Lao-Tai males in rural areas who are not poor, and a further 16% drop-out before completing primary education.⁹⁴

The wealthier the family the lower the risk of a child dropping out of school at any level, but older children are at more risk across all socioeconomic groups. Almost no children from the richest quintile drop out of primary school and only 2% drop out of secondary school, compared to 2% and 10% respectively for children from the poorest families. Nearly 80% of children from the wealthiest households entered primary school on age, at age 5 or 6, compared with only 28% of children from the poorest households. Dropout rates at lower secondary level are five times higher among the poorest families compared to those from the richest quintile. About one third of 10–14-year-olds who are not in school cited direct and indirect costs of school (costs of uniform, food and transport) while 41% cite “not interested” as the reason they are not in school.⁹⁵

School Exclusion by Location: The dropout rate for children living in rural areas of Laos is higher at all levels than for those living in urban areas. For children living in rural areas road access is significant, with twice as many upper secondary school dropouts where there is no road access compared to those who drop out in rural areas but with road access. In Laos children who have never entered school are concentrated in Savannakhet, Champasak, Saravan and Oudomxay provinces. They

⁹² World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

⁹³ Calculated from LEC 5 (2012/2013) and LEC 6 (2018/2019). World Bank. 2020. *Poverty Profile in Lao PDR Poverty Report for the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018-2019*

⁹⁴ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

⁹⁵ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/mics-education-analysis-for-global-learning-and-equity/>

may eventually enter school as overage or late entrants for cultural or socio-economic reasons. Late entry is also driven by the perception among some communities that the 6-year-old child is considered too young for school.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

4 Key Findings – Barriers and Challenges

Initial Research Questions

Qu.2a What are the challenges faced by sub-national authorities in increasing inclusion in education particularly in Northeast Cambodia (Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri) and Southern Laos?

Qu.2b What are the political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of exclusion and marginalisation?

4.1 Barriers to Inclusive Education for Out-of-School Girls and Children with Disabilities in Cambodia and Laos

A range of barriers and challenges can be identified as reasons why out-of-school children may never enrol in school or may drop out of school, generalisable for all children – girls and boys, and generalisable to children in Cambodia and Laos, or to the Indo-Pacific region. Some barriers and challenges can be identified that are specific to girls or to children with disabilities, or specific to Cambodia or to Laos. In this section the main barriers that exclude out-of-school girls and children with disabilities from education are identified from the literature and from key informant interviews.

Barriers to inclusive education are well documented and can be clustered at **family and community level** (e.g cultural attitudes, household poverty, etc), at **school level** (e.g resources and facilities, specialised staff, pedagogical techniques, etc), and at **system level** (e.g adequate policy and legal support, teacher training, flexible curriculum, supportive leadership, etc).

4.1.1 Family / Community Level Barriers

Household Poverty is a financial barrier to school participation globally, associated with direct cost factors (school fees, uniform, stationery, transport, meals, etc) and indirect cost factors (children needed do other things in the home/family and to contribute to the household economy, etc).⁹⁷ Where families perceive that there is no return on the investment cost of education, they don't want to send their children to school.⁹⁸

Costs of schooling disproportionately affect girls' access, attendance, and learning outcomes across the Asia-Pacific region. Families living in remote and rural areas struggle most to send their daughters to school as transportation fees are costly, and children may have to walk for hours to reach the nearest school.⁹⁹

Financial barriers for children with disabilities: Families of children with disabilities often pay more school-related costs compared to families of children without disabilities, for example the additional cost of transport, diagnosis of needs, classroom

⁹⁷ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

⁹⁸ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

⁹⁹ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

assistants and therapists (if available). Availability of additional support services does not necessarily improve the quality of education but may be a determinant in decision making for families. At the household level, parents may decide that educating a child with a disability is not in the economic interest of the family linked to a perception of low economic return on investment in education and the realities of low employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.¹⁰⁰ In Cambodia findings from a study showed that children with intellectual disabilities may be considered to pose a financial strain as they do not contribute to the family, requiring another family member to lose labour opportunities to care for the child.¹⁰¹

Child labour affects the educational outcomes of both in-school and out-of-school children and is directly linked to household poverty. In Laos more in-school children engage in economic activities than out-of-school children. However, 37% of out-of-school children are engaged in work under hazardous conditions compared to 27% of children who attend school.¹⁰²

Value of education for girls vs boys. Girls were less likely to be seen as worthy of education compared to boys in communities where there is a low perceived value of education.¹⁰³ Instances were recorded where parents expressed a preference for educating their sons but not their daughters as the return on investment was seen as greater for male children.¹⁰⁴

Negative attitudes as barriers to inclusion for children with disabilities: The attitudes of parents, teachers, and communities towards children with disabilities and their ability to learn and achieve can present barriers to educational inclusion and learning outcomes. Factors that influence parental attitudes include low expectation and aspiration, a sense of shame, protection from bullying, attitudes held by the school and by other parents who keep their disabled child at home. Cultural beliefs and practices within the community also present barriers to educational attainment and achievement for children with disabilities. For example, disability is associated with evil and bad omens in some communities, and children are hidden from the public view. Negative beliefs and practices towards disability indicate a lack of knowledge which will effectively exclude children with disabilities from participation in school.¹⁰⁵

In Cambodia parents in rural areas were influenced by cultural beliefs including that disability was a karmic consequence. Negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities were found to exist including widespread societal discrimination deriving from local beliefs about karma or witchcraft as a cause of disability. Some parents of children who are deaf or blind are more positive, seeing improvements in their child's attitudes and communication after being enrolled in school. Other parents see their disabled child as being a burden to teachers. Parents were more accepting of inclusive

¹⁰⁰ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

¹⁰¹ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹⁰² UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017
<https://data.unicef.org/resources/mics-education-analysis-for-global-learning-and-equity/>

¹⁰³ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

¹⁰⁴ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹⁰⁵ (UNICEF 2014) in World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

education if they received training or saw examples of disabled people living and working independently in the community or in the media.¹⁰⁶

Lack of awareness of the rights of children creates barriers in access to quality education for families and communities.¹⁰⁷

Low quality or lack of relevance of education is identified as one of the main reasons given for children never attending school or for early dropout.¹⁰⁸ In Laos, despite a rise in participation from children in the bottom 20% of households, most children attending kindergarten and pre-primary classes are from urban areas and rural areas with good road access. Data show that poorer and rural children have less chance of attending ECE, as do those whose mothers are less educated or whose parents belong to non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups. The current quality of ECE is insufficient and there is a need to improve teaching standards and low cost ECE school sites.¹⁰⁹

Safety of school attendance for girls and children with disabilities. The most common barriers to enrolment cited by parents of girls and children with disabilities were concern for the child's safety and that the school was not accessible for students with disabilities. A particular concern is the risk of violence and sexual abuse during the commute to school and during school hours leading to vulnerable girls dropping out of school. Girls with disabilities are more likely to be victims of sexual assault. The risk of violence, sexual assault, and harassment is a worry for many parents especially at secondary level where there are generally fewer schools and distances to be travelled are generally longer. Families may worry that it is not safe for girls to stay in school dormitories.¹¹⁰ In a small sample survey of 54 parents of children with disabilities in Cambodia, 52% of the children were either not enrolled in school or had dropped out of school. It was found that women and girls with disabilities experience documented discrimination on both their gender and disability compared to women and girls without disabilities or men and boys with disabilities.¹¹¹ Children with disabilities in Laos (and in general) are found to be at greater risk of maltreatment, violence, abuse and exploitation than their non-disabled peers.¹¹²

Language barriers for children from ethnic communities who are non-Khmer (Cambodia), or non-Lao Tai (Laos) leads to low learning achievement in school and to early dropout.¹¹³

Intersectionality of ethnicity, economic status and remoteness in Cambodia combines to create multiple barriers to inclusion in mainstream education for marginalised and vulnerable children from three school communities: **Islamic schools,**

¹⁰⁶ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹⁰⁷ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

¹⁰⁸ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

¹⁰⁹ MOES. 2020. Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025. MOES, Lao PDR

¹¹⁰ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

¹¹¹ Hayes & Bulat, 2018 in USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹¹² UNICEF. N.d. Children with disabilities. Access for all, no matter what. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

¹¹³ Key Informant Interviews CARE Laos, December 2021

Buddhist monastic schools and floating schools.¹¹⁴ For Cham Muslim students for example, language of instruction is a barrier to inclusion in state schools and Muslim girls were restricted from wearing the hijab at school which constituted a barrier to regular attendance for some girls. Most children who attend the floating schools do not transition to secondary school at the end of primary grades as there is no floating secondary school. This presents a financial burden for families. The cost of commuting and living on the mainland is expensive and the existing MOEYS scholarships are not sufficient, for example one school received 22 scholarships for 322 students. In Buddhist schools all students must start at Grade 1 regardless of age which can be challenging for over-age learners and for teachers of mixed age learners.¹¹⁵

Intersectionality of ethnicity, economic status and remoteness in Laos is evident at local level for primary age children due to socioeconomic status though initial attendance rates overall are high. There is a need for greater investment in reaching more disadvantaged communities where there is high risk of primary school dropout. At lower and upper secondary levels, participation was found to be low, particularly in rural and more remote areas, where there are a limited number of schools and dormitories. Ethnicity was also a factor in limiting access at secondary level, where Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien ethnic groups have notably low enrolment rates, low literacy levels, low transition rates to the next education level and high dropout rates at all levels. Students from low socioeconomic and non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups were predominant in this data, with evidence showing that child labour and early marriage are factors to be addressed for children of secondary school age. Parental engagement with the school and in supporting their children's educational development at home was also found to be low among these groups.¹¹⁶

Intersectionality of gender, poverty, ethnicity and location as a barrier to secondary education. Studies consistently show that the combination of being poor, a woman and living in a rural area forms the most common barrier to secondary education. Girls who face multiple disadvantages - such as low family income, living in remote or underserved locations or who have a disability or belong to a minority ethno-linguistic group - are farthest behind in terms of access to and completion of education and learning outcomes.¹¹⁷

4.1.2 Impact of COVID-19 on girls' education and children with disabilities in Cambodia and Laos

In Cambodia the risk of children dropping out of school has increased due to prolonged school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A self-reporting rapid assessment and mapping exercise was undertaken in Cambodia to identify those at high risk of dropping out and the determinants of drop-out at district and provincial levels. At provincial level 1.9% of students in the sample had dropped out due to school closures with a further 8% at high risk of dropping out. Boys had a 2.1% higher risk of drop-out than girls. Children from poorer families were at higher risk of dropping out

¹¹⁴ UNICEF. 2018. Inclusion and Quality in Islamic Schools, Buddhist Monastic Schools and Floating Schools.

¹¹⁵ UNICEF. 2018. Inclusion and Quality in Islamic Schools, Buddhist Monastic Schools and Floating Schools.

¹¹⁶ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017

¹¹⁷ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

than those less poor, and non-Khmer speakers were at higher risk than Khmer speakers. Students with a disability had a 7.7% higher risk of drop-out than students without a disability. At provincial level Stung Treng Province had the highest rate of student dropout at 5.3% and the highest risk of further student dropout. Kandal (2.3%), Ratanakiri (2.3%), and Prey Veng (2.1%) also had higher levels of dropout due to school closures than other provinces.¹¹⁸ A notable proportion of girls and boys (17% and 23% respectively) self-reported facing additional violence, abuse or exploitation. In addition to students being at an increased risk overall those who self-reported a disability were at an increased risk (23%) when compared to students with no disability (15%). 10% of students at primary level were found to be at risk of dropping out compared to 7% at lower secondary school and students from poor households were at greater risk than those from non-poor households (19% and 15% respectively).¹¹⁹

In Laos all schools and educational institutions closed in March 2020 and remained closed for several months to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This disrupted the learning of over 1.7 million children and young people, who were entering the last 2.5 months of the 2019-2020 school year. Due to the second wave of the virus, schools closed again in April 2021, putting children's learning further at risk. Prolonged school closure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is predicted to have the greatest impact on already marginalised children. For primary school girls in rural areas of Laos school closures are associated with higher likelihood of child marriage, and the burden of additional household chores or pressures of child labour among poorer households. Children in some ethnic groups and in rural areas are further impacted with lower access to digital technology through which to access distance learning options during times of school closure. It is predicted that the COVID-19 linked school closures will lead more disadvantaged secondary school children to engage in income-generating activities and marriage, leading to higher levels of dropout. Girls are increasingly vulnerable to child marriage and sexual exploitation violence and abuse, and both girls and boys are more vulnerable to child labour. Children in rural areas especially without road access, non-Lao-Tai ethnic families and those from the poorest quintile are at highest risk of dropping out because of COVID-related school closures. Child marriage, child labour and early employment are predicted to surge.¹²⁰

4.1.3 School Level Barriers

Access-related Barriers

Incomplete schools. An insufficient supply of schools (e.g. incomplete primary school in villages with no grade 4 and grade 5), shortage of classrooms, shortage of trained teachers, or inadequate and unsafe school environment are all barriers to inclusive education. In both Laos and Cambodia there are incomplete primary schools that do not offer the full range of grades and therefore limit the supply of and access to schooling. Incomplete schools are likely to be concentrated in rural and remote areas, with small school populations resulting in higher risk of dropout in upper primary grades

¹¹⁸ Cheb, Hoeurn. (2021). School Drop-Out Risk Hotspot Analysis: Statistical Analysis Report. Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Save the Children Cambodia.

¹¹⁹ UNICEF. 2021. Cambodia COVID-19 Joint Education Needs Assessment

¹²⁰ UNICEF. 2021. *Impact of COVID-19 on Children, Adolescents and their Families in Lao PDR*.

in those locations.¹²¹ In Laos it is observed that between 30-40% of those who leave school early live in a village where schools do not offer G4 and G5 i.e. incomplete schools.¹²²

Lack of physical access. Distance and journey to school, physical access to and unsuitability of school buildings and bathroom facilities and the extra costs of schooling are barriers to school attendance and to educational attainment for girls, for children living in remote areas and for children with disabilities. While assistive learning devices and other technologies benefit children with disabilities they are expensive and unaffordable for many. Rural schools and training centres lack the necessary electricity, assistive devices and connectivity, classrooms can be overcrowded, or inaccessible, and pedagogical approaches are often not geared towards accommodating learner diversity.¹²³

The combined socio-economic factors of gender, ethnicity, poverty and distance to school play a large part in determining the length of time a child with a disability will stay in school.¹²⁴

Students with physical disabilities have fewer reported attitudinal barriers than other disabilities but inaccessible transportation and infrastructure remain barriers and limit their full inclusion.¹²⁵

A study in Laos identified the two most disadvantaged types of disability as those related to hearing difficulties and those associated with communicating and remembering difficulties. Children with these disabilities faced more barriers to access to education.¹²⁶

Quality-related Barriers

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is a human rights violation perpetrated through corporal punishment, physical and psychological violence and abuse, bullying, cyber-bullying, sexual violence and abuse. Girls are typically more exposed to sexual abuse and psychological forms of violence. SRGBV leads to lower educational enrolment, achievement, and attainment and the risk of SRGBV is, for many families, a barrier to school enrolment of their daughters. Research shows that SRGBV is prevalent to some extent in Cambodia and Laos.¹²⁷

Inadequate WASH infrastructure is a barrier to inclusive education in Cambodia and Laos. Poor WASH management systems (separate toilets, washing areas and availability of sanitary products) disproportionately affect girls' causing absenteeism, poor academic performance, and in some cases, school dropout. Girls with special

¹²¹ Cambridge Education. 2021. DHS-MICS Survey Data Analysis Summaries: Annex C FCDO Lao-Cambodia Inclusive Education Report

¹²² World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

¹²³ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

¹²⁴ UNICEF. N.d. Children with disabilities. Access for all, no matter what. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

¹²⁵ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹²⁶ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau.

¹²⁷ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

needs and disabilities are disproportionately affected by poor WASH management systems.¹²⁸

Teachers are not trained in inclusive education methodologies and are unable to provide for individual learning needs; children are blamed as being the problem, rather than blaming the system itself.¹²⁹ In Cambodia significant gains have been made in **pre-service teacher training for special education teachers, and teachers in general education** receive some level of instruction on how to support learners with disabilities in their classroom. This begins to address the basic issue of shortage of trained teachers. However, the duration of training is too short for teachers to acquire foundational skills, for example in sign language fluency. Pre-service teacher training includes 28 hrs inclusive education training specific to vision or hearing disability for teachers working in segregated schools or integrated classes. In-service teacher training uses a cascade approach to teacher training with short (one-to-five day) trainings on inclusive education, but programmes have reached a minority of educators nationally.¹³⁰

Teachers generally lack training in dealing with **gender stereotyping in the classroom**. Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) is not widely included in teacher education, teaching practices, lesson plans and education curricula.¹³¹

Learning Resources. Where school resources and facilities are found to be inadequate for the needs of all children interventions are needed to make the school more inclusive for children from marginalised groups who are at risk of dropping out. A study in Cambodia for example found that curriculum, teaching and learning materials, and teachers' guides were needed to meet the needs of girls and for children with disabilities from three marginalised school communities - Islamic schools, Buddhist schools and floating schools.¹³²

In Cambodia, education provision where it exists for children with disabilities is mostly through **segregated special schools or resource rooms** for children who are deaf or blind or have an intellectual disability. The quality of education provision is quite variable and there is an acute **shortage of teachers with sign language proficiency or availability of braille materials**.¹³³

Teacher and parental attitudes present another barrier to inclusive education for children with disabilities where there is limited understanding of the benefits of inclusive education and limited parental engagement and participation in school activities. Research shows that within the community and among teachers there is limited understanding about the learning needs of children with disabilities which is often fuelled by prejudices around disability.¹³⁴ Evidence shows that attitudes become more

¹²⁸ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

¹²⁹ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

¹³⁰ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹³¹ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

¹³² UNICEF. 2018. Inclusion and Quality in Islamic Schools, Buddhist Monastic Schools and Floating Schools.

¹³³ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹³⁴ UNICEF. 2021. Cambodia COVID-19 Joint Education Needs Assessment

favourable through awareness raising, exposure to good practices, and training.¹³⁵

Learning-related Barriers

Cambodia and Laos show evidence of **poor education outcomes for girls at both primary and secondary levels**. Data suggests this is a result of lack of government investment, enduring rural poverty and harmful patriarchal practices.¹³⁶

In Laos, it is not known how many children who drop out before completing primary school have sustainable literacy skills. **Female literacy** remains consistently lower than that of males, particularly among non-Lao-Tai groups. Learning outcomes, as measured by Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) at grade 3 level, remain quite low. A 2017 learning assessment conducted by MOES shows that only one-third of Grade 3 students had met literacy standards for entry into Grade 4, and less than 20% met the standards for mathematics. A 2019 assessment at Grade 9 found similar low learning outcomes: In Lao language 90% of students perform at basic level or below; in science 49% and in mathematics 90% perform below basic level. For the grade 9 survey girls performed significantly better than boys in all three subjects (Lao, maths, science).¹³⁷

For children who drop out of school before or on completion of either primary or lower secondary level their **literacy and numeracy skills** will be predictably low. The Southeast Asia-Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM 2019) results found that on average girls performed better than boys in reading and writing across all 6 countries, and in Cambodia girls had higher levels of mathematical literacy than boys. However, overall levels of achievement were low for children in Cambodia and Laos where a very limited number of Grade 5 children had achieved higher levels of proficiency in writing (among lower numbers of high performers, girls outnumbered boys in all subjects in Cambodia and Laos), and more than 70% of children were in the lower three proficiency bands (among higher numbers of low performers, boys outnumbered girls in all subjects in Cambodia and Laos). In mathematics a modest percentage of Grade 5 children had achieved the mathematical literacy skills expected at the end of primary school, implying that most Grade 5 children were still working towards mastering fundamental mathematical skills. In the SEA-PLM 2019 grade 5 survey girls scored significantly higher than boys in Lao, but in maths they were roughly equal. The main SEA-PLM report provides no disaggregated data on achievement of children with disabilities.¹³⁸ The SEA-PLM trial testing report makes reference to “the challenges of including different population sub-groups, such as children with special needs into the survey sample” and noted that “most (Grade 5) teachers had not received any training related to inclusive education or special needs education”.¹³⁹

In Laos (2017) there were over 300,000 illiterate youth aged 15 to 24 years some of whom did not attend school, though most did and yet did not learn how to read. Almost

¹³⁵ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹³⁶ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

¹³⁷ MOES. 2020. Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025. MOES, Lao PDR. [lao_education_development_plan_2011-2025_en.pdf](#) (unesco.org). Data on learning outcomes in the ESSDP is not presented as disaggregated by gender or disability.

¹³⁸ UNICEF. 2020. SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report. Children's learning in 6 Southeast Asian Countries.

¹³⁹ UNICEF. 2020. SEA-PLM 2019 Trial Testing Report.

60% of young people who only attended primary education are illiterate. This illustrates a global concern to improve the quality of learning outcomes not only for out-of-school children and young people, but also for children who attend primary school and do not learn to read, which are more numerous than those out of school.¹⁴⁰

COVID-related barriers to inclusive education. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the challenges facing girls' education with at least 1.2 million additional girls at risk of dropping out of school in the Asia-Pacific region. The combination of school closures, and loss of learning and of family livelihoods caused by the pandemic may leave girls especially vulnerable to exclusion and inequality among the poorest communities. Hard-won gains in gender parity and school enrolment have been lost and are likely to have a long-term negative impact on girls' education outcomes in the Asia Pacific region.¹⁴¹

Analysis of **parental engagement in children's learning** has been a focus of research following school closures and home-schooling practices arising during the COVID pandemic. Research in Cambodia shows the strong influence that parental engagement has on student learning and the impact it has on student achievement. Parental engagement in children's learning leads to higher grades and completion rates, lower drop-out rates, and improved student behaviour. Three barriers to parental engagement in distance learning are (i) lack of knowledge of learning content and materials (55%), (ii) parents lack time due to work and other responsibilities (54%), and (iii) lack of knowledge or inability to use different technologies (48%). These barriers are likely to significantly impact the most vulnerable and marginalised girls and children with disabilities living in poorer households and in remote rural areas.¹⁴²

4.1.4 System Level Barriers

Policy and Funding Barriers

Weak education policy as a barrier to inclusive education. A GPE analysis of **Education Sector Plans (ESP)** found only 19 out of 51 countries had ESPs that include aspects related to disability and inclusive education and none with any direct reference to improving learning outcomes for children with disabilities.¹⁴³ Without a systemic approach to gathering data on learning achievements of children with disabilities there is no effective and evidence-driven means of ensuring that financial resources for teacher development or materials and support to address and achieve quality inclusive education and learning for all are well-targeted or delivering change. The inclusivity of assessment frameworks is also needed to track a country's progress towards the achievement of SDG 4. The lack of information on learning outcomes of students with disabilities renders these children and their needs invisible and leads to omissions in the planning and budgetary processes and in turn to exclusion from policy planning, financing and implementation as well as service provision and support for children with disabilities. Many of the ESPs in the GPE analysis did not allocate any

¹⁴⁰ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017

¹⁴¹ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

¹⁴² UNICEF. 2021. Cambodia COVID-19 Joint Education Needs Assessment

¹⁴³ GPE. 2018. Disability and Inclusive Education – A stocktake of Education Sector Plans and GPE-Funded Grants (Working Paper #3)

budget specifically to disability and inclusive education related activities. A resource-constrained school environment with inaccessible school facilities, lack of teacher's capacity to respond to diverse learning needs, an inflexible curriculum and lack of aids and assistive devices can considerably limit the learning experience of children with disabilities.¹⁴⁴

The education sector policy documents for Cambodia and Laos include strong statements of recognition and commitment to inclusive education. Cambodia's ESP makes direct reference to interventions for children with disabilities including adapted school infrastructure and materials, teacher training, multilingual education programmes, scholarships and career counselling, technical education and skills development, and promotion of sports for children with disabilities. The Laos ESSDP highlights that data is lacking on children with disabilities, both in and out of school and that EMIS should use the Washington Group Child Functioning Questions to gather data on children with disabilities. The ESSDP recommends a policy action to revise Teacher Guides to include simple and practical assessment rubrics that teachers can use in the classroom, including for students with disabilities and students who have Lao as their second language.

In Cambodia system level challenges to inclusive education identified in the ESP¹⁴⁵ focus mainly on low levels of learning achievement in early grade reading and mathematics, lack of quality standards and lack of preschool teachers, poor nutrition in remote areas, and challenges for children in remote and rural areas to access education. Remaining challenges are reviewed annually and reported in Sub-Sector Performance Reviews and Annual Congress Reports demonstrating a strong system of monitoring from sub-national to national level. Capacity gaps are identified at local authority (provincial, district, community, and school) levels, where upgrading of human resources is needed to strengthen the implementation of inclusive education. Financial resourcing gaps are reliant on sources of external funding.¹⁴⁶ Challenges remain relating to the provision of inclusive education services, including a lack of accurate data on students with disability and a comprehensive diagnosis system, a limited referral system and support services, and a shortage of qualified human resources.¹⁴⁷

In Laos system level challenges for inclusive education identified in the ESSDP¹⁴⁸ focus on financial constraints caused most recently by the uncertainties of the COVID pandemic, the need to realign the skills and competencies of MOES staff, the need for institutional strengthening at sub-national levels down to school level, and targeted support needed to enhance learning outcomes and reduce disparities across the 40 most disadvantaged districts as identified by MOES. A priority in the current ESSDP is to improve data systems by consolidating and deepening the analysis of data on education (e.g., disaggregated (including by gender, ethnicity, and disability) analysis of enrolment, completion rates, dropout, transition rates and quality indicators- literacy and numeracy levels. Capacity building is needed at national level for MOES officers to

¹⁴⁴ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

¹⁴⁵ MoEYS. 2019. Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023. Cambodia.

¹⁴⁶ Key Informant Interviews Cambodia, December 2021.

¹⁴⁷ GPE. 2020. [Building a stronger partnership to improve education in Cambodia | Blog | Global Partnership for Education](#)

¹⁴⁸ MoES. 2020. Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025.

gain a better understanding of inclusive education for children with disabilities. Many communities, parents and school personnel in Laos are not aware of the right to education of children with disabilities and teachers need training to better understand inclusive education.

Inadequate national and school level operational budgets are a financial barrier and a challenge to improvement in inclusive education provision in Cambodia and Laos.

The Cambodia ESP sets out the annual financing needs 2019-2023 by sub-sector showing an increase from 3,817,885 million riels in 2019 to 5,289,762 million riels in 2023, mirrored by an annual decline in external funding. An annual financing gap is identified of USD 48 million over the plan period. The ESP identifies some system level interventions that would begin to address some financial barriers in Cambodia strengthened budget management, revised formulae for operating costs and school operating budgets, increase in targeted stipends and scholarships, transportation costs for students in remote areas and for floating schools, and financing for additional resources including assistive devices to meet needs of all learners.¹⁴⁹

The Laos ESSDP highlights the underfunding limitations of the education sector budget and the concern for sustainability of donor-funded interventions as programmes close. The state budget for education has fallen from 14.2% of the State Budget in 2018 (primary expenditure) to 13.1 % in the State Budget Plan for 2020. MOES raises the question in the ESSDP, “How can allocation of human and financial resources reduce disparities, including changes to formula for determining operating budgets at all levels?” with two responses highlighting barriers to inclusive education: “current school block grant formula does not reflect the higher costs faced by smaller schools” and “the very small size of operating budgets at district level make it difficult for districts to support smaller remoter schools which often incur higher travel costs and longer travel time. Increased funding and a prioritised focus on more disadvantaged schools is needed”. In Laos, there is very little government budget allocated to inclusive education; this creates an over-reliance on external funding in this space. External finance in inclusion is not currently working to shrink this gap in government financing, by for example building government’s willingness and ability to strengthen the system in this area. The ESSDP stated that “an increase of the education sector budget of 2.8% per year in average, starting in 2021, instead of 2% starting in 2022 in the current scenario, would be sufficient to cover most of the (identified funding) gap”. Where development partners fund MOES directly the funds usually remain at central level. Where funding is channelled through INGOs the funds are regulated by MOFA with controlling regulations and a challenging environment is created with lack of trust requiring a lot of advocacy effort. If funding is channelled through CSOs the current decrees and regulations make it very difficult to invest substantial project funds, for example the MOHA has USD 50k cap, MOFA procedure is very challenging.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ UNICEF. 2018. Inclusion and Quality in Islamic Schools, Buddhist Monastic Schools and Floating Schools.

¹⁵⁰ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

Financing inclusive education for girls. Evidence shows that government expenditure in education in some countries, is surprisingly poorly correlated with girls' relative and absolute education outcomes. This indicates that gender and social norms are still sources of educational inequality, and that **increasing government expenditure is not sufficient to achieve gender equity**. Cambodia for example allocated only 5.32% of GDP per capita per student at the primary level (2014) while Laos allocated 10.37% GDP per capita per primary school student (2014). However, countries average similar figures in terms of expenditure per student while ranging widely in terms of learning outcome indicators, suggesting that ultimately **quality of investment trumps quantity**.¹⁵¹

Capacity Gaps

In Cambodia, capacity and resource gaps create barriers for MOEYS in implementing inclusive education at provincial, district and community / village level. Capacity gaps are:

- Lack of additional inclusive education training for teachers throughout the country.
- Lack of physical support materials for children with disabilities
- Limited upgrading of local authorities and communities' capacity for implementing inclusive education programmes
- Parents lack knowledge and understanding on disability and their responsibilities towards children with disabilities
- Teachers, authorities, and communities do not yet know how to do initial identification / screening for students with disabilities at the local level.¹⁵²

In Laos the following capacity and resource gaps have impeded the expansion of inclusive education interventions

- Lack of assigned officers with responsibility for inclusive education at provincial and district levels.
- Limited understanding of or closed mindset towards the rights of girls and children with disabilities within some populations, including some parents, teachers, education personnel and wider community, influenced by cultural and traditional beliefs.
- Lack of effective awareness raising and advocacy mechanisms
- Low capacity of MOES (RIES and IEPC) to implement inclusive education programmes due to financial and human capacity constraints
- Disparity in resources between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas.
- Lack of capacity of teachers to support children with a diverse range of learning needs.¹⁵³

Barriers to inclusive education for children with disabilities include **physical barriers** (including inaccessible transport and buildings), **information barriers** (including lack of

¹⁵¹ FCDO. 2021. Education systems for girls' education in the Indo-Pacific: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

¹⁵² Key Informant Interviews Cambodia, December 2021

¹⁵³ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

sign language and learning materials in braille), **system/institutional-level barriers** (including lack of policies, legislation, and funding for inclusive education), and **stigmatising attitudes**. Effective and well-coordinated interventions are needed to build capacities through which to overcome these barriers and achieve better inclusive education practices.¹⁵⁴

Lack of Data

Data on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities. Few countries collect reliable data on disability making inequalities in access to education for children with disabilities hard to measure. Few countries have undertaken a comprehensive reform of inclusive education policy and services.¹⁵⁵ Various national or cross-national household surveys, national school surveys of administrative data, or censuses have been used to collect data on children with disabilities. However, comprehensive data is lacking which compromises any efforts to increase access, participation and learning achievement for children with disabilities.¹⁵⁶

A lack of reliable and consistent datasets on children with disabilities presents barriers to effective planning and service delivery. Especially in resource-constrained environments, decision makers and planners need accurate and up-to-date information without which they cannot make informed decisions on allocation of resources. The lack of relevant data leads to poor support and service delivery including learning materials, teacher training programs, curriculum, infrastructure and assistive technology to address diverse needs. Poor quality of education services for children with disabilities reduces demand and in turn low levels of enrolment and attendance by children with disabilities affects funding and policy decisions, described as **an invisible cycle of exclusion**.¹⁵⁷

In Cambodia MOEYS has developed monitoring forms and provided schools with equipment to collect data on inclusive education provision at school and classroom level. There is a self-data collection tool to evaluate special education schools through school and classroom data collection, processed through the district and provincial education offices and submitted to the MOEYS Special Education Department. There is currently no quantitative EMIS reporting in Cambodia on children with disabilities within or outside the education system. Grass roots projects and donor funded interventions gather data on disabilities for target populations when they are planning, monitoring and evaluating activities but investment is needed to coordinate and collate this information so it can be used for government planning. An NGO working with out-of-school children in remote communities found that children and adults with disabilities are not always acknowledged or recorded in official records (some are literally hidden). Despite the Education for All strategy, limited resources are allocated to schools and teachers in these remote districts and only one official is assigned in each district to

¹⁵⁴ International Centre for Evidence in Disability. 2018. *Improving social inclusion and empowerment for people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: why does it matter and what works?*

¹⁵⁵ FCDO. 2020. Key barriers to girls' education in the ASEAN and Pacific region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development

¹⁵⁶ UNESCO. 2019. The Use of UIS Data and Education Management Information Systems to Monitor Inclusive Education. Information Paper No.60.

¹⁵⁷ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

support people with disabilities including children and adults.¹⁵⁸

There is limited information on the number and status of children with disability in Laos due to the lack of an effective and efficient data collection system. As reported in 2017, the Laos EMIS database had no data on disability. MOES acknowledges that this data is needed to better inform planning and has the intention to improve disability data collection in the EMIS database. There is also a recognition that EMIS data analysis should be used to inform and support local-level planning at school and district levels, and not only as a data collection exercise to meet the needs of higher levels, particularly MOES. Capacity building programmes are needed for school principals and DESB staff to use data more effectively in their planning.¹⁵⁹

In Laos, data is not accurate because the definition is not clear and data collection is inconsistent and irregular. There is no clear definition of children with disabilities. School principals have difficulty completing the data forms. “Everyone knows there are many disabled people in the community, but when they ask for numbers, the villagers say no one is there”. Disability is viewed as “an internal family issue”. Finding a way to count the number of children with disabilities goes beyond definitions of disability into challenges of local and family attitudes and understanding of measurement techniques.¹⁶⁰

Coordination Issues. Provision of services to reach out-of-school children with disabilities cuts across education, health and welfare ministries.¹⁶¹ The tendency of government ministries to work in silos presents a barrier to effective development of strategies and interventions to address intersectional issues of children with disabilities. In Laos for example an NGO implementing projects to support inclusive education for children with disabilities described the need to negotiate three separate agreements (Memorandum of Understanding) with the concerned ministries.¹⁶² In many countries special schools are government run by the Ministry of Education (MOE). In Cambodia, for example, special schools for children with disabilities are run by the Ministry of Health, requiring data collection and reporting to be coordinated to ensure that enrolment of children with disabilities is captured accurately. Special schools can also be run by NGOs, DPOs, or church organisations, and enrolment data from these schools may not be collected or reported by the Ministry of Education.¹⁶³

Screening of disabilities. In Cambodia there is no national system for general identification of disabilities, no standard approach to disability identification at the classroom level, and a lack of standardisation in approaches to disability screening and referral. Lack of government budgeting and coordination of screening activities has restricted the expansion of disability identification practices. MOEYS has a checklist to identify disability, but most screening is done by NGOs who generally use their own screening tools. Some screening and referral programmes have been implemented in

¹⁵⁸ KHEN NGO website <https://www.khencambodia.org/inclusive-project.html>

¹⁵⁹ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017

¹⁶⁰ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

¹⁶¹ UNICEF. N.d. Children with disabilities. Access for all, no matter what. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

¹⁶² Key Informant Interviews, Laos December 2021.

¹⁶³ GPE. 2018. Disability and Inclusive Education – A stocktake of Education Sector Plans and GPE-Funded Grants (Working Paper #3)

selected schools in Cambodia.¹⁶⁴ There is no national system for hearing and vision screening in Cambodia though NGO projects have trained thousands of teachers on school-based screening procedures.

Barriers to hearing and vision screening in Cambodia are identified as: (i) inconsistent policy definitions and guidance; (ii) proliferation of NGO-developed tools without standardisation; and (iii) risk of inaccuracies in teacher-led assessments. For intellectual and learning disability screening the Government checklist is not consistently used and has not been validated, and there is no national screening process. To remove barriers to education access, an effective referral mechanism is needed through which children identified with disabilities receive educational support and supplementary aids.¹⁶⁵

In Laos there is currently no MOES system in place for screening of children with disabilities. The ESSDP includes a policy action under Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Increased intake and progression rates at all levels leading to increasing graduation rates, to establish a Joint Technical Working Group between MOES, MOLSW, MOH and development partners “to ensure that screening, identification and provision of services for children with disabilities can be achieved”. The ESSDP also proposes a screening test at the end of primary school linked to non-formal literacy programs and targeting areas where literacy rates are lowest, particularly where there are concentrations of females from ethnic groups. The screening test would be conducted to determine if primary school leavers have sustainable literacy skills and it is proposed that the results are used as a basis for further decision making at local, sub-national and national level as appropriate.¹⁶⁶

Barriers to learning are created where countries follow the practice of labelling and categorisation of children using an impairment focused psychometric testing approach. The practice is still widely used, leading to low expectations, and to segregation and exclusion. As a deficit-based assessment this approach reduces the likelihood of an inclusive placement. An education-based approach to assessment is needed for provision of inclusive education for all children.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ RTI International, 2019; World Bank, 2018a in USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹⁶⁵ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹⁶⁶ MOES. 2020. Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025. MOES, Lao PDR. lao_education_development_plan_2011-2025_en.pdf (unesco.org)

¹⁶⁷ World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

5 Key Findings - Interventions and Approaches

Initial Research Questions

3.a. Government approaches

- (i) What are the approaches taken by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos to increase inclusion in primary and secondary education?
- (ii) Are there promising practices that are evidence based, feasible and cost effective to scale by?

3.b. Donor funding

- (i) What funding do donors provide for inclusive primary and secondary education in Cambodia and Laos?
- (ii) Where are the gaps in donor funding?

3.c. Effectiveness

What interventions are effective for increasing inclusivity in primary and secondary education among girls and children with disabilities?

- (i) Promising approaches taken by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos that could be scaled up by Civil Society Organisations/Non-Governmental Organisations and private sector.
- (ii) Effective Donor-funded interventions in Cambodia and Laos.
- (iii) Interventions identified in the grey and academic literature as delivering strong impact.

In this section some interventions and approaches are highlighted that have been effective in improving access to inclusive education for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities. The examples cover a range from local small-scale interventions to national level large-scale interventions and reflect some examples of effective interventions as well as interventions that have been piloted and scaled up in Cambodia and Laos. Evidence is drawn from the literature and from in-depth key informant interviews with ministry officials and donor, NGO and CSO representatives in the two countries.¹⁶⁸ Text boxes are used to highlight specific examples. Identification of cost-effective interventions to address specific barriers or challenges to improved education outcomes will be useful in guiding processes of decision making. A summary matrix of all-inclusive education projects and interventions is provided in Annex C. However, information on government or donor funding provision for inclusive education and related funding gaps was limited. Information that was provided was variable or inconsistent in the level or format of reporting, and in most instances was not readily available. This means that a holistic picture that shows what progress is being made in

¹⁶⁸ Key Informant Interviews conducted in Cambodia and Laos in December 2021. See matrix in Annex C Donor Funded Inclusive Education Projects providing a summary of INGOs and NGOs working with out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in Cambodia and Laos

system strengthening, including budgeting, planning and data driven decision making by policy makers, is not fully emerging.

Three areas of intervention can be identified (Table 6) that are generally applicable to the population of out-of-school children, not targeted specifically to either out-of-school girls or children with disabilities – interventions for timely and universal enrolment, interventions to prevent dropout, and interventions to ensure quality learning.¹⁶⁹

Table 6 Examples of Possible Interventions to Address Root Causes of Dropout¹⁷⁰

1. Interventions for timely and universal enrolment	2. Interventions to prevent dropout	3. Interventions to ensure quality learning
Increase demand for schooling through:	Continue to increase and improve supply	Focus on improving learning outcomes
Information campaigns to address attitudes and information gaps to inclusion	Complete incomplete schools to reduce distance to school for primary grade children	School readiness, nutrition and language provision to lay the foundation for learning
Early childhood education and early grade screening to bring children into school	School safety and inclusion to provide a safe learning environment for all children	Improve early grade reading and numeracy teaching methodology for basic skills for all children
Introduce flexible school / curriculum for remote areas and marginalised children to respond to family needs	Support rural students to become local IE teachers to address teacher shortage and language barriers	Focus on classroom practices in all grades to address learning needs and styles of all children
Stipends, transport, targeted scholarships, school lunches to address rural and poverty-related barriers	Learning materials and textbooks reflect diversity of learners and their needs	Introduce flexible assessment methodologies to monitor learning outcomes of all children, disaggregated by gender and disability

Note: Content modified from the source document.

5.1.1 Government Interventions - Cambodia¹⁷¹

MOEYS is implementing three programmes to support inclusive education for disabled children through ongoing support for implementation by Krousar Thmey, UNICEF and

¹⁶⁹ World Bank. 2016. *Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions*

¹⁷⁰ World Bank. 2016. *Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions*

¹⁷¹ Key Informant Interviews Cambodia. December 2021

other partner organisations (see Section 5.1.3 for a sample of inclusive education project and programme descriptions):¹⁷²

1. Special Education Program – implemented in Battambang, Siem Reap, Prey Veng, Kampong Thom, Phnom Penh Provinces
2. Inclusive Education Program – implemented in Battambang, Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Phnom Penh, Kandal Provinces
3. Integration Class Program – implemented in Sihanoukville, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang Provinces

MOEYS interventions through these programmes include:

- A scholarship programme for poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable primary and secondary age children, with 60% priority given to female students and 90% success in retention of students.
- Annual ear, mouth, eye examination supported by NGO/CSO partners, especially Krousar Thmey
- Teacher training in schools
- Road and school compound construction for easier access for disabled children to schools and classrooms
- Latrines construction for girls and disabled children

SDG 4a-related interventions¹⁷³ being taken by MOEYS indicates that there is a significant gap in the diagnosis of and provision for children with disabilities, including:

- Construction and infrastructure improved and updated to accommodate students with disabilities e.g. building slopes in school buildings, in bathrooms and toilets
- Continue to disseminate and implement programs to prevent violence and negative phenomena in schools, classrooms, communities and families through the Children's Council, the Youth Council, the School Management Committee, in close cooperation with the authorities through monthly review meetings led by the School Management Committee and quarterly meetings chaired by the Chairman of the School Management Committee
- Prepare to implement the school community strategy by making all schools in the community a place to learn, provide knowledge, skills, income and social skills to students, teachers and the community.
- Turn schools, classrooms, families, communities and markets into non-violent, drug-free places.

Training and professional development on inclusive education for children with disabilities is being provided (a) for mainstream teachers and school principals and (b) for specialist teachers of children with disabilities.

¹⁷² MOEYS. 2021. Report on 9th National Forum on Inclusive Education (29 April 2021).
[Report_9+National+Forum+on+IE_EN_finaled.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

¹⁷³ SDG 4.a *build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all*

- Capacity building of teachers on inclusive education programs including strategies to overcome negative attitudes and stigmas
- Provincial Teacher Training Center has trained primary to lower secondary school teachers since 2015-16 on how to teach disability students using a resource book called “28 hours teaching”.
- Training provided for special education teachers

MOEYS tools developed to monitor the needs of all learners:

- Equipment/forms to monitor inclusive education provision at school and classroom level using MOEYS monitoring forms (EMIS)
- Campaigns to collect children with disabilities to enroll in school
- A self-data collection tool to evaluate special education schools – data collected at school and classroom level is processed through the DOE office and POE office, and submitted to the MOEYS Special Education Department

Resources available for children with disabilities include:

- Transportation to and from school
- Audio Books
- Slate and Stylus
- Sign Language Book
- Braille books

Inclusive education staff at sub-national level support implementation of projects for girls’ education and education for children with disabilities.

- Provinces that have received special education training: Siem Reap, Battambang, Prey Veng, Rattanakiri, Phnom Penh, Kampong Thom
- Working groups established at provincial level and district levels for inclusive education; at provincial level primary education office staff are responsible for inclusive education

5.1.2 Government Interventions - Laos¹⁷⁴

MOES Inclusive Education programmes: The MOES IEPC coordinates inclusive education programmes with development partners who fund and implement activities. There are Education Sector Working Groups and an Inclusive Education Technical Working Group administered by development partners with the agenda set by the Inclusive Education Department, as the government counterpart.

Data on Children with Disabilities is collected by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the National Committee for Disabled and Elderly (NCDE) and MOES. The MOES Inclusive Education Center is planning to develop the National Inclusive Education Strategy and improved measurement of children with disabilities in EMIS.

¹⁷⁴ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

5.1.3 Donor Funded Interventions - Cambodia

Multiple small-scale donors provide funding and technical support in Cambodia to improve inclusive education for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities. Some examples are presented in this section focusing on **three broad areas of intervention that may be considered as potential entry points for future FCDO support**: (i) **Data system strengthening**, (ii) **Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns**, and (iii) **Identification of individual learning needs** (screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc). These three areas have the greatest chance of catalysing greater government understanding and action in these spaces and thereby opening opportunities for deeper engagement on reforms. Two other intervention areas were considered during the first phase of this review and subsequently set aside on the guidance of FCDO: (a) **Scholarships and Stipend Programmes** – targeted needs/merit based to support inclusive education for girls and children with disabilities from poor households who are at risk of dropping out of secondary school; and (b) **Learning Resources** - for children with disabilities (assistive devices, KPL e-learning platform). These two areas conversely can be seen to shift the burden away from government for finding sustainable solutions and suggest that the challenges faced by children are purely at the family level as a result of poverty. In order to begin the shift towards accountability for inclusion sitting with government, these types of interventions are not being considered in isolation of a broader systemic response.

5.1.3.1 Data system strengthening interventions - Cambodia

Participatory community mapping campaigns have been used in Cambodia to identify and bring out-of-school children into the formal education system. The information is then used to provide a mix of targeted supply- and demand-side interventions. This intervention was conducted with CCOOSC support, focused around data needed to implement specific inclusive education activities.¹⁷⁵

5.1.3.2 Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns - Cambodia

A Save the Children project to reach out-of-school children and develop inclusive quality learning environments in Pursat, one of the poorest rural provinces in Cambodia, is supporting more than 3,000 disadvantaged children (6-14 years) to get access to and benefit from inclusive education - building the capacity of Children's Councils and teachers on inclusive education; providing technical support in 8 primary schools that function as models for other schools in the same district. Awareness raising among local authorities, parents and teachers has improved overall understanding of disability, and resulted in increased enrolment and retention of children with disabilities.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ CCOOSC Phase II website

¹⁷⁶ Save the Children. 2019. Mainstreaming Inclusive Education: Sharing Good Practices.

5.1.3.3 Identification of individual learning needs (screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc) – Cambodia

GPE2 and All Children Reading (ACR) have provided support for screening and referral programmes implemented in selected schools in Cambodia. Concerns persist regarding the scalability of such initiatives by MOEYS and regarding the ongoing challenges posed by a lack of coherent screening tools.¹⁷⁷

A KHEN NGO project in Cambodia identified children with disabilities in 25 target schools in Battambang Province and provided access to schooling which met their individual needs. Actions and funds to support children with disabilities were included in Commune Investment Plans (CIPs). Continuing support for inclusive education is provided through the Provincial Education Sector Working Group.¹⁷⁸

Krousar Thmey, a Cambodian NGO, provided hearing screening for 2500 children in the public schools of Sen Sok district organised in collaboration with the School Health department of the Cambodian Ministry of Education, in order to identify children with possible hearing impairments. Depending on their needs, Krousar Thmey offered them adapted support, through the provision of a hearing aid or support in a special school. Children study for 3 to 5 years full-time in the special school in order to learn Sign Language or Braille according to their disability. They are then enrolled part time in public school. After the success of the first pilot implementation with 145 children following their school curriculum in public schools, the project has been extended to 5 other districts in Kampot Province. This province will serve as a role model for duplication of this system on a national scale.

Krousar Thmey founded the first school for deaf children in 1997 and has since created and administered the 5 special schools of the country for 25 years. The organisation has now transferred the management of these schools to the local authorities creating the first public system of special education in Cambodia. The foundation is developing new projects aimed at improving the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system and the society, offering them adapted learning tools or promoting their access to training and employment.

Institutional and individual capacity-building is being provided for teaching and technical staff at the NISE and the School Health Department (SHD), the two entities registered under MOEYS. In the long term, the local authorities should undertake the screenings and identification of children and the autonomous management of the inclusive education system.¹⁷⁹

5.1.4 Donor Funded Interventions - Laos

Several large-scale donor-funded programmes and some smaller local NGOs and CSOs provide the funding and technical support in Laos to improve inclusive education for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities. Some examples are presented in this section focusing on **three broad areas of intervention that may be considered as potential entry points for future FCDO support**: (i) **Data system strengthening**,

¹⁷⁷ USAID. 2021. Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education: Comparative Literature Review. Laser Pulse

¹⁷⁸ KHEN NGO website <https://www.khencambodia.org/inclusive-project.html>

¹⁷⁹ Krousar Thmey - Education for deaf or blind ([krousar-thmey.org](https://www.krousar-thmey.org)) <https://www.krousar-thmey.org/en/education-for-deaf-or-blind/screening-and-support-with-adapted-education-for-children-with-hearing-impairment/>

(ii) **Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns**, and (iii) **Identification of individual learning needs** (screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc).

5.1.4.1 Data System Strengthening Interventions - Laos

Humanity and Inclusion (HI) NGO have **trained enumerators from Laos Department of Statistics to measure disability**.

Several NGOs have some **project-based data** (e.g., CRS, Child Fund, SOS).

SOS Learn to Read project data plan to collect **data on children with disabilities** in 4 districts and 2 provinces **using the Child Functioning Module**.¹⁸⁰

5.1.4.2 Information, knowledge Sharing and Advocacy Campaigns - Laos

Information campaigns on the value and importance of education, are being conducted **at community level, through village education councils** for example. Such interventions **can have significant impact on school attendance**. However, they are only effective where education quality is at acceptable levels.¹⁸¹

School and community level information sharing campaigns that focus on overcoming local attitudes and cultural norms as barriers to school enrolment and participation for out-of-school children, include:

- Providing **advice/information to parents** on the value and benefits of education in local language
- Increasing guidance on **school safety**
- Providing **mother tongue instruction** and Lao language skills in early years for **ethnic students through community child development groups**
- Providing complete schools, teachers, and **school materials** in remote rural areas¹⁸²

CARE research into Girls not in School in Sekong, Southern Laos: Barriers for girls dropping out of school are related to social norms, linked for example with reproductive health. Keeping girls in school helps educate them on reproductive health. For girls who have never enrolled in school social norms are very relevant. If there are few educated people in a community it is easier not to enrol whereas in more educated communities, there is higher expectation of going to school.

Research into **why girls marry early** show regional differences and ethnic variation. The previous narrative was that girls drop out of school to marry. The research finding show that **dropout is economic - not for marriage** - a combination of the work burden and the need to take care of siblings, etc. This impacts schoolwork which leads to dropout. The research showed, from time logs, that **girls report much less time spent on homework than boys due to household expectations**. It is not clear

¹⁸⁰ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

¹⁸¹ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

¹⁸² World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

who makes the decision to drop out, but it appears that girls are making their own decision to support their family especially if they are not good at studying or do not see future.¹⁸³

5.1.4.3 Identification of individual learning needs (screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc) – Laos

School level Interventions needed to achieve **positive learning outcomes for children with disabilities**:

- **Capacity-building of teachers** to be able to differentiate lessons to enable them to include all students in learning.
- **Development of an inclusive environment in classrooms** (reasonable learning environment, scaffolding lessons, accessibility, support services etc.).¹⁸⁴

Learn to Read project - 5-year project 2018-2023; funded by USAID; Save the Children Fund leads and implements in Northern Laos; Room to Read leads in Southern Laos; HI provides technical support in both north and south; including a small IE component.

Government partners: MOES RIES, DGE (Primary Education Department), Early Childhood Department, Inclusive Education Promotion Center (4 departments).

Targeting 4 provinces (2 in north, 2 in south) Vientiane-Xiengkhouang, Champasak-Attapeu.

Inclusive Education pilot being conducted in one district in Champasak Province.

Identification of individual learning needs (screening and support services): Train teachers to identify these children with disabilities; give them simple tips and then support them on where to go for assessments and support (for children and families).

Train teachers on how to do deal with hearing/seeing disabilities in the classroom so that they can support them; only working with children who are in the classroom (USAID specified hearing and seeing difficulties); not many children enrolled in school and teachers do not know how to teach those who do enrol.

Identification of individual learning needs (early grade language skills): Teacher training in Year 4 focusing on reading-writing (language) difficulties and children with specific disabilities (dyslexia, reading-writing), children learning Lao as second language, and children in multigrade classroom; working with reading-writing difficulties and hearing-visual difficulties.

5.1.4.4 Projects integrating data system strengthening, information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns, and identification of individual learning needs

The following examples from larger scale inclusive education projects have the scope to combine several interventions at national level such as inclusive education messaging through teacher training and advocacy campaigns for example, or through

¹⁸³ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

¹⁸⁴ Ministry of Planning and Investment. 2020. Disability Monograph of Lao PDR. Vientiane: Lao Statistics Bureau

small scale piloting of interventions such as trialing data collection tools at provincial level or Lao language learning that can be scaled up and replicated with additional funding.

BEQUAL interventions are supporting primary curriculum development and teacher training with an inclusive approach in three areas: girls, CwD, and ethnic minorities/language

Information, knowledge sharing: Training / capacity building of teachers and MOES officers on inclusive approach: addressing lack of understanding of disabilities

Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns: Awareness raising event targeting senior management to address issues of stigma; 630 Provincial trainers selected through MOES - up to 50% females (not always met); providing opportunities for women and creating role models; series of videos on Role Model teachers to create awareness of inclusive education.

Identification of individual learning needs (early grade language skills):

Spoken Lao pilot (grade 1): One hour of additional instruction in afternoon targeting ethnic minority students. Children receive additional hours of Lao using phonics approach. 365 young people trained for 3-4 years in Teacher Training Colleges; then returned to their villages to teach in local language.

SOS-Inclusive Education project: funded by EU, technical and financial support from HI;

4-year project period, funding started in 2019, implementation in 2022, will finish in 2023, covering 2 provinces (Huaphanh, Champasak).

Data system strengthening: Planning to use **Child Functioning Module** for 200 families, bring those children into school, and **working with Teacher Training interns** on how to work with these children; then the interns will **support the mainstreaming of these children**, but they will begin in separate classroom

Information, knowledge sharing: Capacity building for CSOs (e.g. autism associations and Intellectual Disability Association).

Advocacy campaigns: Working with parents to promote children rights to support children to go to school; **working with teachers and officials in schools, and districts and support them with strategy**; most activities implemented by the Associations.

Identification of individual learning needs (screening and support services):

Identification and support for disabilities activities specifically targeting autistic children, and children with intellectual disabilities. There are **high costs associated with screening and support** for disabilities activities.

UNICEF Laos (with funding from Australia) is supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the National Committee for Disabled Persons (NCDP) **to pilot a community-based child protection model for prevention and response to violence, abuse and exploitation of children with disability** in Savannakhet and Xiengkhouang provinces.

Data system strengthening: Establish a **bottom-up data collection mechanism** for children with disabilities in 2 provinces.

Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns: on the rights of children with disabilities across all sectors and levels of society to promote social inclusion and reduce discrimination against children with disabilities. **Capacity building for family members and professionals working with children** on knowledge and skills to support children with disabilities.

Identification of individual learning needs (screening and support services): Collaborate with DPOs in **piloting multi-sectoral community-based services for early screening, referral and case management.**¹⁸⁵

5.1.5 Effectiveness of Inclusive Education Interventions

In this section examples of effectiveness of inclusive education interventions are drawn from key informant interviews and from the literature review to answer the question “how confident can be that interventions will be effective i.e. that they contribute to getting girls and children with disabilities into school and learning?” Key informants from development partner organisations were asked to describe successful interventions. Their observations reflect the current inclusive education context and projects in which they are engaged. The literature review provided limited evidence of effectiveness in overcoming specific barriers to inclusion from global, regional, Cambodia and Laos reports of inclusive education practice. The examples presented below have been selected relating specifically to the **three broad areas of intervention** linking to the donor funded interventions described in the previous Sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 and linking to the recommendations set out in Section 6 – under the headings (i) **Data system strengthening**, (ii) **Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns**, and (iii) **Identification of individual learning needs** (diagnosis, screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc).

Analysis of “**smart buys**” as effective interventions in bringing children into school and improving learning outcomes provides some limited evidence for this study relating to the inclusive education contexts and proposed interventions for Cambodia and Laos.¹⁸⁶

- **Data system strengthening** is not included among the smart buys, likely due to its complexity as an intervention area and lack of randomised control trial evidence. “**Community involvement in school management**” is categorised as a “**promising but low-evidence**” smart buy. This links with the proposed intervention of **gathering better data at school level for data system strengthening**, though it is noted that this may not be effective where local government is not functioning, or community members have limited access to the school. In Cambodia the evidence from development partners indicates that locally sourced data on out-of-school children and community engagement in schools is managed through NGO and CSO project activities. In Laos there is evidence from MOES of the need to strengthen capacity and engagement for inclusive education at

¹⁸⁵ UNICEF. N.d. Children with disabilities. Access for all, no matter what. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/what-we-do/child-protection/disabilities>

¹⁸⁶ World Bank. 2020. Cost Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning.

community and school level. The conclusion is that there is limited capacity for decentralised school management and community engagement in promoting inclusive education, and lack of evidence of its effectiveness. Data system strengthening through community and school level capacity development for decentralised school management is therefore not proposed as an FCDO intervention.

- In the category of **“great buys”** there is good evidence that the intervention of **“giving information on the benefits, costs and quality of education”** to parents and children increases attendance and learning at low cost. The focus is on **providing specific and context-relevant information that shifts people’s beliefs about the benefits of education** or the quality of schooling through **information sharing and advocacy campaigns**. In Cambodia and Laos there is strong emphasis on delivery of a range of awareness raising interventions. For example, in Cambodia support has been mobilised through awareness raising among households and communities and solutions identified to overcome barriers to children’s access to and completion of primary school. In Laos a Disability Awareness Toolkit is being used to mainstream disabilities by assisting organisations and programmes to avoid being categorised as specialized in disabilities education.¹⁸⁷ Project interventions on information sharing have been effective in establishing mechanisms for reporting school violence through the development of child protection tools.¹⁸⁸ The conclusion is that a wide range of information sharing interventions can be identified that could be effective in promoting inclusive education in Cambodia and Laos if they are well designed and delivered to achieve specific purposes and to target specific populations.
- Evidence of cost-effectiveness of screening and support services is not included in the smart buys analysis. However, the intervention to **“target teaching instruction by learning level”** categorised as a **“good buy”** requires **teachers and education service providers to identify individual learning needs**. Targeting teaching to the learning level of the individual child rather than their age is highly applicable to improving learning outcomes, especially for marginalised girls, second language learners and children with disabilities. In this review of inclusive education provision in Cambodia and Laos the evidence shows a significant gap in identification of individual learning needs. In this case the smart buys evidence of effectiveness describes provision of targeted help for students “in or out of school”, for “all or part of the day”, “effective where there is a wide variety of learning levels within a class and student learning levels are below grade-level curriculum expectations”. A conclusion for this study is that improved screening and identification of individual children’s learning needs in Cambodia and Laos could be an effective first stage towards enabling schools and teachers to target teaching instruction by learning level and is therefore a proposed intervention.

Conceptualising Success in Inclusive Education. A set of 16 dimensions have been developed as reference points to establish the success of inclusive and equitable

¹⁸⁷ Plan International (Cambodia and Laos) and HI (Laos) in Key Informant Interviews, Laos and Cambodia, December 2021

¹⁸⁸ Save the Children. 2021. Education with Quality and Inclusive Learning (EQUAL) Evaluation Report. Cambodia..

education systems.¹⁸⁹ Of relevance to this study are the following dimensions which align with the three broad areas of intervention set out above:

Data systems: Dimension 1.4. Systems are in place to monitor the presence, participation, and achievement of all learners within the education system.

Information and Advocacy: Dimension 1.3 All partners who work with learners and their families understand and support national policy goals for promoting inclusion and equity in education.

Identification of individual learning needs: Dimension 4.1 Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation, and achievement of all learners from their local community.

5.1.5.1 Effectiveness of data system strengthening interventions

Building **EMIS systems which accurately identify out-of-school children and children with disabilities** remains a global challenge. EMIS data is important for **national level** budgeting and resource planning, and for SDG reporting. Data on out-of-school children and disability status is also helpful in drawing up **sub-national** education plans, providing support needs, and guiding inclusive education interventions. EMIS data is limited where it does not include disaggregated information on children who are out of school.

GPE funding for children with disabilities aims to strengthen countries' education systems with **tools and guidelines for education sector analyses and planning** to support improved disability data. Improvement in the availability of disability disaggregated education data across partner countries is a strategic priority for GPE.¹⁹⁰

International best practice on identifying people with disabilities has moved away from asking about "disability" or asking about what impairment a person has, towards asking about difficulty experienced in undertaking basic activities such as seeing, hearing, walking, remembering and concentrating, communicating, lifting, etc. UNICEF's Guide for Including Disability in Education Management Information Systems proposes a template taking the same approach but adapted for an EMIS setting.¹⁹¹ Descriptors or indicators of functioning are needed to guide non-specialise teachers in the process of identification of children's disabilities. The Washington Group (WG) on Disability Statistics Short Set of Questions in national censuses and surveys are being used to identify persons with disabilities moving towards standardising measurements in terms of functioning difficulties and how these place people at risk of restricted participation. The WG/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning and Disability is being developed and tested to further improve the

¹⁸⁹ UNESCO. 2017. *Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education*. in DFID. 2018. *Implementing Inclusive Education: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development*.

¹⁹⁰ GPE. 2020. *GPE Results Report 2020*. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/docs/results-report-2020/2020-09-GPE-Results-Report-2020.pdf>

¹⁹¹ UNESCO. 2019. *The Use of UIS Data and Education Management Information Systems to Monitor Inclusive Education*. Information Paper No.60. The UNICEF template for identifying students with disabilities is shown in Table 1.

quality of data being collected on children between the ages of 2 to 17 years by reflecting on different developmental stages.¹⁹²

In Fiji the EMIS uses a functional approach to identifying children with disability.

Actions at the central level:

- Working with the IT department of the Ministry of Education to develop online forms and programming for automated data analysis.
- Schools provided with a guidance package with forms and instructions, and a guidance table with descriptors (information) of functioning examples to support consistency in selection of response categories.
- Training programs for school heads and district education officers, who then train teachers.
- Verification of data through school visits - in Fiji this is particularly important because disability identification through the system leads to inclusion funding.
- Monitoring automated reports from the online system.

Actions at the school level: Teachers complete the form at any point during the year (where possible in discussion with parents) based on everyday observations of the student's functioning in class and on school grounds. Depending on Internet connectivity, the teacher either enters the data online, or submits the paper form to an administration officer at the school or district office.¹⁹³

Monitoring of student and teachers' attendance A School Governance project has been training indigenous communities in some of the most remote parts of Cambodia to improve quality education for all. The School Support Committees (SSC) in Mondulkiri Province have received training in monitoring of students' and teachers' attendance. Where communities, through the SSCs, have taken ownership of their schools there has been a positive impact on enrolment rates, better school infrastructure and lower dropout rates.¹⁹⁴

School Monitoring Visits: Pedagogical advisers (PA) based in District Education and Sports Bureau (DESB) in Laos are using **monitoring tools developed under the project** to support schools on effective implementation of the new curriculum. DESBs do not always have budget for PAs to make monitoring visits to schools. Under the BEQUAL project **grant funding** has been **provided to DESBs for school level support and for school monitoring visits by PAs.**¹⁹⁵

Success factors for Inclusive Education for children with disabilities are identified by some NGOs working in Laos based on their practical project experiences:¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

¹⁹³ UNESCO. 2019. The Use of UIS Data and Education Management Information Systems to Monitor Inclusive Education. Information Paper No.60.

¹⁹⁴ Care Our School (School Governance project) <https://schoolgovernance.care-cambodia.org/>

¹⁹⁵ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

¹⁹⁶ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

- Start with **identification of children using Washington Group set of questions (Child Functioning module)**.
- **Train teachers to be more inclusive**, using active pedagogies to support all children, not only children with disabilities, how to make teaching-learning materials that are accessible to all, and strategies to overcome negative attitudes and stigma.
- Ensure **safety of school environments** for all children.
- **Provide classroom and school-based follow up support** including additional coaching and support visits, and not just one-off training.
- How to measure success? Even **just getting children into school and attending regularly will be a success**, not necessarily about academic achievement
- Purely inclusive education projects can be more successful, but in Laos the projects are larger and include components focused on **mainstreaming of children with disabilities**.

5.1.5.2 Effectiveness of Information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns

Information campaigns. Analysis of the effectiveness of information campaigns in reaching the families of out-of-school children across a range of countries shows that **information about the value of schooling has a significant impact on school attendance**. This is observed where parents may perceive the returns as low. Where children from rural areas move away from the community to continue their studies for example, the returns may be perceived as a negative return if children are needed for household chores, or because of certain cultural perceptions. The evidence shows that this is likely to be **more important for girls than for boys**. However, **the effectiveness of information campaigns is dependent on the quality education**.¹⁹⁷

System level interventions that will contribute significantly to reducing barriers to education for out-of-school children in Laos are:

- Provide all communities with access to **"complete schools" and better equipped schools, scholarships, and education that is more relevant to rural, ethnic populations** in both delivery, content and **language of instruction**.¹⁹⁸
- **Involve parents in the life of the school** especially for children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction and children with disabilities.¹⁹⁹
- Expand **awareness raising on negative impacts of child labour** especially in hazardous work - incorporate risks and dangers into the school curriculum.²⁰⁰

Effective inclusive education interventions for children with disabilities are currently being implemented through the work of **local disabled persons**

¹⁹⁷ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

¹⁹⁸ World Bank. 2016. Reducing Early Grade Dropout and Low Learning Achievement in Lao PDR. Root Causes and Possible Interventions

¹⁹⁹ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017

²⁰⁰ UNICEF. 2020. Country Report. Lao People's Democratic Republic. Lao Social Indicator Survey II 2017

organisations, of which there are many in Laos. The local NGOs identify as a priority the need to **change attitudes and mindsets of teachers and communities towards children with disabilities** for effectiveness of interventions. Feedback on lessons learned from local NGO highlights the importance of **working with local communities to understand perceptions**. Several NGOs recommend that activities should be **integrated into mainstream education projects rather than implementing a separate project on children with disabilities**.²⁰¹

5.1.5.3 Effectiveness of Interventions for Identification of individual learning needs (screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc)

An innovative approach to **disabilities policy** in South Africa - “**Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support** (2014)” - followed a 10-year consultative process involving teachers and disability rights holders from a wide range of contexts across all provinces. The policy guided **the establishment of a support system for districts, schools, and teachers** to improve access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience barriers to learning, including children with disabilities who are out of school and those in schools who are not being supported. The **identification and assessment process is placed in the hands of teachers** who are required to centrally involve parents and learners in any decision making related to the nature of support that the learners should receive and where they should be receiving it.²⁰²

Improving Girls’ Enrolment: A CARE International programme has a specific focus on supporting girls including through teacher training on **gender-responsive and gender transformative teaching**. **Culturally sensitive learning materials for ethnic minority languages and a multilingual curriculum** were developed, with **scholarships** provided for children from low-income families. The programme saw **a significant increase in girls’ primary and secondary enrolment, and improved enrolment rates amongst indigenous students in lower secondary education**.²⁰³

To reduce the risk of early marriage among vulnerable girls a Leadership and Entrepreneurship Camp for young ethnic minority women in Laos, supported by the British Embassy Programme Fund,²⁰⁴ offered participants mentorship and skills development in identifying, designing, and implementing community-service oriented business start-ups. A subsequent project, Education for Girls and Women Now²⁰⁵ was launched to fight gender inequalities globally from West Africa to South and Southeast Asia, including in Laos. Small grants and training on business management and accounting were provided as an intervention to girls at risk of leaving school early.

²⁰¹ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

²⁰² World Bank. 2019. Every learner matters: Unpacking the learning crisis for children with disabilities

²⁰³ FCDO. 2020. Girls’ education programmes in the ASEAN region: K4D Knowledge Evidence and Learning for Development.

²⁰⁴ Aide et Action. 2020. [Lao PDR: New skills bring new opportunities for ethnic minority women \(aide-et-action.org\)](https://www.aide-et-action.org/en/lao-pdr-new-skills-bring-new-opportunities-for-ethnic-minority-women)

²⁰⁵ Aide et Action. 2020. [Not just young brides: Education and women’s empowerment in Laos \(southeastasiaglobe.com\)](https://www.southeastasiaglobe.com/not-just-young-brides-education-and-women-s-empowerment-in-laos/)

In Laos and Vietnam an innovative Sport for Development programme “Pass it Back”, led by ChildFund in partnership with World Rugby and Asia Rugby, has provided children with structured sport and life skills learning opportunities in a safe, inclusive environment, that supports social and emotional learning and allows children to positively contribute to their communities. The project has provided a role-model for equitable gender relations in communities and the evaluation framework uses a dual lens of gender and disability inclusion, with special attention to issues of

female leadership and gender-transformative practices. In all project activities (in sessions, as coaches and in teams) 50% or more of the participants were girls.²⁰⁶

There is a need to **define the terminology for different levels of disability**. NGOs in Laos have observed that terminology used is not clear (for example “severe” “moderate”, etc.). Teachers tend to focus on children with moderate disabilities. Children in the severe disabilities categories are ignored as schools and teachers cannot cope with severe disabilities. Schools then report no severe disabilities. So these children drop out and stay at home. There is no institution to deal with severe disabilities at local level, only at regional level, so not accessible to local communities.²⁰⁷

5.1.5.4 How to Effectively Scale Up Inclusive Education Interventions

Where there have been successful pilot interventions, for example in inclusive education projects in Cambodia, it was noted in key informant interviews that as soon as funding ends all project activities and interventions stop. Careful work with government and other duty-bearers is needed, including contingencies and commitments, to ensure the wider learning replication, sustainability and scaling up of project interventions including ownership, planning for future funding streams through clear value for money analyses, for example, and building management and implementation capacity.²⁰⁸

Scalability and sustainability The SCF Inclusive Education Project in Cambodia supported **head teachers from non-project schools** in Bakan district **to visit and learn from project demonstration schools**, invited by the Pursat provincial authorities District Office of Education. **Inclusive education experiences were shared** with other districts and provinces during technical meetings, **exchange visits between districts and provinces** were organised for wider learning and replication. Suggestions for future implementation includes the **use of internationally agreed definitions, classification and identification of disabilities** – including intellectual disabilities - such as based on the UNCRPD and using the ICF-CY and the Washington Group-UNICEF Child Functioning Module; **capacity building of actors and stakeholders and develop demonstration classrooms**, lobbying for **inclusive education mainstreaming rather than separate stand-alone modules in existing teacher education programs**.²⁰⁹

NGO feedback highlights factors important for effective expansion and scaling up of inclusive education interventions, based on project experience.²¹⁰

Factors for effective scale-up of interventions identified from the BEQUAL project in Laos:

- Only **scale up if it is a systems approach**

²⁰⁶ Child Fund. 2020. Report of Final Evaluation to ChildFund Pass It Back in Vietnam and Laos. [ChildFund-Pass-It-Back-Evaluation-2020.pdf](#)

²⁰⁷ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

²⁰⁸ Key Informant Interviews Cambodia, December 2021

²⁰⁹ Save the Children. 2019. Mainstreaming Inclusive Education: Sharing Good Practices.

²¹⁰ Key Informant Interviews Laos, December 2021

- **Engage with the right department** that can approve and take action, for example: RIES/MOES for curriculum development (BEQUAL Phase 1); Department for Teacher Education for Continuous Professional Development (BEQUAL Phase 2). Start BEQUAL Phase 2 in 3 TTCs, then scale up to other TTCs
- Pilot Spoken Lao initiative has the **potential to be scaled up**

Factors for effective scale-up of interventions identified by the CARE team:

- **Work with MOES** for government buy-in - workshops to **engage with government staff**
- Work towards sustainability though progress may be slow
- MOES prefers national level projects rather than pilot projects
- For some project activities it is more realistic to work as **separate add-on activities**, but this **may not be as sustainable or scalable**

Factors for effective scale-up of interventions identified by the Plan International team:

- Inclusive education **embedded throughout the programme** using **an integrated approach**
- Include **different kinds of representations** in storybooks (gender, disabilities, ethnic, etc.) and **make materials more widely available** as resources are currently quite limited

6 Recommendations for Entry Points, Partners and Approaches

A selection of potential entry points for FCDO future engagement in improving inclusive education are identified from the key informant interviews and analysis of literature on out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in Cambodia and Laos. The entry points, partners and approaches detailed in this section could potentially be piloted and in future expanded either at sub-national, national or regional level as opportunities to improve inclusive education. Alongside these entry points, FCDO should look to delivery mechanisms that will strengthen engagement of government actors in delivery and review of interventions, ensure wide lesson sharing with government and other duty-bearers, and consolidation and analysis of emerging data and evidence. Through these forms of engagement, FCDO can open up opportunities to strengthen the system and ensure more sustainability.

6.1 Decision-Making Process

Examples of donor funded interventions presented in Sections 5.1.3 to 5.1.5 focused on **three broad areas of intervention that may be considered as potential entry points for future FCDO support**:

- (i) **data system strengthening**
- (ii) **information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns**
- (iii) **identification of individual learning needs** (screening and support services, early grade language skills, etc).

The three broad intervention areas were selected following the advice of the FCDO team overseeing this study. This focus was intentional in narrowing the scope of possible approaches under consideration, retaining those that closely align with FCDO strategies for inclusive education. The Inclusive Data Charter²¹¹ for example, recognises the importance of **data collection and knowledge sharing** to scale up learning and best practices as well as the need for robust disaggregated data collection to identify development needs and inform appropriate interventions. The UK government's strategy for disability inclusive development prioritises **public awareness raising** to challenge harmful stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities.²¹² Strategies to bring girls and children with disabilities into mainstream education include tackling stigma, combating violence and **ensuring that schools are safe spaces for children's learning and well-being**. Transformation of what happens in the classroom to improve girls learning outcomes can include scaling up of efforts to bring girls into school and improve language and literacy skills for early grade learners. Interventions around **information sharing, awareness raising, and advocacy campaigns** align with FCDO priorities to initiate a bold campaign and communications plan to build

²¹¹ Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. 2021. Two Years of the Inclusive Data Charter.

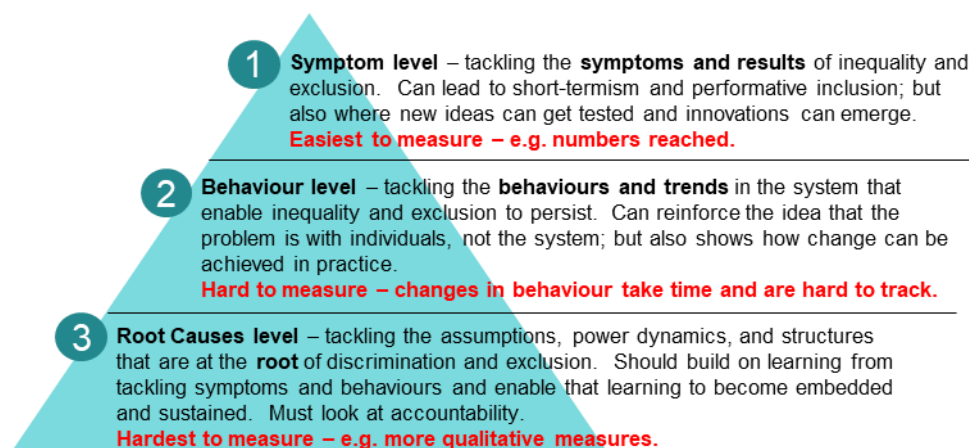
²¹² DFID. 2018. DFID's Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development 2018-2023: Now is the Time.

greater public awareness of and enthusiasm around the importance of educating girls, especially in the post COVID-19 pandemic recovery.²¹³

Each of the three potential entry points are explored further in this section and presented as recommendations for future support to improve inclusive education in Cambodia and Laos, also considering the option for replication and expansion to the wider ASEAN region.

A Systems Thinking Framework is used to examine how FCDO can ensure that its investments are driving at deeper levels of change and building on learning. The diagnosis above shows that project and intervention level work has not led to wider buy in on gender or inclusion in either Cambodia or Laos. The suggestions below therefore seek to ensure that future investments work towards greater sustainability and systemic buy in. The model in Figure 4 shows how to work to get to these levels of change over time.

Figure 4 Cambridge Education Gendered and Inclusive Systems Thinking Iceberg



6.2 Recommendation 1. Data System Strengthening

Proposed Approach: Support system strengthening to improve the quality of disaggregated data collection and analysis on out-of-school girls and children with disabilities

Purpose: To improve capacity for data collection and analysis of out-of-school children and strengthen planning processes at national and sub-national level

Evidence from numerous sources referenced in this study highlight the need for improved data collection and analysis of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities as a critical starting point upon which to plan and design inclusive education interventions. The available data provides sufficient evidence from which to identify priorities such as the most educationally under-served locations in Cambodia and Laos, the pockets of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities and some indication of the dominant factors or barriers that determine enrolment, retention,

²¹³ FCDO. 2021. Every girl goes to school, stays safe, and learns: Five years of Global Action 2021-26. Girls Education Action Plan.

progression, learning outcomes and completion. With more disaggregated information in hand, the targeting of limited funding can be more cost-effective and efficient and can ultimately ensure best value for money. Table 7 summarises the proposed data system strengthening approaches.

Table 7 Summary of Data System Strengthening Approaches

Entry Point	Approach	Partners	Target Group
1. Strengthen EMIS/data systems Provide support for capacity development at sub-national levels for improved data collection and analysis of out-of-school children. - to identify out-of-school girls and children with disabilities more accurately - to provide the basic information for required for design of interventions, for targeted pilot interventions or for scaling up and expansion of successful interventions - to support improved budgeting and resource planning for inclusive education at sub-national to national level, and for SDG reporting	- Identify MOES/MOEYS priorities and key partners (UNICEF / GPE / SCF) - Identify major information gaps in data for a specific purpose (e.g. OOS girls, OOS CwD, girls and CwD at risk of dropping out of school, SDG reporting) including lack of accurate disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity and disability - Identify capacity gaps in data collection and data analysis (e.g. school and district level officers) and capacity development strategies - Align and coordinate with other DP / NGO initiatives to strengthen EMIS / data systems – provide targeted capacity development and support	MOES / MOEYS UNICEF GPE SCF	– out-of-school girls and children with disabilities – Working with school / district officers
Possible Approach: Capacity development at school, district and provincial level for disaggregated data collection on marginalised groups, including student enrolment by gender and disability, completion rates and ethnic composition, in coordination with MOES / MOEYS and other development partners to strengthen awareness and inform policy development across all levels. Promote use of positive motivational incentives for data collection to ensure that there is a demand for data and a willingness to use it as relevant to all levels in the system.			

- Partner with other development partner / NGO / associations (to be identified) to pilot, replicate or expand a data system intervention that has the potential to be scaled up or that requires additional funding and technical support.

6.3 Recommendation 2. Information, Knowledge Sharing and Advocacy Campaigns

Proposed Approach: Promote information, knowledge sharing and advocacy campaigns to raise awareness among all stakeholder groups (parents, teachers, educators, children) of the value of providing inclusive education opportunities for all children

Purpose: To address mindset barriers of education officers, teachers, parents and community leaders to promote education inclusion (access and quality) for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities

The literature review and the key informant interviews identified the need for information sharing and communication initiatives on inclusive education to convey a range of messages to a varied audience. Some people are influenced by long held and deeply embedded cultural beliefs and stigmatising attitudes. Others are prejudiced by misinformation or stereotypical misunderstandings for example on the low value and poor return on investment of educating girls or children with disabilities. Yet others such as some teachers, education officers, teacher trainers and school principals may lack knowledge of how to adapt teaching methods and content, and how to provide a safe learning environment for a diverse range of children.

Evidence indicates that information and knowledge sharing strategies on a range of issues (long term value of education, school violence, negative impacts of child labour, return to education for young mothers and girls who married early, etc) can reap good returns by influencing behavioural change, bringing children into school where the messaging is well targeted and where the learning environment meets the needs of the learner. There is evidence that parents of children with disabilities who have been encouraged through awareness raising campaigns to enrol their child in school have then been able to realise the benefits.

Approaches that may be explored (Table 8) include (i) awareness raising campaigns at local level targeting specific geographical areas, especially in some ethnic and rural areas where there are high rates of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities; (ii) awareness raising campaigns to keep children in school at transition points when there is higher risk of drop out linked to early marriage and poverty; and (iii) through to knowledge sharing events at in-country or ex-country regional forums. Information sharing could be through print and e-based materials (comics, radio, social media, etc) or through meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences. It is generally acknowledged that awareness and advocacy campaigns alone are not sufficient but can be effective when used to complement and strengthen existing programmes especially at local community level.

Table 8 Summary of Indicative Approaches on Information, Knowledge Sharing and Advocacy Campaigns

Entry Point	Approach	Partners	Target Group
2. Information and Advocacy Campaigns to raise awareness of the value of education and to bring girls and children with disabilities into school - to support improved budgeting and resource planning for inclusive education at sub-national to national level, and for SDG reporting. Strengthen community outreach and advocacy programmes to communicate the value of education to parents and community leaders.to identify out-of-school girls and children with disabilities more accurately.	Support MOES/MOEYS and NGOs in development of communications strategies and materials, for example: ● production of video/radio and print (e.g. comics) to provide key information in multiple languages on inclusive education and the right to education of girls and CWD; ● sponsor regional / national conference attendance and knowledge sharing seminars	MOES/ MOEYS media depts, NGOs working at community and school level ASEAN OOSC and Youth working group	– schools – teachers – parents – children – education officers
Possible Approach: ● Partner with NGO(s) to support scaling up of positive messaging (assess parent's concerns and knowledge gaps and ensure messages are properly targeted with parental buy-in) to increase enrolment of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities in marginalised communities, drawing on examples of role models and success stories. Promote good practice by facilitating evidence-based information and knowledge sharing events to showcase what works in practice and lessons learned.			

6.4 Recommendation 3. Identification of Individual Learning Needs

Proposed Approach: Build capacities at school / district level in target (pilot) locations to develop skills in identifying learning needs of marginalised girls, CwD (screening) and other vulnerable groups e.g, over-age learners, etc. Trial tools and instruments for specific learning needs (for autistic learners, second language learners, etc)

Purpose: To strengthen screening, referral and support services for children with disabilities to improve the match between learning needs and inclusive education service delivery

Children with a diverse range of learning needs are excluded from school in situations where the individual learning needs of children are not identified, and the school and the teachers are not trained or prepared with learning materials or flexible teaching approaches. This can include children with a range of disabilities and related specific learning needs as well as children whose first language is not the language of instruction in school.

Evidence from this study indicates that there is very limited access to screening services for children with disabilities, provided mainly through donor funded and project-based support. There are examples in Cambodia and in Laos of screening services that could be scaled up or replicated in other locations to identify the learning needs of groups of children currently out of school. Aligned to the screening process, a support package of capacity development and learning resources can be provided to schools to provide a learning environment more closely matched to the learning needs of the individual child (Table 9).

Table 9 Summary of Indicative Approaches to Identify Individual Learning Needs

Entry Point	Approach	Partners	Target Group
3. Support strengthening of capacities to identify individual learning needs and provision for learning ● screening and referral services for children with disabilities to improve the match between learning needs and inclusive education service delivery. ● second language learning for non-Khmer (Cambodia) / non-Lao Tai (Laos) speakers in early grades.	● Work with MOES/MOEYS and key DPs to build capacity at national and sub-national levels in (i) screening (e.g. in/ex country training, diagnostic equipment, etc) of OOS CwD; (ii) improving levels of achievement in early grade reading and mathematics and (iii) quality indicators of literacy and numeracy levels. ● Identify opportunities to assist in strengthening of referral services and school-based provision for CwD; and (ii) to provide targeted support	MOES / MOEYS and Health / Social Welfare if relevant; specialist NGOs	– Out-of-school and in school CwD – Non-Khmer / non-Lao Tai speakers in early grades

to enhance
learning outcomes
and reduce
disparities.

Possible Approach:

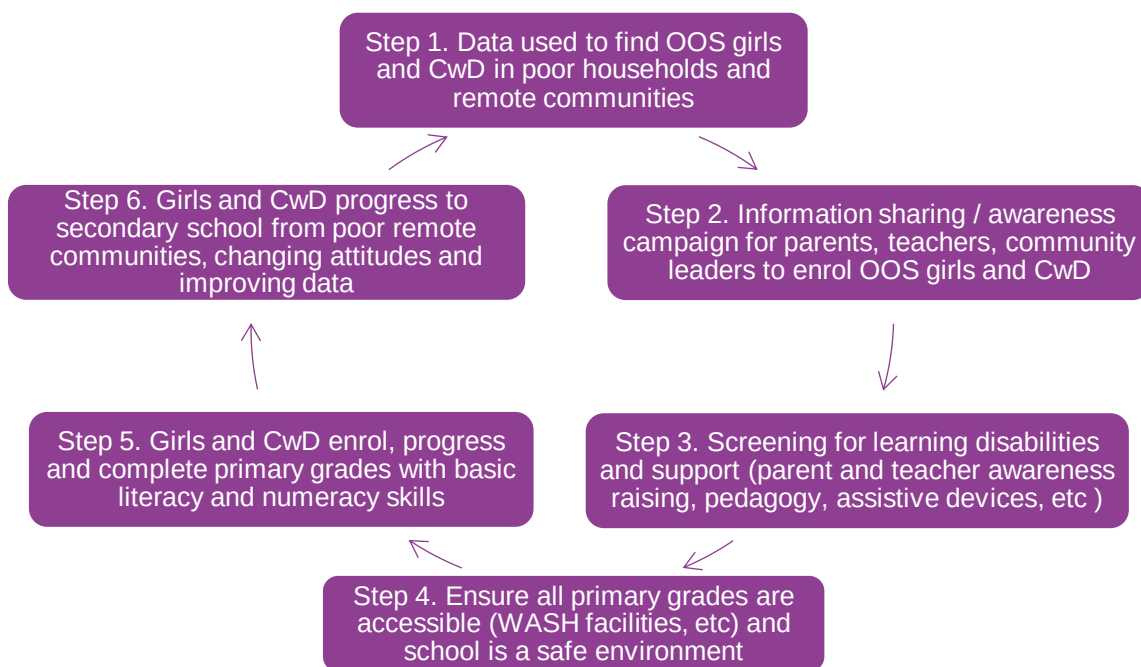
- Partner with NGOs currently implementing screening programmes aiming to identify the learning needs of marginalised out-of-school children, bring them into school, and provide for their learning needs by supporting teacher capacity development and resource provision; Scale up or replicate approaches being implemented successfully to expand the programme in target areas. Reinforce positive messaging to tackle stigma.

7 Conclusion

The three intervention areas, proposed approaches and recommendations contribute to a process of service provision aimed at identifying educationally marginalised girls and children with disabilities, attracting them into school and making available some level of individualised provision for them to learn, to acquire basic numeracy and literacy skills, and ultimately to progress through school. Ensuring that the delivery of these interventions builds in government engagement and lesson learning, measures value for money and seeks opportunities for sustainability will also ensure that deeper progress is made towards sustainable and systemic solutions.

A Virtuous Circle of Transformation is mapped out in Figure 5 to indicate how each of the proposed approaches are inter-connected in a process which contributes towards overcoming some of the barriers and challenges to school presence, participation and performance for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities and towards long-term change.

Figure 5 Virtuous Circle of Transformation to improve inclusive education opportunities for out-of-school girls and children with disabilities



Indicative examples from this study of interventions corresponding to the virtuous circle:

Step 1. Participatory community mapping campaigns to identify OOSC (Cambodia)

- Step 2.** Community- or school-based awareness raising meetings and parental engagement meetings (multiple project examples)
- Step 3.** Extensive screening and referral programmes for CwD (GPE2/ACR)
- Capacity building for CSOs and parents in identifying CwD, bring CwD into school and support them with trained interns (SOS IE Project EU)
- Train teachers to identify and provide for CwD in the classroom; address stigma and negative attitudes of teachers and education officers - a pilot component of IE for CwD (SCF Learn to Read Project)
- Step 4.** Mainstreaming IE through integrated system approach (curriculum, teacher training, infrastructure, awareness raising, spoken Lao pilot (Gr.1) (BEQUAL)
- Step 5.** Accelerated learning / catch-up programmes / early grade literacy/language skills for non-Khmer / Non-Lao Tai speakers
- Community-based child protection model for CwD to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation (UNICEF)
- Step 6.** Girls Counselling programme; role models and communication showcasing girl's and CWD's achievements (multiple project examples on social media and case studies)

A. Methodology

The methodology used in this study was a combination of literature review and key informant interviews using a semi structured interview format. Key questions were identified and grouped according to the informant groups which included government officers and selected representatives from INGOs and NGOs. Information from the literature review and the key information interviews was organised under the main headings that form the structure of the report – characteristics, barriers, and interventions – and sub-divided by country, and including a global / regional perspective where relevant.

Literature Review

A wide range of documents have been analysed to construct a framework of evidence describing the situation of out-of-school girls and children with disabilities at global and regional levels and within Cambodia and Laos. The full list of references is provided in Annex E. Information from key documents was extracted with a cross reference to the source document and organised into a spreadsheet under relevant headings for cluster analysis. The resulting matrix enabled categorisation of information under the general heading of inclusive education, and more specific references: out-of-school children, girls' education, children with disabilities, learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, intersectionality, impact of COVID-19 on education for girls' and children with disabilities.

Key Information Interviews

A shortlist of key informants was drawn up by the consultants to reflect the main government departments and organisations implementing inclusive education projects, from small scale to national coverage. Some projects have a very specific inclusive education focus while others have a broader or even national focus but with a component focused on inclusive education. The key informant interviews have been documented and are included in a separate annex to this report for future reference in design of interventions.

Key Questions

The primary questions from the original terms of reference are posted in text boxes at the beginning of each chapter, as applicable. Questions used in the semi-structured questionnaire for key informant interviews were developed by the consultant team and clustered as relevant to different informant groups, as detailed below. The questionnaire was translated into Khmer to aid the interviews in Cambodia.

Semi-Structured Questionnaire for Cambodia/Laos Key Informant Interviews:

- focusing on girls and children with disabilities who are not in school

Meeting Introduction

Summarise the points made in the Introductory Letter provided by FCDO.

We are conducting a study of girls and children with disabilities who are out of school. The information will assist the UK government as they explore opportunities to support the Government of Cambodia / Laos to improve inclusive education.

Briefly introduce yourself by name and your role – to gather information from ministry officials and from relevant development partners, CSOs and NGOs in Cambodia / Laos to feed into the study.

Questions for Ministry of Education officials (Department of General Education / ECE, PED, SED):

1. Gender / Inclusive Education officers

Girls not in school

Significant improvement has been made in enrolment, participation and learning at basic education level in recent years. However, in our analysis of educational progress for girls, the data shows that ...% of primary age girls are out of school and ...% of secondary age girls are out of school; ...% of girls of school age have never attended school. Please review and confirm or amend this basic data.

1.1 What are the main reasons for girls never enrolling in primary education?

- Are there any communities where it is more prevalent that girls are never enrolled?

1.2 What are the main reasons for girls dropping out before completing primary education?

1.3 What are the main reasons for girls dropping out before completing secondary education?

1.4 What programmes and projects is the MOES/MOEYS implementing to support inclusive education for girls?

- Are there other examples of recently completed projects that have been successful in making education more inclusive and attractive for girls?
- What are the success factors / why were those projects effective?

1.5 What strategies/activities can schools and communities implement to ensure that girls are not excluded from primary or secondary education?

1.6 What are the main barriers and challenges to implementation of these strategies and activities, to make schools more inclusive for girls?

Request a copy of the latest policy/strategy/action plan for Girls Education (e-version or web link)

[NOTE: request a copy of the latest Policy/Strategy/Action Plan for Girls Education]

1.7 How is SDG 4a. implemented and monitored?

[SDG 4.a Goal “build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all”]

2. Disabilities / Inclusive Education Officers

Disabled children not in school

Significant improvement has been made in enrolment, participation and learning at basic education level in recent years. However, in our analysis of educational progress for children with disabilities the data shows that ...% of primary age disabled children are out of school and ...% of secondary age disabled children are out of school; ...% of school age children with disabilities have never attended school.

2.1 What do you know about the situation of children with disabilities and their access to education?

- What kinds of data are available on education provision for children with disabilities?
- Who is in charge of measuring/monitoring children with disabilities (which ministry)?

2.2 What are the main reasons for disabled children never enrolling in primary education?

2.3 What are the main reasons for disabled children dropping out before completing primary education?

2.4 What are the main reasons for disabled children dropping out before completing secondary education?

2.5 What programmes and projects is the MOES/MOEYS implementing to support inclusive education for disabled children?

- Are there other examples of recently completed projects that have been successful in making education more inclusive and attractive for girls?
- What are the success factors / why were those projects effective?

2.6 What strategies/activities can schools and communities implement to ensure that disabled children are not excluded from primary or secondary education?

Request a copy of the latest policy/strategy/action plan for Inclusive Education / education for children with disabilities (e-version or web link)

2.7 Is a multi-sectoral approach used in planning for children with disabilities (education, health, social welfare departments, etc)? Please explain how effective and workable this approach is, whether there are barriers and challenges to this approach and ways in which it could be improved.

2.8 How is SDG 4a. implemented and monitored for children with disabilities?

[SDG 4.a build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all]

Capacity Gaps for Inclusive Education – children with disabilities

2.9 What training and professional development on inclusive education for children with disabilities is provided (a) for mainstream teachers and school principals and (b) for specialist teachers of children with disabilities?

2.10 Is the national curriculum and the assessment system inclusive of all learners and flexible to take into account the needs of all learners?

2.11 What resources are available for children with disabilities (e.g. assistive devices, transport to/from school, curriculum materials – braille, ethnic language books, audio books, etc)?

- what are the capacity and resource challenges and gaps for MOES / MOEYS in implementing inclusive education at provincial, district and community / village level?

- Are there inclusive education staff at sub-national level to support implementation of projects for girls education and education for children with disabilities?

2.12 Which development partners / NGO's / CSOs are active in girls' education and education for children with disabilities – inclusive education? What kind of support/programmes do they provide?

[NOTE: find out whether there is a summary table of the key partners/projects already mapped out that they can share with us - don't try to gather information on each project in the interview. If no spreadsheet is available, then please request them to complete a simple matrix as below for the main Inclusive Education programmes/projects that target OOSC – UNICEF may already have this information in a PIP spreadsheet – please check with UNICEF. Triangulate with information from meetings with donors.]

3. MOES / MOEYS EMIS department

Data Validation: We have analysed the MICS and DHS data on OOSC and would like you to verify some key findings.

[NOTE: Present the basic statistics for out-of-school girls and out-of-school children with disabilities and ask them to check the validity of the data – add any specific questions here for missing data they may be able to provide e.g.]

3.1 What are the challenges you face relating to OOSC data collection, analysis and utilisation for planning purposes (at central and decentralised levels) – for out-of-school girls and for out-of-school children with disabilities?

3.2 What support could be provided to help you to overcome these challenges and improve the quality and utilisation of data on OOSC?

3.3 How is SDG 4a. implemented and monitored?

[SDG 4.a build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all]

4. MOES / MOEYS Finance / Planning Dept – also Inclusive Education Dept/Centre

4.1 What is the budget allocation to support inclusive education activities – central level, provincial level and school level – from government and from donor funding?
[NOTE: request any available documentation with sub-sector, department or activity breakdowns and timeframes i.e. annual or multi-year, including government and donor funding]

4.2 What kind of IE related activities are funded – e.g. girls' latrines, disabled access, assistive devices for disabled students, stipends for girls and disabled children, disabilities screening and referral services, capacity development / system strengthening for data collection and analysis, etc?

4.3 Where are the main funding gaps for inclusive education (OOSC, girls' education and children with disabilities)? What is the funding gap (latest indicative estimate – e.g. from GPE/UNICEF)?

[NOTE: it is not realistic or necessary to request exact budget figures but rather to request available budget breakdowns and to open up a discussion on whether the allocations are centralised or decentralised to any extent, or whether or not there is separate allocation of funding to support IE activities, and identifiable funding gaps.]

4.4 How is SDG 4a. implemented and monitored?

[SDG 4.a build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all]

5. EU Inclusive Education Project, Laos (or other Inclusive Education Projects in Laos)

5.1 What are the project plans for Inclusive Education in Champasak Province?

– target group(s) / beneficiaries, objectives, indicative planned activities, timeframe, budget and indicative allocation of funds (for TA, infrastructure, school resources, stipends, etc), partners (MOES departments and donors/CSO/NGO).

- please describe any successful evidence-based interventions for inclusive education that are feasible and cost effective for scaling up.

Request any available project documents / situational analysis / relevant studies (e-version/web link)

[NOTE: a similar range of points can be covered in meetings with other DPs/CSOs/NGOs]

6. Aide et Action and Educate a Child - Inclusive Education Project, Cambodia (CCOSC or other Inclusive Education Projects in Cambodia)

6.1 What are the project plans for Inclusive Education in Ratanakiri, Monduliri and Kratie Province?

– target group(s) / beneficiaries, objectives, indicative planned activities, timeframe, budget and indicative allocation of funds (for TA, infrastructure, school resources, stipends, etc), partners (MOES departments and donors/CSO/NGO).

- please describe any successful evidence-based interventions for inclusive education that are feasible and cost effective for scaling up.

Request any available project documents / situational analysis / relevant studies (e-version/web link)

[NOTE: a similar range of points can be covered in meetings with other DPs/CSOs/NGOs]

7. UNICEF / Save the Children / Plan International / GPE [select donors as relevant]

[NOTE: select only key donors/CSOs/NGOs for IE – only 3-5 donors due to time limitation]

7.1 What are your organisations' project plans for Inclusive Education (targeting OOSC - girls and children with disabilities) being implemented at national and sub-national level.

– target group(s) / beneficiaries, objectives, indicative planned activities, timeframe, budget and indicative allocation of funds (for TA, infrastructure, school resources, stipends, etc), partners (MOES departments and donors/CSO/NGO).

Request any available project documents / situational analysis / relevant studies (e-version/web link)

7.2 Please describe any successful evidence-based **pilot interventions** for inclusive education that are feasible and cost effective for scaling up.

[NOTE: gather a small number of case studies that illustrate examples of effective inclusive education projects that could be scaled up.]

7.3 What are the key factors for scaling up? (e.g. funding, technical expertise / local capacity, broadening the target base of beneficiaries, additional resources and infrastructure needed).

7.4 Which other development partners/NGOs/CSOs are active in girls' education and education for children with disabilities – inclusive education?

[NOTE: a similar range of points can be covered in meetings with other DPs/CSOs/NGOs]

B. Supplementary Data Analysis

FCDO Laos-Cambodia Inclusive Education: DHS-MICS Survey Data Analysis Summaries (Cambridge Education, 2021)

B.1 Introduction

The DHS (Cambodia) and MICS (Lao PDR) surveys provide useful background information on educational participation and exclusion. In each country multiple rounds of surveys have been applied, which facilitates trends analysis in addition to more detailed summaries of the most recent surveys. This summary provides a picture of the overall scope of exclusion in Cambodia and Laos, and the rate of progress in recent years in getting more children into school. Analysis by socio-economic status, ethnicity and disability is included in this summary drawn from other sources though with limitations on availability and quality of data.

B.2 Lao PDR summaries

The detailed summary based on the OOSC framework²¹⁴ is provided for four age groups that align with the full basic (pre-primary, primary and secondary) education sequence in Lao PDR: pre-primary (5-year-olds), primary grades P1-P5 (ages 6-10), lower secondary grades M1-M4 (ages 11-14), and upper secondary grades M5-M7 (ages 15-17). A red-yellow-green presentation strategy is used in each figure. Dark red corresponds to the percentage of children who have never entered school, light red refers to the percentage who have entered school at some point but are not currently attending (dropouts), yellow refers to children who are enrolled but are not in the correct level (i.e. overage enrolment), and green shading refers to the percentage of children who are enrolled in the correct level (light green) or the level above their correct level (dark green). The numbers in each figure are presented separately for boys and girls, and across the four MICS survey phases that are available (2000-2017).

For 5-year-olds (Figure App 1) the numbers show substantial progress in enrolling children, mainly via an expansion of pre-primary school spaces. The percentage of early age entrants into primary (6 years is the official entrance age) has grown slightly across the surveys. As a result of the expansion of pre-primary the percentage of 5-year-olds who have not entered school has been reduced from roughly 63% in 2000 to about 25% in 2017. The results do not vary substantially by gender for this age group.

For primary school-aged children (6-10) the results again show substantial improvement in reducing out-of-school children in the last 20 years (Figure App 2). At the time of the 2017 MICS only 6.5% of children had not entered school, and this includes a sizeable number of 6- and 7-year-olds who are likely to enter at some point (i.e., late entry). Dropout rates are also low among this group (less than 2%). Nearly 90% are enrolled in primary or lower secondary, which corresponds to the net

²¹⁴ Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Initiative backed by UNICEF and UNESCO (UNICEF, 2015)

enrolment rate. (NER) A small percentage are overage pre-primary students. At the time of the 2017 survey the profiles for girls and boys are nearly identical.

Figure App 1 Educational participation among 5-year-olds by survey year, Lao PDR MICS

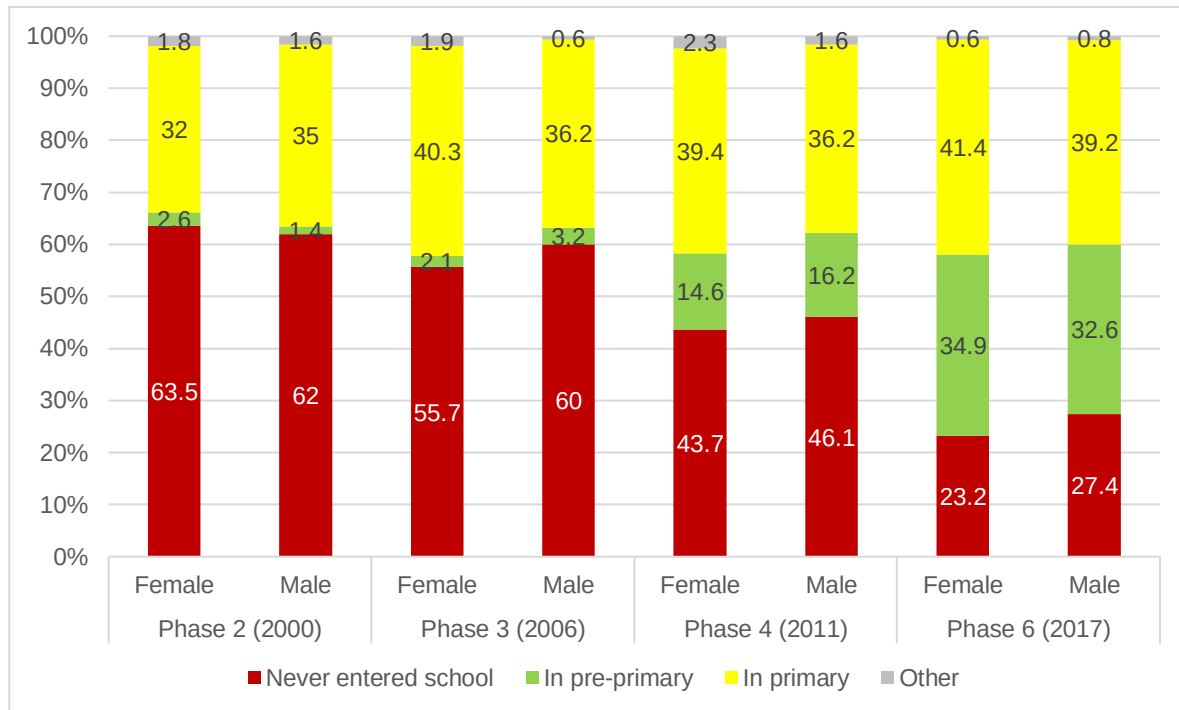
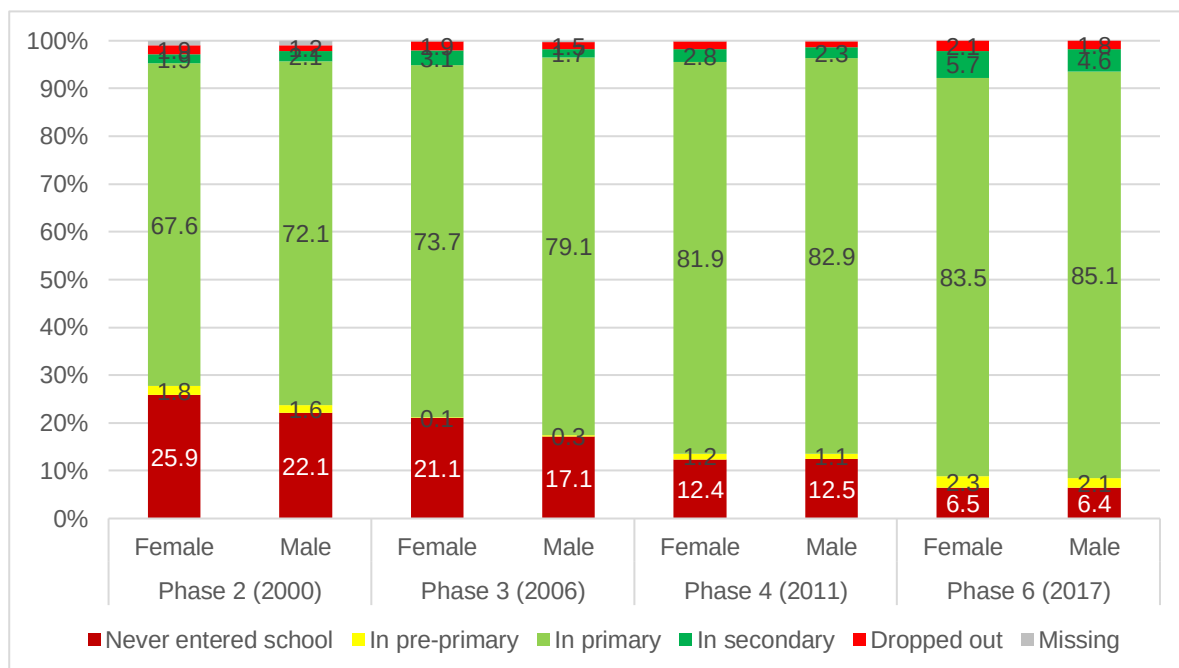


Figure App 2 Educational participation among 6–10-year-olds by survey year, Lao PDR MICS



The summary in Figures App 1 and 2 shows very few out-of-school children, especially considering that most of the primary-aged out-of-school children will eventually enter primary school. The combination of high (eventual) entry in primary and low dropout in this age range leaves relatively few children who are out-of-school. Although within this cohort (about 5% of all children) there may be a concentration of children with different disabilities, so the primary level of schooling may still be relevant for the overall FCDO inclusive education engagement.

Figure App 3 Educational participation among 11–14-year-olds by survey year, Lao PDR MICS

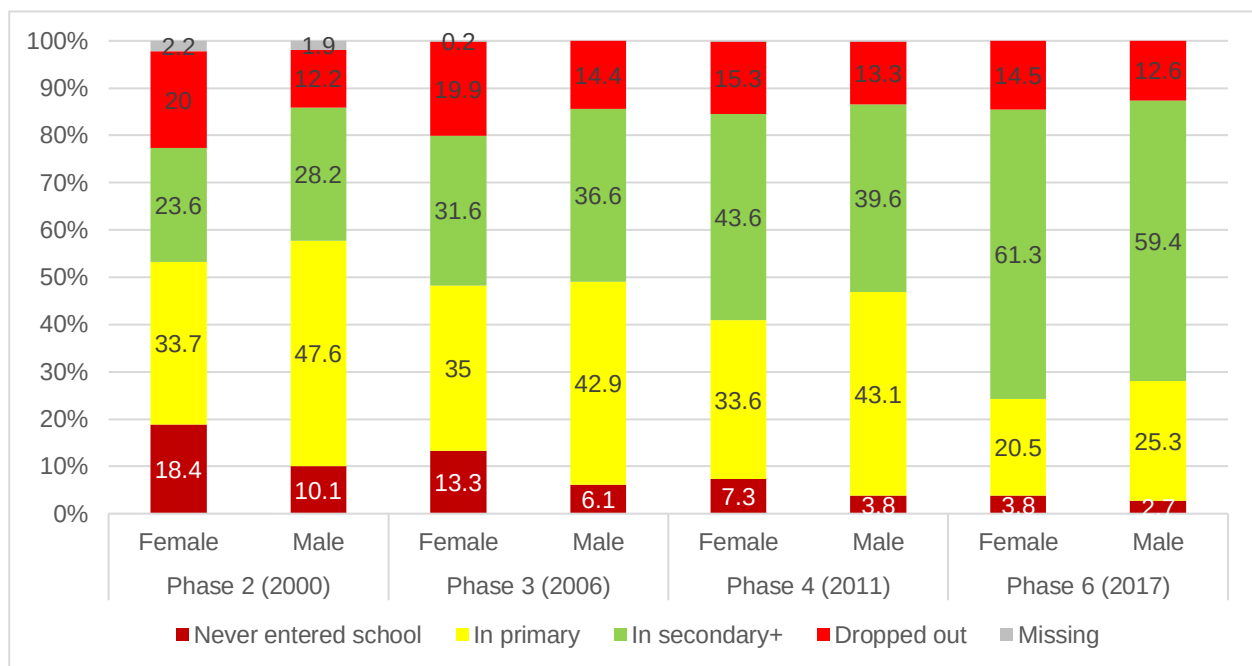
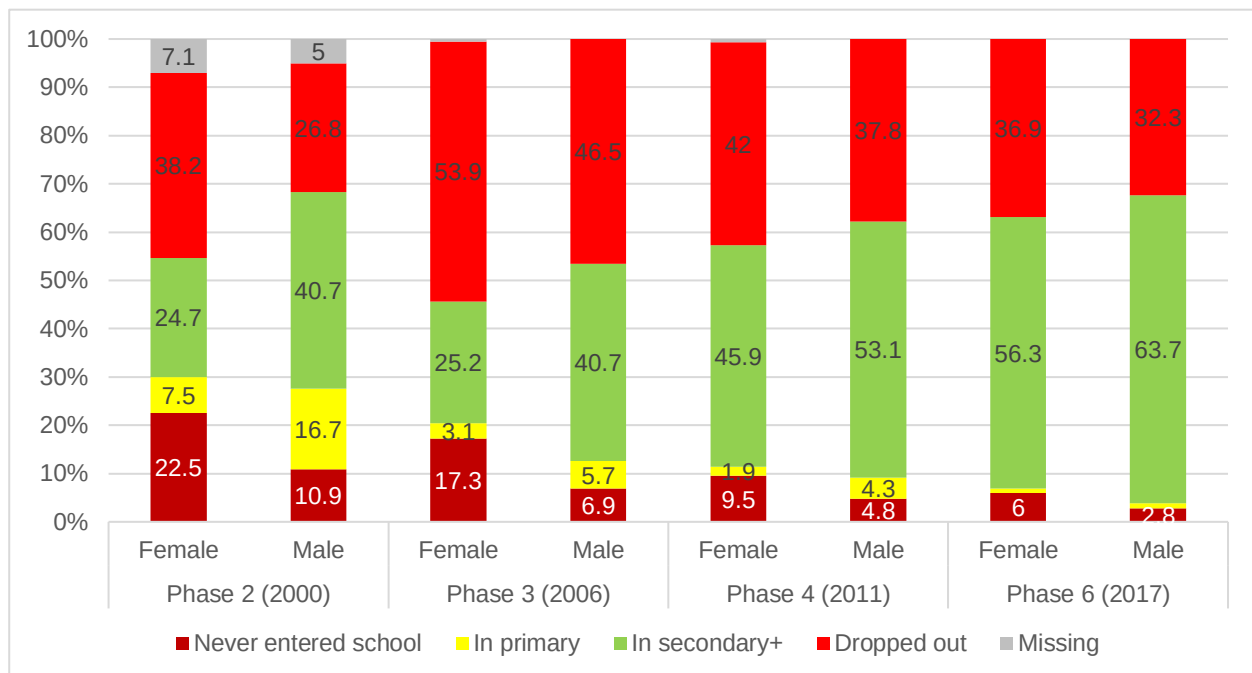


Figure App 4 Educational participation among 15–17-year-olds by survey year, Lao PDR MICS

For secondary-aged children the story is very different. Across the lower (Figure App 3) and upper (Figure App 4) secondary age ranges once again there is evidence of considerable progress in reducing the number of children who are out of school. This is mainly shown by the increasing share of secondary enrolment (green shading), which has accompanied a steady decline in the share of overage primary enrolment (yellow shading) as well as children who have never entered school (dark red shading). For lower secondary aged children there has also been considerable convergence between boys and girls. In 2000 nearly 40% of girls aged 11–14 were out of school due to never enrolling or dropping out, compared with just 22% of boys; by 2017 the OOSC rate was about 16% with relatively equal shares by gender.

There is somewhat less gender parity in the upper secondary level (Figure App 4). Despite substantial progress in reducing gender gaps, girls are more likely to have dropped out of school and also to have never entered school at the time of the 2017 survey. And for both boys and girls there is a very high rate of dropout among 15–17-year-olds (nearly 35% of all children).

Figures 2.1–2.4 provide some general guidance for the analysis of exclusion and its gender component. Full exclusion—meaning never entering school—has been considerably reduced, and currently only affects about 3% of all children. However, children with disabilities are likely to be over-represented in this group. The much larger category of OOSC are dropouts, and among older cohorts, girls are more likely than boys to be in this category.

In terms of the geographical distribution of out-of-school girls the MICS data include large samples by province, which makes it possible to compare results by province (Map App 5). Table App 1 presents the percentage breakdown of the total OOSC

population among girls aged 11-17 by province for two categories of OOSC. The Never Entered column refers to a relatively small group of girls who have never been to school. This group is concentrated in the southern provinces of Savannakhet, Saravan and Champasack. For the Dropped-Out category of girls—which is a much larger overall number of girls—the distribution is not as concentrated in the southern provinces, although that region does have the larger raw total of dropouts.

Table App 1 Percentage summary of the total number of secondary-aged girls (11-17) who are not in school by province, 2017 Lao MICS

Note: The figures refer to the percentage of the total number of OOSC (by category) that are in each province, they do not refer to the percentage of girls in each province that are not in school.

Central Region – Never entered

Province	Never entered in %
1 Vientiane Capital	0.6%
9 Xiengkhuang	2.2%
10 Vientiane Province	2.5%
11 Borikhamxay	2.0%
12 Khammua	2.4%
18 Xaysomboune	0.8%

Central Region – Dropped out

Province	Dropped out in %
1 Vientiane Capital	5.2%
9 Xiengkhuang	4.1%
10 Vientiane Province	5.7%
11 Borikhamxay	3.7%
12 Khammua	6.4%
18 Xaysomboune	1.3%

Northern Region – Never entered

Province	Never entered in %
Phongsaly	3.0%
3 Luangnamtha	2.4
4 Oudomxay	3.8
5 Bokeo	4.5
6 Luangprabang	4.3
7 Huaphanh	4.1
8 Xayabury	0.9

Northern Region – Dropped out

Province	Dropped out in %
Phongsaly	3.1
3 Luangnamtha	2.4
4 Oudomxay	6.1
5 Bokeo	3.0
6 Luangprabang	6.5
7 Huaphanh	4.6
8 Xayabury	3.4

Southern region – Never entered

Province	Never entered in %
Savannakhet	35.7%
14 Saravane	14.1
15 Sekong	2.4
16 Champasack	13.2
17 Attapeu	1.3

Southern Region – Dropped out

Province	Dropped out in %
Savannakhet	15.7
14 Saravane	9.5
15 Sekong	2.2
16 Champasack	14.8
17 Attapeu	2.5

Map App 5 Three provinces in Laos with highest percentages of girls who have never entered school or who have dropped out

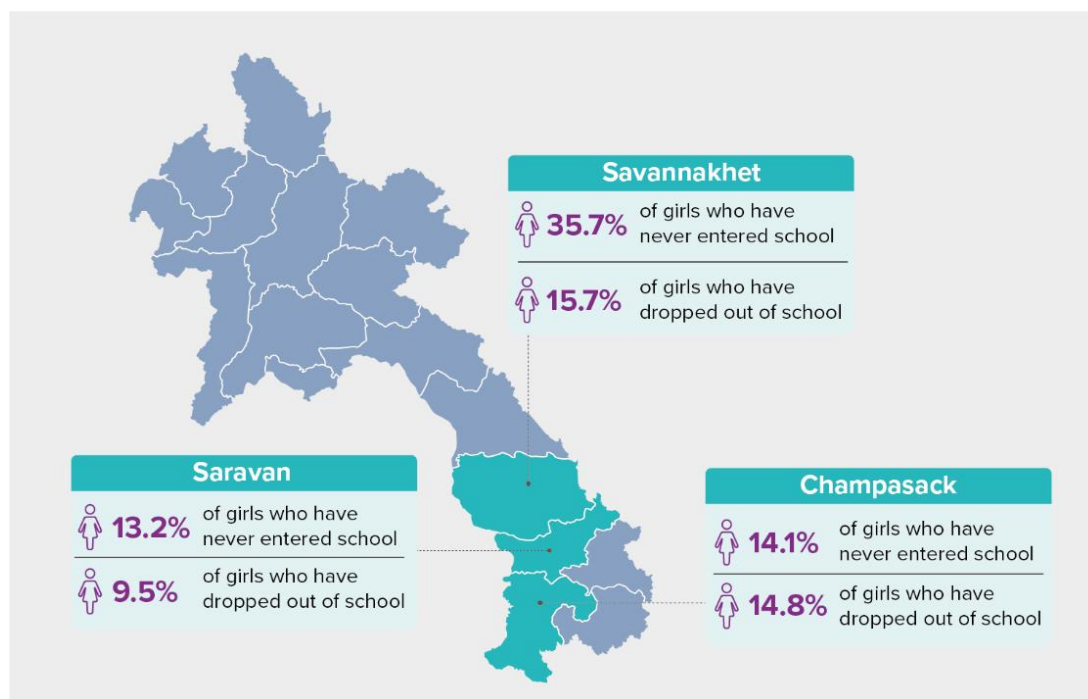


Figure App 5 provides a summary of ethnicity among out-of-school girls aged 11-17 at the time of the 2017 MICS. For Never Entered—which again is a somewhat small group—the main groups are Mon-Khmer and Hmong. But for dropouts the distribution is very different, with a higher proportion of the predominant ethnicity (Lao-Tai).

Figure App 5 Breakdown of out-of-school girls ages 11-17 by ethnic group, 2017 Lao MICS

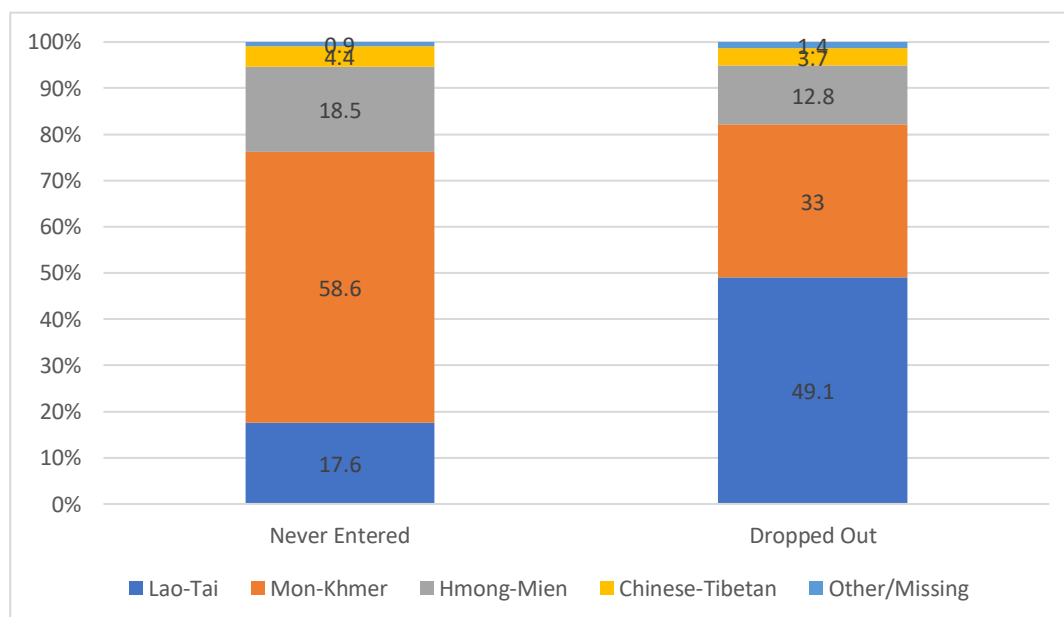


Table App 2 provides a more fine-grained summary of out-of-school girls in Laos at the time of the 2017 MICS. The actual raw totals of (estimated) out-of-school girls are used instead of percentages. On the left-hand side of Table App 2 is the summary for females who have never enrolled in school (ages 11-17). This total is estimated at about 21,000 girls. Of this group, roughly 9,000 are in non-southern provinces, and just over half (5,145) of the non-southern province girls who have never entered school are reported as Hmong ethnicity. Consistent with the summary in Figure App 5 above, the majority of the never entered girls are from the Mon-Khmer ethnic group which is concentrated in the southern provinces. 6,214 of the estimated total of never enrolled girls—or nearly 30% of the national total—are poor Mon-Khmer girls in Savannakhet and Saravane provinces. Another 2,873 are poor Mon-Khmer girls in other provinces in the south. Furthermore, the concentration of never entered girls in the south is even more specific by language sub-category: roughly 60% of the Mon-Khmer girls who are out of school in the southern provinces are from the Makong and Katang language sub-groups.

The main takeaway from the summary of raw numbers of girls who have never entered school in Table App 2 is that this outcome is quite concentrated in a handful of subgroups, including Hmong (mainly in the north) and Mon-Khmer (mainly in the south). This certainly provides some justification for targeting this particular category of children in southern provinces like Savannakhet and Saravane, and in fact the language group concentration of the problem (Makong, Katang) provides further justification for a targeted program. What is not known is how much progress has been made on this specific problem since the 2017 MICS data collection.

The right-hand side of Table App 2 summarises the sub-categories of girls who have dropped out. These results are very different from the never enrolled category. First, the overall total is almost six times larger: 112,000 dropouts aged 9-17 versus 21,000 girls aged 11-17 who have never enrolled in school. Second, female dropouts are not as concentrated in the south, or in the Mon-Khmer ethnic group; this was already shown in Figure App 5. The higher degree of geographic (and other) dispersion does complicate the task of targeting programs to counteract drop out. Nevertheless, there are large pockets of dropouts in different regions of the country (including the south), so there is certainly a justification for regional-targeted activities.

Table App 2 Estimates of raw totals of girls by OOSC category and Region, Poverty, Ethnicity and Province sub-groups, 2017 MICS²¹⁵

Females never enrolled in school ages 11-17:	
South / Poor / Mon-Khmer / Savannakhet-Saravane	6,214 females
Non-south / Hmong	5,145 females
Non-south / Non-Hmong	4,209 females
South / Poor / Mon-Khmer / Other	2,873 females
South / Poor / non-Mon-Khmer	2,272 females

²¹⁵ Data source: Lao PDR MICS (2017)

South / Non-poor	1,069 females
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Female dropouts aged 9-17	
Non-South / Non-Hmong-Mon Khmer	24,027 females
Non-South / Mon-Khmer	19,126 females
Non-South / Hmong	18,887 females
South / Poor / Lao-Tai	15,301 females
South / Non-poor / Lao-Tai	13,448 females
South / Poor / Mon-Khmer / Other	10,161 females
South / Poor / Mon-Khmer / Savannakhet-Saravane	7,531 females
Other	3,526 females

One notable difference in the summary of dropouts is that non poor girls and Lao-Tai ethnic girls make up a sizeable proportion of the total, whereas these sub-groups are almost entirely absent among the group of girls who have never entered school. Also, there is a large group (nearly 20,000) of Mon Khmer girls who are not in the southern provinces who have dropped out, while for never entered the Mon Khmer girls were concentrated in the south. There is still a large group of poor Mon Khmer girls in southern provinces—especially Savannakhet and Saravane—who have dropped out. And once again these girls are concentrated in the Makong and Katang language sub-groups (not shown in Table App 2). In other words, there is still a justification for targeting southern provinces and specific groups within those provinces. But this targeting will not reach such a high percentage of the national total as it will for the never enrolled group of out-of-school girls.

B.3 Cambodia Summaries

The Cambodia OOSC summaries are provided in Figure App 6-9. For pre-primary (age 5) and primary (ages 6-11) the results are nearly the same in Cambodia and Laos, especially when focusing on the most recent survey (2014 DHS in Cambodia). Participation has expanded substantially and relatively few children are out of school, especially allowing for eventual entry.

Figure App 6 Educational participation among 5-year-olds by survey year, Cambodia DHS

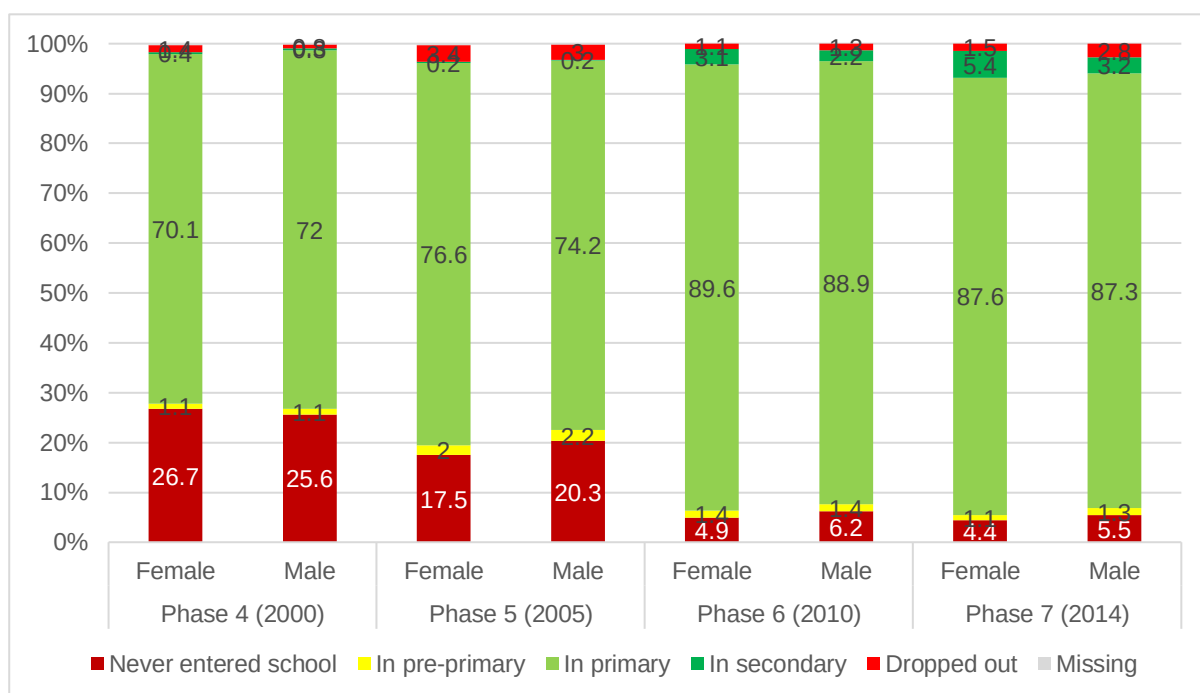
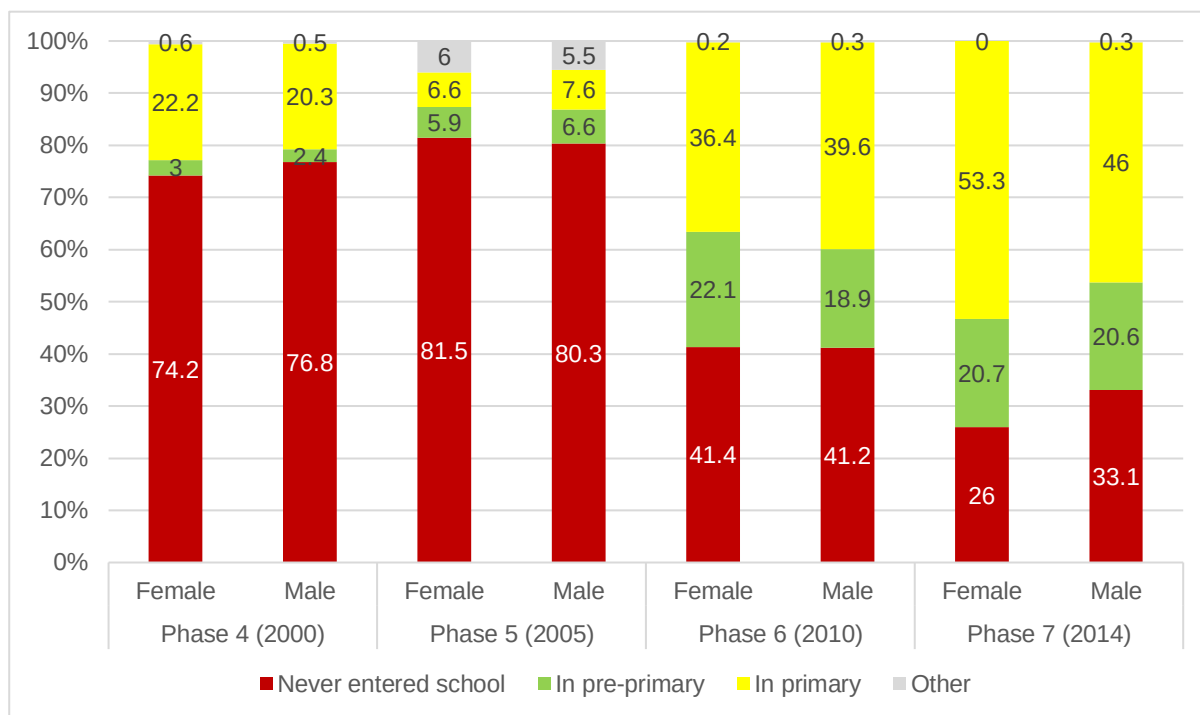


Figure App 7 Educational participation among 6–11-year-olds by survey year, Cambodia DHS

For secondary aged children the overall patterns are similar in Cambodia, but with some differences compared to Laos. First of the all the DHS trend is not as clear as the

MICS-based trend in Lao PDR, especially when comparing DHS 5 with DHS 6. The second main difference in Cambodia is the much higher dropout rate among secondary aged children.

Figure App 8 Educational participation among 12–14-year-olds by survey year, Cambodia DHS

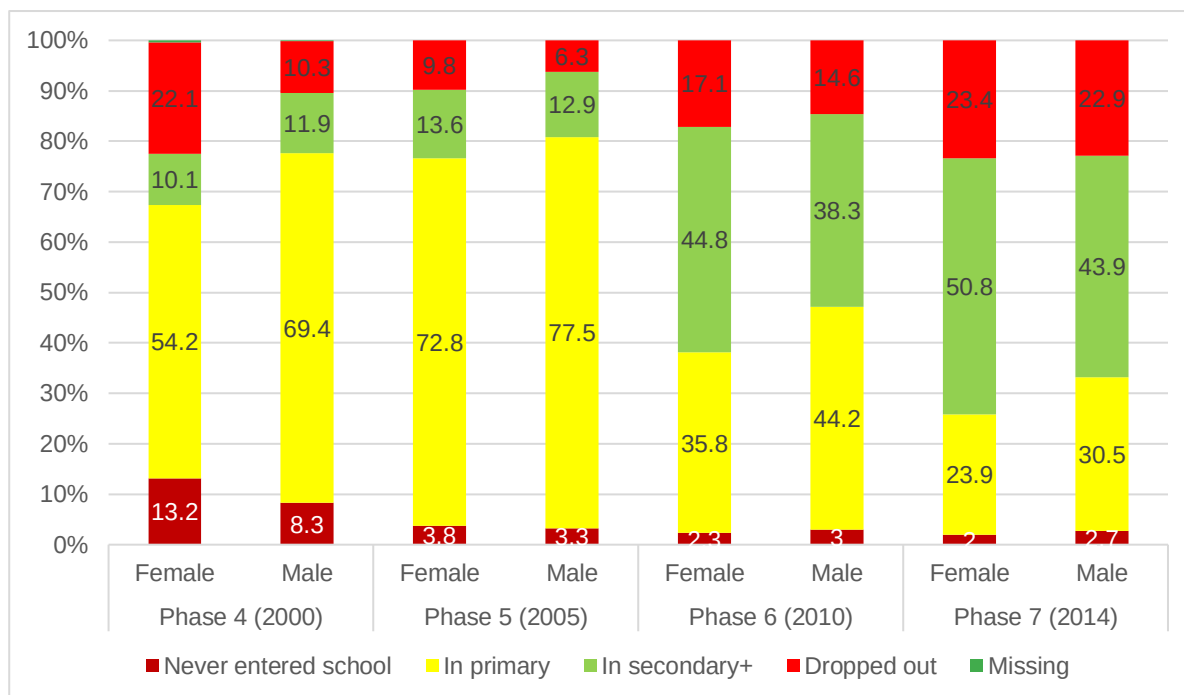


Figure App 9 Educational participation among 15–17-year-olds by survey year, Cambodia DHS



And finally, the Cambodia DHS results do not show much difference between boys and girls, even in upper secondary (Figure App 9). Nevertheless, there is a very large group of girls in the secondary age ranges that are out of school, mainly due to dropping out of school.

Table App 3 provides the counterpart summary to Table App 1 from Laos, with a summary of the percentage of the total number of Never Entered and Dropped Out girls of secondary age (11-17) by province. The results show some concentration of Never Entered girls in Mondul and Ratanak Kiri regions of northeast Cambodia, which is where ethnic minority groups tend to be concentrated (Map App 6). But for dropouts the results, like for Laos, show a more uniform distribution across the entire country. This can be followed up with more detailed analysis province by province, especially since the DHS survey in 2014 was quite large by province.

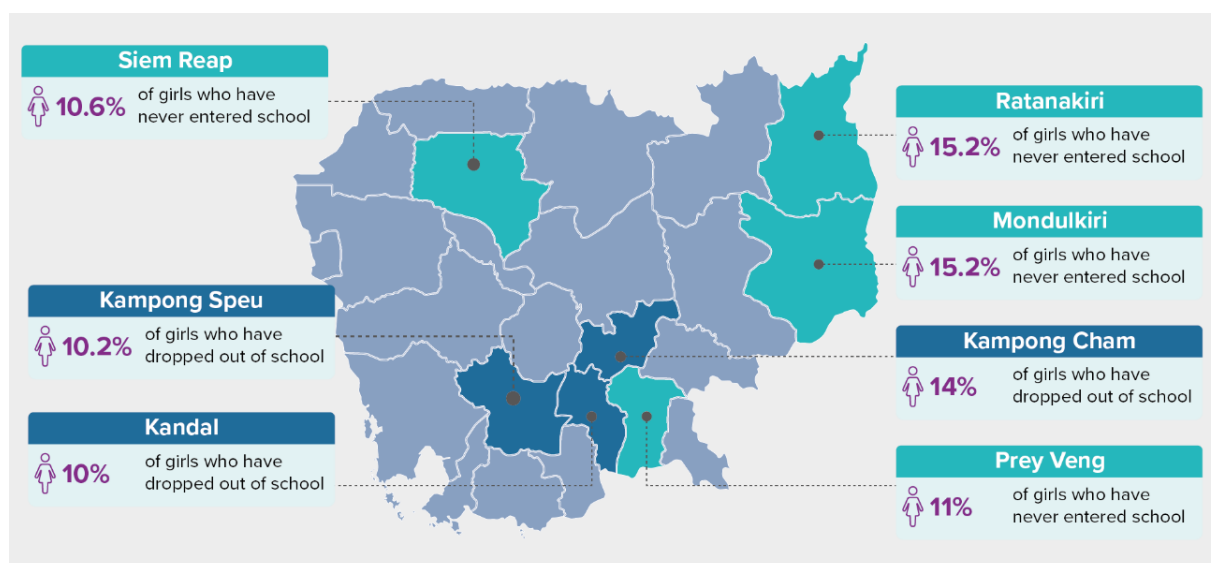
Table App 3 Percentage summary of the total number of secondary-aged girls (11-17) who are not in school by province, 2014 Cambodia DHS²¹⁶

Province	Never entered	Dropped out
1 Banteay Mean Chey	1.7	4.8
2 Kampong Cham	7.9	14.0
3 Kampong Chhnang	1.6	3.7
4 Kampong Speu	4.5	10.2
5 Kampong Thom	6.3	5.7
6 Kandal	4.3	10.0
7 Kratie	3.3	2.9
8 Phnom Penh	5.3	7.2
9 Prey Veng	11.0	4.0
10 Pursat	9.0	3.8
11 Siem Reap ²¹⁷	10.6	9.4
12 Svay Rieng	0.1	2.9
13 Takeo	3.7	3.1
14 Otdar Mean Chey	3.3	1.8
15 Battambang & Pailin	2.8	5.4
16 Kampot & Kep	2.0	3.1
17 Preah Sihanouk & Kaoh Kong	0.6	2.6
18 Preah Vihear & Steung Treng	6.8	3.3
19 Mondol Kiri & Rattanak Kiri	15.2	2.5

²¹⁶ The figures refer to the percentage of the total number of OOSC (by category) that are in each province, they do not refer to the percentage of girls in each province that are not in school.

²¹⁷ Siem Reap socio-economic benefits from tourism may be outweighed by its geography as a large province with many small and remote areas, and impacts of poverty, family migration, tourism-related child labour, for example,

Map App 6 Provinces in Cambodia reporting highest % of girls who have dropped out of school and who have never entered school



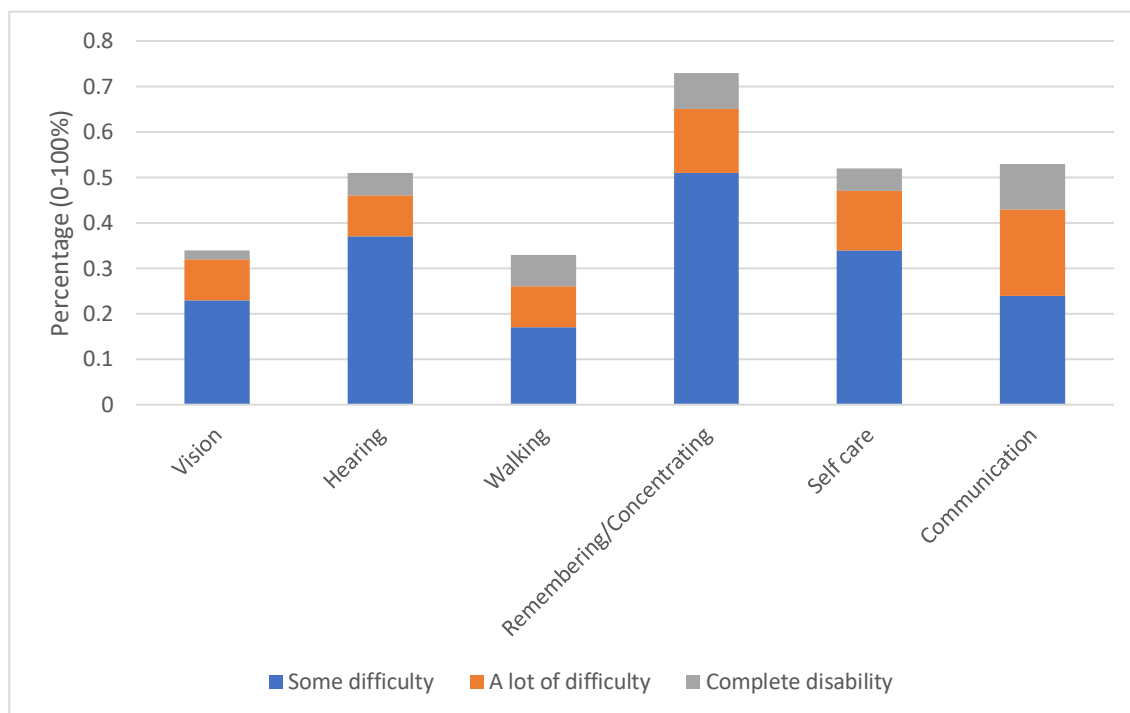
The DHS data do not include categories for language or ethnicity in Cambodia, so it is not possible to extend the analysis further into ethnic concentration. There is a question about marriage among persons aged 15 and older. The results show that 1.4% of Cambodian girls aged 15 are married in the 2014 DHS, 6.6% of 16-year-olds, 12.2% of 17-year-olds, and 24.2% of 18-year-olds.

Finally, the DHS Cambodia data do include a module on disabilities. The same question was asked for six specific physical attributes: vision, hearing, walking, remembering/concentrating, self-care and communication. Each person in the survey was classified as 1) not having any problem or difficulty; 2) having some difficulty; 3) having a lot of difficulty; and 4) having total difficulty (i.e., cannot see at all).

Figure App 10 summarises the extent of reported physical disabilities among children aged 5-17 in the 2014 DHS in Cambodia. The results show that less than 1% of children were classified as having any kind of disability; the x axis is measured in % between 0-100, where 0.8 means 0.8 of one%. The most commonly reported disability is related to “Remembering/Concentrating”. Very few children are classified as being in the most severe category of disability (grey shading).

Additional follow up analysis is possible with the disability data from DHS, including comparisons of school attendance rates by disability category and severity. But there are limitations on what can be done with the DHS data on this topic. The main problem is sample size: there are very few children in the sample with disabilities, especially the more severe versions that are likely to impact school attendance. This does not mean that this is not an issue in Cambodia, it simply means that there is not a lot of information in DHS on this sub-category of children. Disabilities are probably best measured with very specialised surveys, and general purpose surveys like DHS may not be capable of truly measuring the extent and severity of these problems.

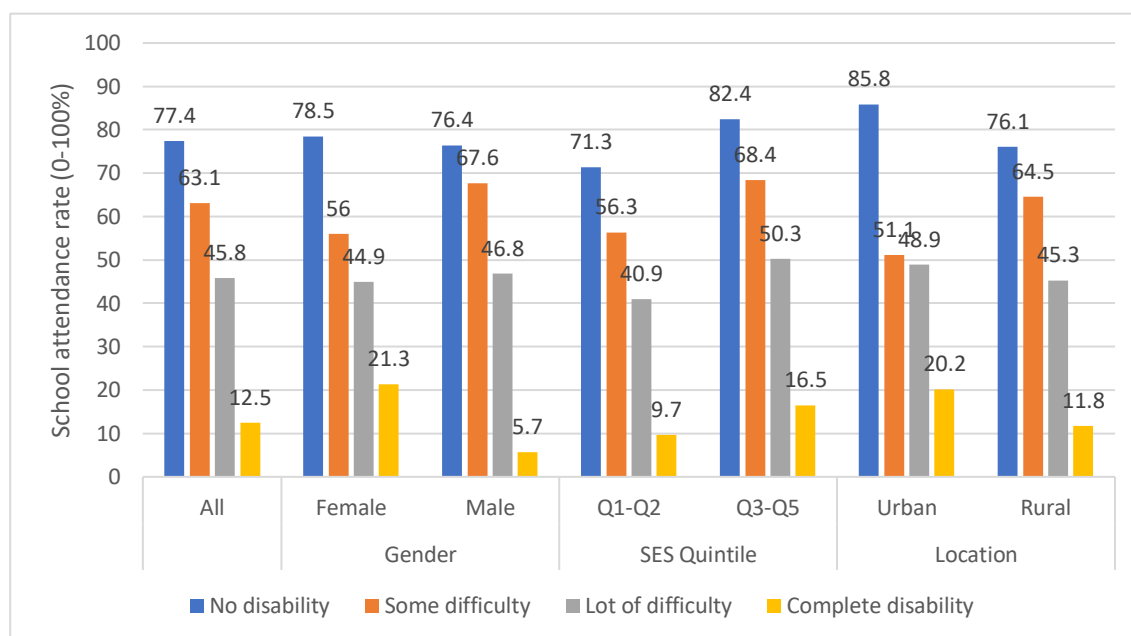
Figure App 10 Percentage of persons aged 5-17 with reported physical disabilities by category and severity, Cambodia DHS



How many children have disabilities based on the DHS 2014 survey in Cambodia? The school aged population is about 4.2 million (aged 5-17) in 2014. Just over one% (1.26%) of these children are reported to have “some difficulty”, which translates into about 53,000 children. Another 16,000 have “lot of difficulty”, followed by 8,000 with “complete disability” in at least one of the disability categories in Figure App 10. One possible limitation with the household survey approach to measuring disability is that it may depend on the household’s definition of disability, subject to the guidance provided by the enumerators. This means that the different levels of disability may be very hard to define, and some families may not even be aware of disabilities (or may be wary of reporting them). Regardless, based on the DHS summary there are nearly 80,000 children with some form of disability. This figure will need to be compared against other secondary data sources for disability, if they exist.

Figure App 11 concludes the summary of disability in Cambodia with a comparison of school attendance rates by disability status. All children aged 5-17 are grouped into four categories: no reported disability, disability with “some difficulty”, disability with “lot of difficulty” and “complete disability”. The attendance rate in 2014 for all children aged 5-17 with no reported disability was just over 77%. This falls to 63.1% for children with the lowest level of reported disability, then 45.8% for children with “lot of difficulty” and finally just 12.5% for children with “complete disability” This provides some dramatic evidence of the impact of disability on school attendance in Cambodia, where even children with some difficulties are less likely to be in school and very few of the children with “complete disability” are in attendance.

Figure App 11 Attendance rate for children aged 5-17 by disability status and gender, SES and location, Cambodia DHS (2014)²¹⁸



B.4 Out-of-school girls by data source

A comparison of out-of-school children rates by data source is a potentially time-consuming task given the various data sources that are available and the need for extreme caution when making comparisons. Nevertheless, it is important to have some sense of how accurate (or consistent) the different sources of data are. This is especially true for future monitoring and identification of out-of-school children.

This activity is only feasible for girls, as there is simply no set of “competing” data to assess when it comes to disabled children, at least not at this stage of the analysis.

In each country there are three sources of data. First there are the periodic household surveys that rely on large samples of high-quality data to estimate important outcomes like school enrolment rates. Second there is the information provided in EMIS reports in both countries. And finally, there is the information on the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) website that includes a category for out-of-school children. Since UIS data tend to come from EMIS systems the second and third data sources should be identical or at least very similar, but this is not always the case.

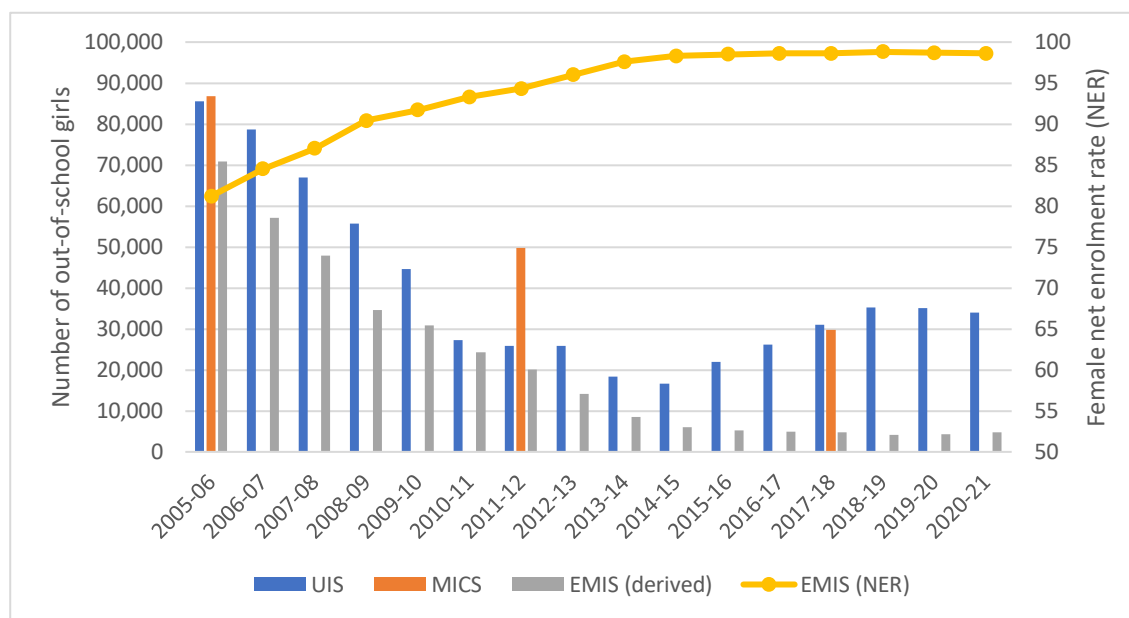
B.4.1 Lao PDR data comparisons

Figure App 12 begins the comparisons in Lao for primary-aged girls. The blue bars represent the number of out-of-school primary-aged girls according to the UIS data system reporting. The periodic orange bars are taken from MICS data at different points in time. And finally, the grey bars represent the “derived” total of out-of-school

²¹⁸ Data source: DHS (2014)

girls based on EMIS data; this calculation simply takes the difference between correct age primary girls who are in school and the total population of girls aged 6-10, both of which are reported in the Lao EMIS annuals.

Figure App 12 Comparison of raw totals of primary age out-of-school girls by data source and school year, with EMIS-reported net enrolment rate (right axis), Lao PDR 2005-2021²¹⁹



The numbers in Figure App 12 diverge quite a bit by data source. For the MICS summaries (orange bars) the total number of out-of-school girls steadily declines across the three survey periods and is about 30,000 in the 2017-18 school year. The UIS-reported total number of out-of-school girls is nearly identical to the MICS reported total in 2005-06 and then again in 2017-18, but in the middle years the UIS numbers decline quite substantially before actually increasing in recent years. This is a strange pattern to understand since it is unlikely that OOSC numbers have declined and then increased this much.

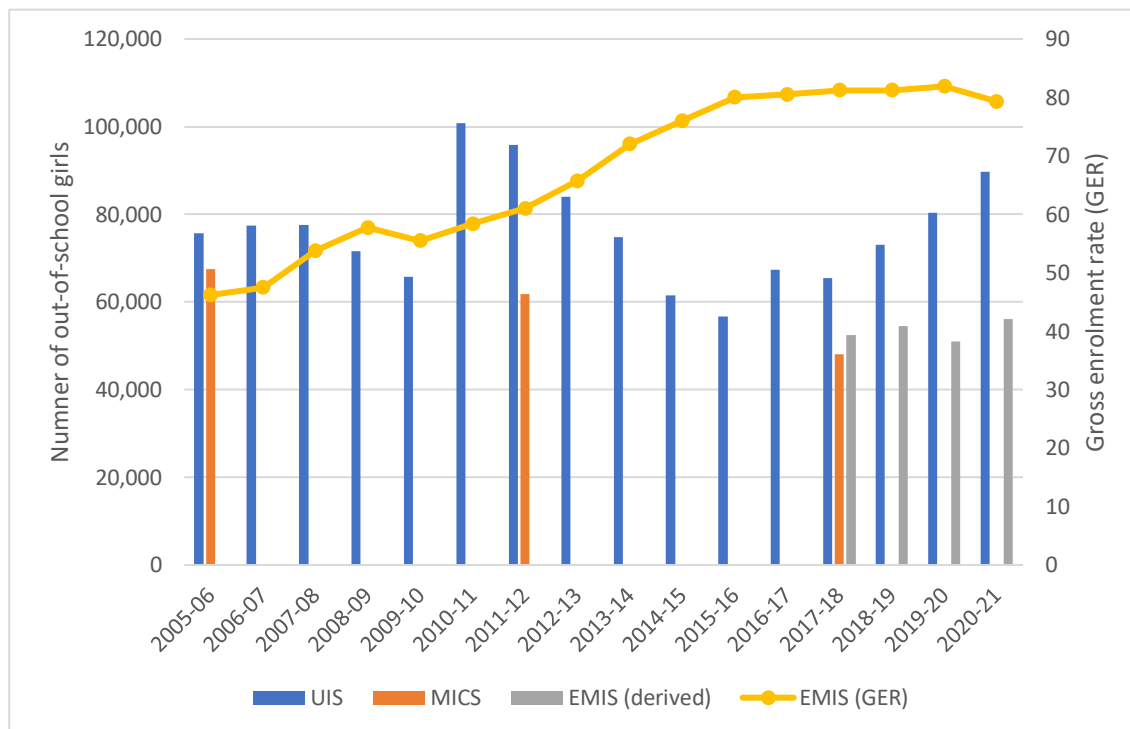
The EMIS derived numbers are fairly close to MICS and UIS numbers in early years but then drop off considerably and stay very low. This does not seem realistic, and concerns about EMIS over reporting of enrolment in primary have been expressed elsewhere (see World Bank 2017 analysis). However, as noted above the UIS data tend to rely on EMIS-reported numbers, so the discrepancy between the blue and grey bars in Figure App 12 is somewhat difficult to understand.

Figure App 13 continues with the lower secondary age girls. At this level the net enrolment rate is not included in the EMIS annual statistics summary, so the gross enrolment rate is presented instead (right side axis with yellow line). Also, it is only possible to calculate the derived number of out-of-school girls at the lower secondary

²¹⁹ Data source: Lao PDR MICS (various years), Lao PDR EMIS (various years), UIS website

level in the most recent EMIS annual summaries that include number of correct age girls enrolled in lower secondary.

Figure App 13 Comparison of raw totals of lower secondary age out-of-school girls by data source and school year, with EMIS-reported gross enrolment rate (right axis), Lao PDR 2005-2021²²⁰

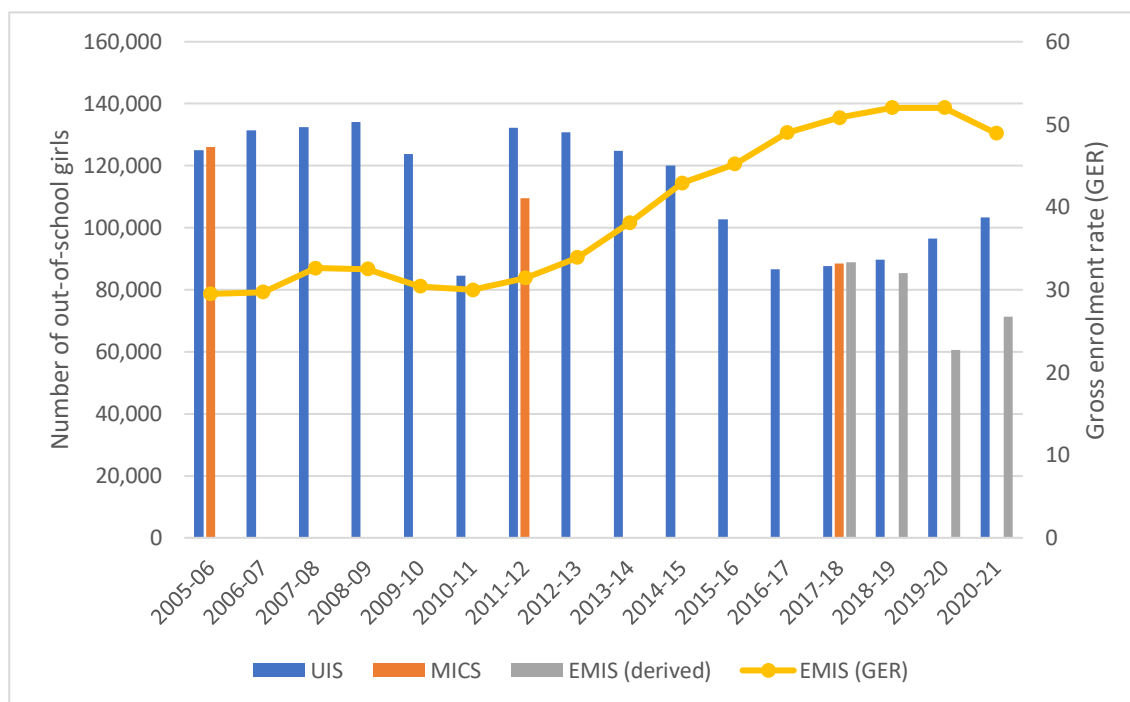


The numbers in Figure App 13 again show steady progress in reducing out-of-school girls according to MICS survey data that is consistent with the overall trend of more girls in school (GER in yellow line). Also, the EMIS-derived number of out-of-school girls is very similar to the MICS total in 2017-18, which is encouraging. Finally, at the lower secondary level the UIS numbers are again very inconsistent, with high numbers in the middle years and then again in recent years. This is not an easy pattern to understand.

Figure App 14 concludes with the summary for upper secondary aged girls. This summary is a bit more consistent, and in fact in 2017-18 there is a remarkable degree of agreement between the three data sources for the number of girls who are out of school. The EMIS-derived figures in recent years show some more progress in reducing OOSC and are generally on trend with the MICS trend. The UIS numbers, once again, move around a bit but for upper secondary ages the movement is not as extreme.

²²⁰ Data source: Lao PDR MICS (various years), Lao PDR EMIS (various years), UIS website

Figure App 14 Comparison of raw totals of upper secondary age out-of-school girls by data source and school year, with EMIS-reported gross enrolment rate (right axis), Lao PDR 2005-2021²²¹



There are three main takeaways from the results in Figure App 12-14, although it should be noted that this is a somewhat abbreviated analysis. First, the trends in OOSC based on the MICS data are quite coherent and seem to be consistent with the larger trends as reported by other sources. Second, the EMIS-derived numbers of out-of-school girls—which are not actually reported in the EMIS annual summaries—are not accurate at the primary level but seem to be pretty accurate in lower and upper secondary levels. This is encouraging for future monitoring and overall EMIS data validity, again subject to concerns about over reporting of enrolment in primary level. And finally, the UIS data are a bit of a mystery since these tend to rely on official EMIS reports, and they are quite inconsistent, especially in the lower secondary level.

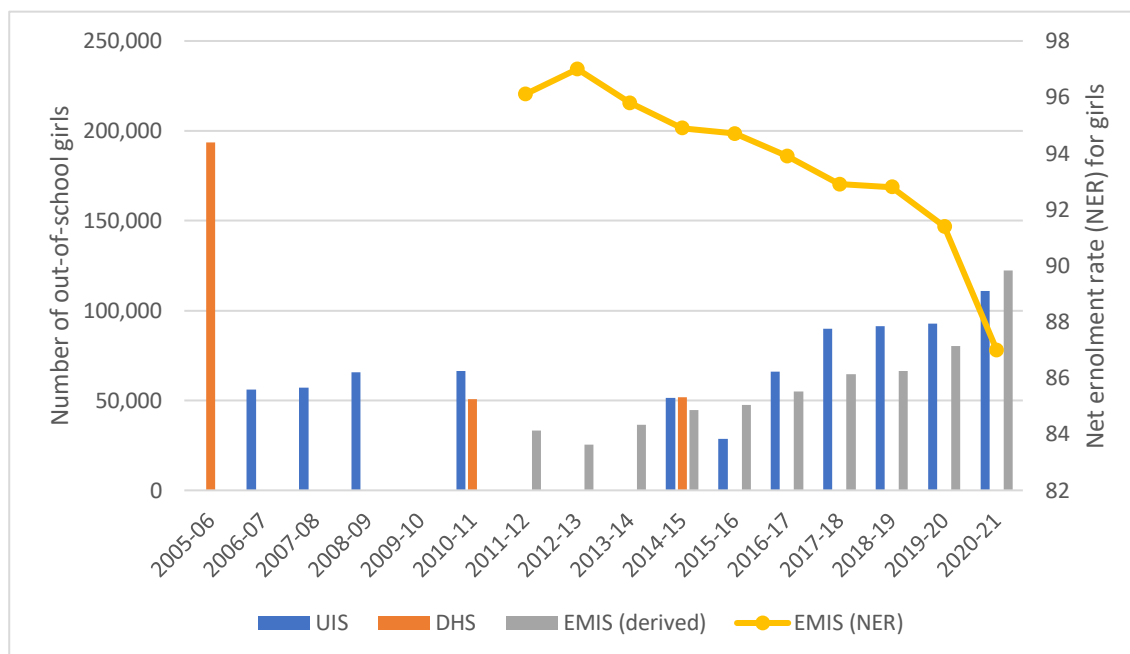
B.4.2 Cambodia data comparisons

Figures App 15-17 include the DHS-EMIS-UIS comparisons for Cambodia. The data are not as consistently available for UIS and EMIS over this period, but some patterns are apparent. For primary school-age girls the DHS estimate from 2005 appears to be an outlier, but in 2010 and 2014 the different data sources are generally in agreement. One troubling trend in Figure App 15 is the declining net enrolment among girls since 2011 (yellow line), and as a result there is an increasing number of out-of-school girls according to both EMIS and UIS sources (blue and grey bars). This may reflect more

²²¹ Data source: Lao PDR MICS (various years), Lao PDR EMIS (various years), UIS website

early childhood education (ECE) participation as primary-aged girls are (still) in pre-primary instead of primary, but it is a trend that needs to be noted.

Figure App 15 Comparison of raw totals of primary age out-of-school girls by data source and school year, with EMIS-reported net enrolment rate (right axis), Cambodia 2005-2021²²²



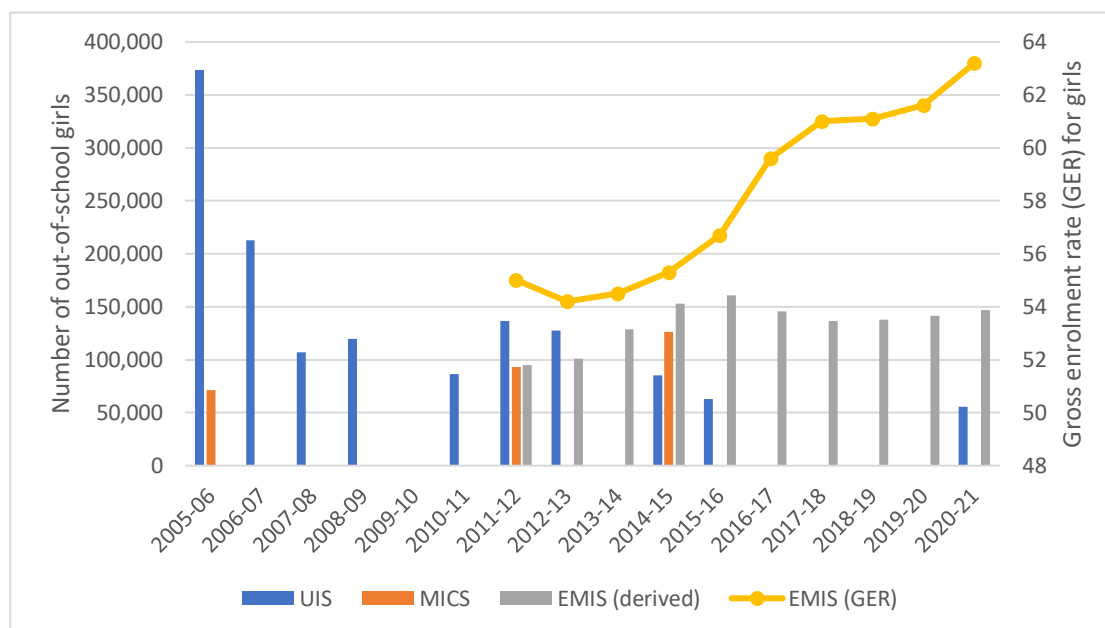
For lower secondary (Figure App 16) and upper secondary (Figure App 17) the patterns are quite similar. First, the gross enrolment ratio for females is generally increasing in recent years for both levels (NER not available in EMIS). Second, the DHS, EMIS (derived) and UIS numbers of out-of-school girls are similar, and do not show consistent divergence. In other words, the derived method of obtaining out-of-school girls from EMIS annual reports appears to provide a fairly accurate picture of out-of-school girls, and that is true at the primary level. This is encouraging from a monitoring standpoint given the infrequency of sample-based surveys, and some inconsistency in UIS reported figures (especially at the lower secondary level).

There are a lot of girls out of school in Cambodia: roughly 600,000 aged 6-17 based on the EMIS (derived) measurement. Compared with Lao the raw numbers are much larger due in part to population size differences. But as noted in the detailed OOSC summaries in Section 3 the Khmer girls are more likely to be out of school on a percentage basis compared with their Lao counterparts, and there is some evidence (according to DHS) of a worsening situation in recent years in lower and upper secondary (also see EMIS data for primary in recent years). Overall, the situations in

²²² Data source: Cambodia DHS (various years), Lao PDR EMIS (various years), UIS website

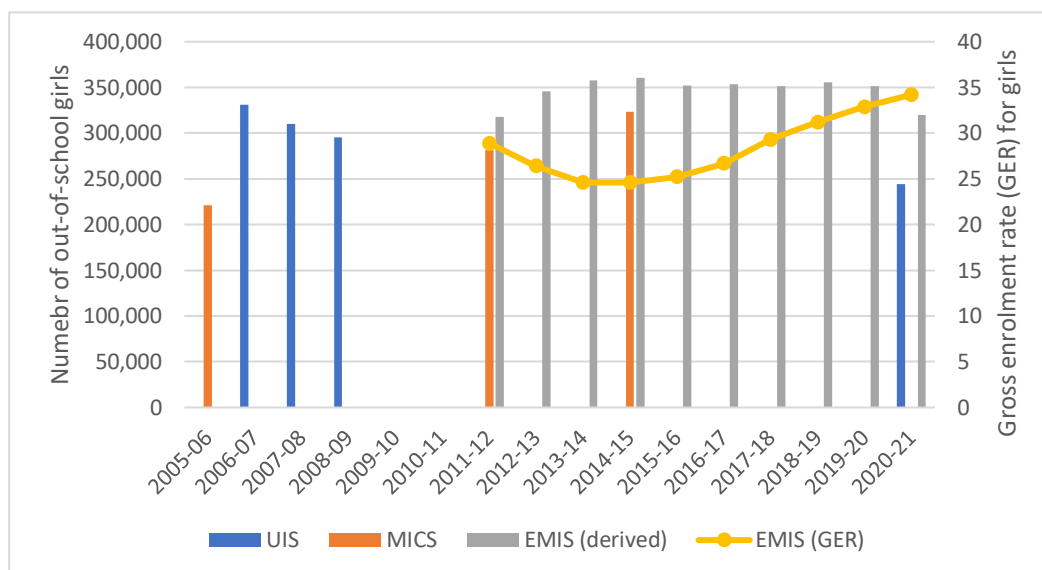
the two countries are not dramatically different, but nonetheless there are causes for concern in the Cambodia case.

Figure App 16 Comparison of raw totals of lower secondary age out-of-school girls by data source and school year, with EMIS-reported gross enrolment rate (right axis), Cambodia 2005-2021²²³



²²³ Data source: Cambodia DHS (various years), Lao PDR EMIS (various years), UIS website

Figure App 17 Comparison of raw totals of upper secondary age out-of-school girls by data source and school year, with EMIS-reported gross enrolment rate (right axis), Cambodia 2005-2021²²⁴



B.5 Child marriage follow up (Cambodia)

Current marital status is asked in the three most recent DHS data collections in Cambodia, but only in the earliest (2000) Lao MICs survey. Figure App 18 summarises marriage rates among Khmer girls ages 15-20 by survey phase (marriage only asked for persons 15 and older). The results show a decline in marriage rates between the 2005-06 and 2011-12 DHS data collections, followed by a significant increase in reported marriage among girls in the 2014-15 survey. For example, 15.9% of Khmer girls aged 18 reported being married in 2005-06, which then declined to 13.3% in 2011-12. But in 2014-15 this percentage increased to 24.2%. But in 2014-15 this percentage increased to 24.2%. Similar jumps are shown for ages 18-20 and, to a lesser extent, for 16 year olds. This is a somewhat surprising finding that may be worth following up on in other parts of the analysis of out-of-school girls in Cambodia.

²²⁴ Data source: Cambodia DHS (various years), Lao PDR EMIS (various years), UIS website

Figure App 18 Percentage of girls who are married by age and survey, Cambodia
DHS 2005-2014²²⁵

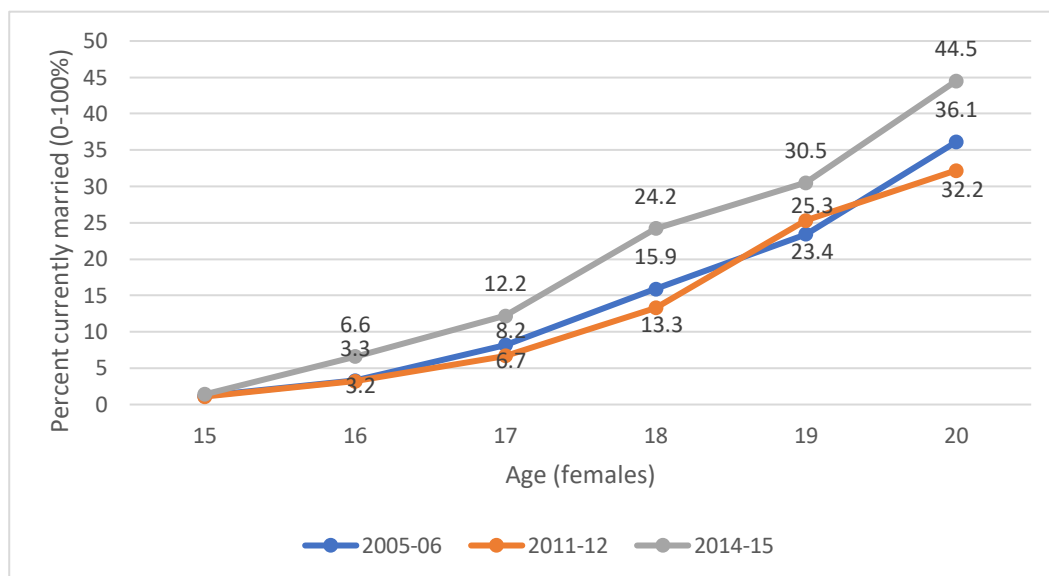
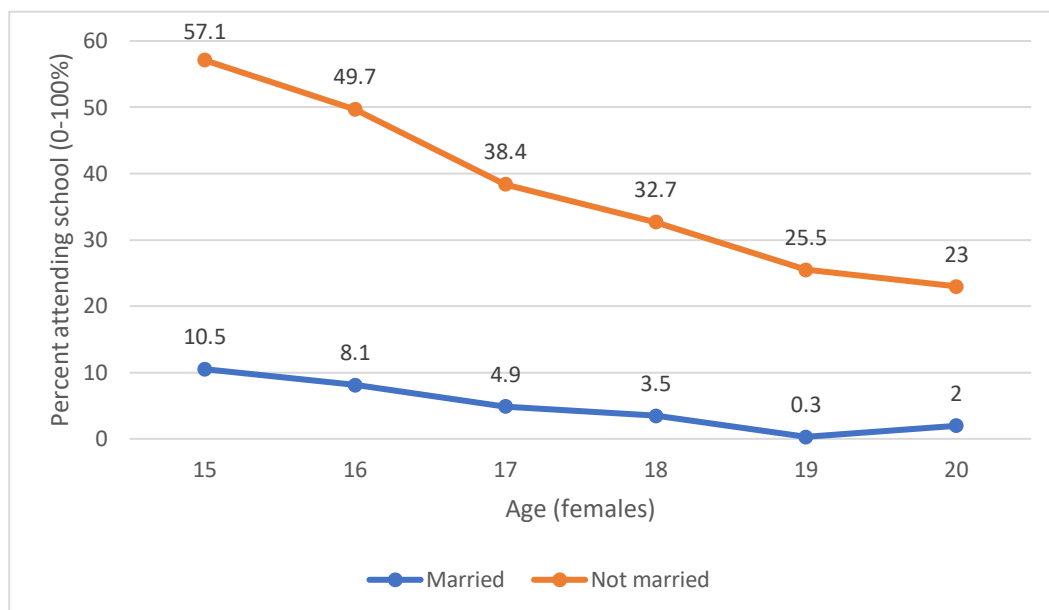


Figure App 19 then compares current school attendance rates between married and non-married girls aged 15-20 at the time of the 2014-15 DHS survey in Cambodia. Not surprisingly, married girls are much less likely to be enrolled in school. This suggests that one sub-group of out-of-school girls are older married girls. This can be followed up on later to look for regional or other patterns in child marriage rates.

²²⁵ Data source: Cambodia DHS (various years)

Figure App 19 Current school attendance rates among girls aged 15-20 by marital status, Cambodia DHS 2014-15²²⁶



B.6 Incomplete schools follow up

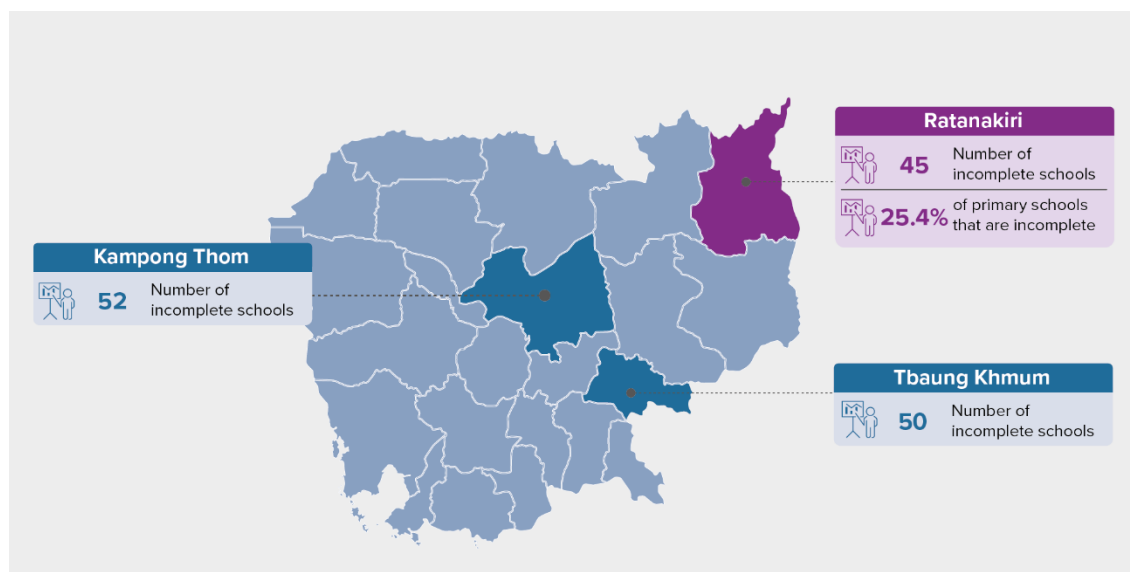
In both Laos and Cambodia there are incomplete primary schools that do not offer the full range of grades and therefore limit the supply of schooling. Incomplete schools are likely to be concentrated in rural and remote areas, with small school populations. There is also some uncertainty about the underlying cause, as high levels of dropout in early grades may reduce the demand for higher grades. Nevertheless, incomplete schools should be treated as supply constraints to schooling, so it is important to understand more about the prevalence of this issue in both countries.

Based on EMIS data for the 2020-21 school year there are 6,922 primary schools in Cambodia, and 382 of these schools are incomplete (i.e., they do not offer all six primary grades). The incomplete schools represent 5.5% of the total schools, although in terms of actual student population they are almost certainly smaller given the tendency for incomplete schools to have lower enrolments. Kampong Thom (52), Ratanak Kiri (45) and Tbaung Khmum (50) are the provinces with the most incomplete schools (Mondul Kiri does not report any incomplete schools). However, as a percentage of the total primary schools Ratanak Kiri stands out: 45 out of 177 schools are incomplete (Map App 7).

So, for the Khmer case the incomplete school issue is indeed present, and it appears to be especially pronounced in Ratanakiri.

²²⁶ Data source: Cambodia DHS (2014-15)

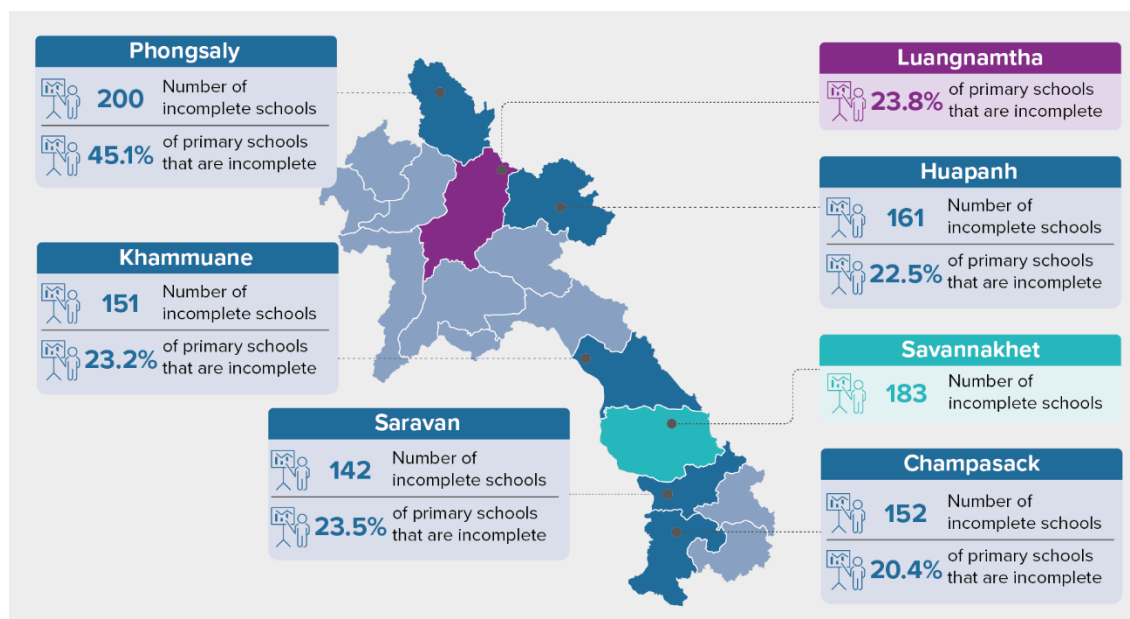
Map App 7 Cambodia provinces reporting most incomplete schools



For Lao PDR the data source is somewhat different, but the main conclusions are similar. There are 8,813 primary schools in the most recent EMIS (2020-21), and 1,564 of these are designated as incomplete. This represents 17.8% of all primary schools, which is considerably higher than in Cambodia. However, on the basis of grade 1 student population the incomplete schools only represent 8.4% of total enrolment. So, this is clearly an issue in Lao PDR and a possible constraint for girls (and boys) schooling, but it is important to note that a very high percentage of students are studying in complete schools.

The incomplete schools are concentrated in six provinces: Phongsaly (200) and Huapanh (161) in the north, and Savannakhet (183), Champasack (152), Khammuane (151), and Saravane (142) in the south. As a percentage of all primary schools the incomplete schools are most prevalent in Phongsaly (41.5% of primary schools in the province are incomplete), Luangnamtha (23.8%), and Huapanh (22.5%) in the north, and Khammuane (23.2%), Saravane (23.5%) and Champasack (20.4%) in the south (Map App 8).

Map App 8 Lao PDR provinces reporting most incomplete schools



C. Donor Funded Inclusive Education Projects and Programmes

C.1 Cambodia

Project / Programme title	Donor/NGO/CSO weblink	Date / Period	Goal / Objectives	Activities	Geographical location	Target group	Indicative Budget
Investing in Adolescent Girls Education in Cambodia: Pathways to a Brighter Future	Asia Foundation working in partnership with Khmer Youth Association (KYA) https://asiafoundation.org/2019/03/13/investing-in-cambodias-adolescent-girls/	2017-	(1) to lower drop-out rates in secondary schools and keep young people in school, eliminating one of the root causes of labor migration; (2) to empower at-risk, adolescent girls to take leadership roles in school and imagine other education and career pathways that match Cambodia's changing economic landscape	The project has supported 410 students, 80% of them girls. Students and their families receive material support for students' basic, practical needs—bicycles for getting to school, pens and paper for schoolwork, uniforms, school bags, and rice. The project provides a mentoring and enrichment experience to help students grow personally, academically, and eventually professionally.	Six remote schools in Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, and Prey Veng provinces known for high drop-out rates and pervasive labor migration	Children (80% girls) at risk of dropping out or having dropped out of secondary school	
EAC/AEA CCOOSC Phase II project	Educate a Child (EAC) and Aide et Action (AEA) (CCOOSC) https://educateachild.org/our-partners-projects/projects/cambodia-consortium-out-school-children-ccoosc-%E2%80%93-phase-ii		To increase access to equitable, quality and relevant education to 116,396 marginalised OOSC by focussing on: 1) equitable access; 2) education quality and relevance; and 3) ownership of duty bearers and rights holders	OOSC are initially identified via participatory community mapping campaigns to bring those children into the formal education system, and then providing a mix of supply- and demand-side interventions to reduce the prevalence of push and pull factors and other access barriers, such as poverty, lack of infrastructure and quality. Project Interventions: infrastructure enhancements, teacher training and capacity building for education actors, OOSC enrolment campaigns, parent and youth advocacy, policy dialogues, and research and documentation will take place in all provinces (or at the national level, as appropriate) where the project is active	all 25 Provinces	an additional 116,396 OOSC across the country	

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Adapting, testing and scaling a proven summer pre-primary education model in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Tanzania	A consortium of institutions led by Plan International, Canada with The Mother Child Education Foundation, and the American Institutes of Research https://www.gpekix.org/project/adapting-testing-and-scaling-proven-summer-pre-primary-education-model-cambodia-lao-pdr		To enhance the capacity of ministries of education in Tanzania, Laos, and Cambodia to adopt evidence-based, quality, gender-responsive early childhood education programs for vulnerable girls and boys in underserved communities.	To adapt, test, and scale up an accelerated summer pre-primary education model in Cambodia, Laos, and Tanzania. Parent education and outreach, nutrition and hygiene modules, and gender-responsive teaching-learning and parenting approaches integrated across activities.	Mothers of vulnerable pre-school girls and boys in underserved communities
Provide Cambodian children living in extreme poverty access to education	Pour un Sourire d'Enfant (PSE) For a Child's Smile https://www.pse.ngo/	1996 to continuing	PSE answers the needs of each individual child: education in a state school, remedial curriculum in the PSE school or specialised care for disabled children.	We address all the needs including food, protection, education, healthcare and family support. We teach them a skilled trade so they can join mainstream Cambodian society When the children do not have significant developmental delays and are not too far behind for their age (less than four years) we register them in their local state schools. PSE provides school materials, uniforms, transportation (bus or bike), meals, school counselling to monitor attendance and grades. If required, additional tutoring is provided. When necessary, we help schools, which are often overcrowded, so they can accommodate these children. We build additional classrooms or infirmaries, libraries, sports or sanitation facilities in schools with the greatest need. We also operate within the schools'	Phnom Penh and surrounding districts; also in Sihanoukville and Siem Reap (Angkor) More than 6,000 children from child labourers, scavengers, street children, water spinach harvesters, stone breakers, school dropouts, abused or orphaned children primarily from families that live in precarious conditions in the slums around large cities

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governance framework to ensure day-to-day management and facilities maintenance. An accelerated learning curriculum for children who had dropped out of school for too long or who were too old to re-enter the regular school system. The Adapted Teaching Section of our Phnom Penh Centre children follow appropriate activities in classes organised by age group and intellectual ability. Each group has a dedicated teacher who is assisted by specialised teachers							
Inclusive Education Program (IEP) including the Girls' Education Initiative (GEI)	KAPE: The Asia Foundation; Lotus Outreach; Kinchan Foundation; Oaktree Foundation; GAP Foundation; PACT-USAID; MOEYS-Child Fund; Save the Children; WeWorld-GVC; European Union; VVOB	2016-2022	To increase access to education, especially for girls, minorities and other vulnerable and marginalised children/youth	IEP assists children and youth at multiple levels from secondary school through to tertiary, vocational, and professional training levels - scholarships; gender training; remediation for struggling children; temporary classrooms to make education immediately available in remote areas; community outreach such as school mapping and enrolment campaigns; and advocacy	Kampong Cham, Tbaung Khmum	100 vulnerable girls	USD 29,092 in FY 2020 for GEI Unit cost per beneficiary = USD 291

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Happy Cambodian Children (HCC) Project	KAPE	2018-continuing	Project Objective 1: Access to education (especially for girls and vulnerable children) improves in target locations Project Objective 2: School effectiveness (i.e. quality of education) improves through the development and practice of Child Friendly School approaches in and out of the classroom in a way that is relevant to needs of vulnerable children, especially girls;	Gender counselling and training, remediation, temporary classrooms, community outreach, advocacy	5 Provinces (Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Ratanakiri, Kratie, Tbuang Khmum) 13 Districts (Varin, Kralanh, Kampong Siem, Memot, Ponhea Krek, Dambae, Snuol, Chetborey, Sambo, Oyadav, Barkeo, Lumpat, Or Chum)	8,599 vulnerable children (4,203 girls)	USD 663,654 in FY 2020 Unit cost per beneficiary = USD 76
Inclusive Education Program - GPE Grant	GPE	2006-continuing		Training for more than 5,000 teachers on disability screening and identifying children with vision and hearing impairments; deployed teachers to gather data on disabilities; trained teachers in inclusive education and sign language; and providing textbooks in braille		More than 33,000 children and teachers benefited from the program and close to 3,000 children were referred for treatment	USD 38.5m
Ensuring children with disability from remote community's access education	Khmer NGO for Education (KHEN) https://www.khenca mbodia.org/index.html UNICEF funding	2019-2020	All projects focus on education within rural/remote areas where KHEN believe most barriers to child education exist	Find the "hidden" children – mostly children with disabilities – and get them the support they need to be able to access the type of education that best meets their requirements; Increase the capacity of communities and schools to create child friendly environments for children with disability (CwD) and support these children to attend school and fully participate in both formal and non-formal education opportunities; Change staff, schools and communities' perceptions of children/people with disabilities to a more positive view - focus on what people can do rather on what	Remote areas of Battambang Province 5 of 14 districts in the province 18 communes in the Battambang districts of 1) Samlout, 2) Rukhak Kiri and 3) Rattanakmondol, 4) Sampov Luon	10,000+ children 53 State Primary Schools (14 cluster schools) 32 Community (or called as Annex) Primary Schools 39 Community/State Preschools (Early childhood Education) 6 Secondary Schools (Lower Secondary Schools)	

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they can't – so that they are valued and supported in the same way as people without disabilities; Build the capacity of school and community based organisations - School Supporting Committees (SSC) and Community Councils for Women and Children (CCWCs) so that after the project has finished, people will continue to support children (and adults) with disabilities						
Supporting the Special Schools	Krousar Thmey https://www.krousar-thmey.org/en/education-for-deaf-or-blind/special-schools/	1994-2020 - full transfer to local authorities	To enable deaf or blind children to fully find their place in society by providing them with education and support which will prepare them for working life. To offer blind or deaf children an education adapted to their disability, in line with the National Education program.	1997 school for deaf children founded; 5 special schools; implementation of quality education in special schools, while developing new projects aimed at improving the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system and the society, offering them adapted learning tools or promoting their access to training and employment.	Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampong Cham	Children with sensory disabilities, public education system

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Screening and support with adapted education for children with hearing impairment	Krousar Thmey https://www.krousar-thmey.org/en/education-for-deaf-or-blind/screening-and-support-with-adapted-education-for-children-with-hearing-impairment/	2018-2019	To screen children with hearing impairment and to refer them to the adapted educational structures in regards with the level of disability To support the special schools with the provision of quality education, especially through teachers training To ensure a proper inclusive education is provided to children with mild hearing loss in the public system	Screen around 5 000 children in Sen Sok and Chbar Ampov areas (Phnom Penh). Children identified with hearing impairments will be referred to an ENT doctor and fitted with hearing instruments adapted to their level of hearing loss, which also determine which schools to refer the children to : the most severe cases will be referred to special schools located in Sen Sok and Chbar Ampov while the less severe will go back to the public school they were found in. Strong institutional and individual capacity-building components for teaching and technical staff at the National Institute for Special Education (NISE) and the School Health Department (SHD), two entities registered under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Indeed in the long term, those local authorities are destined to undertake the screenings and identification of children.	Phnom Penh province	Children from public schools in Sen Sok and Chbar Ampov districts, member of the education system
Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Low Vision	Krousar Thmey https://www.krousar-thmey.org/en/education-for-deaf-or-blind/towards-inclusive-education-for-children-with-low-vision/	2014-2019	Allow visually impaired students to follow their education on an equal footing in the public education system, and promote the integration of children with disabilities in Cambodian society	To experiment with a totally inclusive education system for visually impaired pupils in 12 districts, spread across 6 provinces of Cambodia. In collaboration with Light for the World, a 3-year pilot project has been implemented, designed to identify children with low vision and facilitate inclusive education in the nearest school from their home. Screening and equipment of children with adapted optic devices Training and capacity building of teachers and eye care professionals Publication of framework documents: curriculum and procedures for a quality care of	Kampot	Children schooled in the mainstream system, teachers, eyecare professionals

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		children with visual impairment			
Care Our School (School Governance project)	UNICEF Cambodia https://schoolgovernance.care-cambodia.org/ Project supported by the Capacity Development Partnership Fund; EU, Sweden and UNICEF		School Support Committees as a bridge between schools and communities; Lower school dropout rates attributed to increased capacity of School Support Committees; monitoring teacher absenteeism leads to improved attendance and better education opportunities for students	Mondulkiri	Ethnic group School Support Committee; increased girls' enrolment and retention; increased community awareness of value of education
Education Programme: Cambodia		UNICEF Cambodia focus: equitable and inclusive access to education for children with disabilities, children from ethnic minorities and children living in rural and urban poor areas	scholarships for children of poor households, so they can stay in school instead of dropping out to go to work; access to quality early childhood education services, especially in rural and remote areas; accessible school facilities for girls and boys, with and without disabilities; schools with adequate water and sanitation facilities, so children don't get sick from contaminated water or lack of hygiene, and adolescent girls don't drop out because they cannot manage menstruation hygienically at school; qualified multilingual teachers for ethnic minority students, particularly in the north-eastern provinces; and skilled teachers to teach children with disabilities.	provinces with the highest disparities and worst child development indicators, to ensure an equitable approach towards improving the lives of all children	UNICEF Cambodia
Creating Quality Learning Environments	Save the Children Cambodia	a project to reach out-of-school children and develop inclusive quality learning environments, building the capacity of Children's Councils and teachers on inclusive education.	Children with intellectual disabilities may have difficulties in understanding complex information, using logical thinking to solve problems, following directions and instructions, and using judgement and abstract thought. The project thus prioritised the rights and needs of children with intellectual disabilities and the development of inclusive quality	Pursat 180 km NW of Phnom Penh, one of the poorest provinces and a rural area; Enrolment is high, but so are repetition and dropout rates (8% and 6% respectively)	Children with intellectual disabilities and teachers in 8 target schools

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				learning environments, combining education, child protection and child empowerment.			
IPEA- Inclusive Primary Education Activity	SCF lead consortium - Research Triangle Institute and USAID	01/12/2021-30/11/2026	Build MoEYS capacity to provide equitable access to the Komar Rien Komar Cheh early grade learning program at national scale to ensure all Cambodian children, particularly those in vulnerable groups, including slow learners, children with disabilities, and indigenous children, have improved foundational learning skills, particularly in - literacy.	Main activities – Support for: - system resilience for Early Grade Learning; lead resilience TWG - school-based management (SBM) activities - capacity building for IE in Primary schools, and teachers in “Special Schools” - policies, strategies and plans for IE. - capacity development for teaching children who are deaf. - capacity development of School Management Committees (SMCs) in understanding IE principles	Nation and Kampong Chanang	Children of primary school age (in school and out of school)	1,186,308 USD
PEER- Pathways in Educational Equity and Resilience	SCF with corporate donors from South Korea	01/07/2021-30/06/2024	Helping girls and boys at schools and at risk of dropout access distance learning through paper-based and ICT solutions, providing catch up classes, in order to improve children's learning outcomes, through adaptive and inclusive teaching of better skilled educators - WASH in schools, scholarships to marginalised children to overcome socioeconomic barriers and return to school. Post COVID build capacities to manage children's return to learning into safe and equitable school environments and	Provide girls and boys with greater access to distance learning opportunities, including paper-based materials and digital devices. It addresses the gender digital divide in girl's access to ICT which is lower in Cambodia and globally. Train teachers on new techniques for remote learning and teaching that are tailored to their students' learning levels and that account for learning loss. Training in target schools to use the short set of Washington Group questions to identify/update children at risk of exclusion due to functional difficulties /disabilities.	Kampong Chhnang	Children of primary school age (in school and out of school)	2.9 million USD

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			importantly, will promote greater gender equity in education. Throughout the implementation the project collects data and evidence for advocacy and policy-level influencing	Improve sanitation, hygiene, and detection measures at schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Promote gender equity between girls and boys through child-led initiatives and scholarships for the most marginalised children to stay in school. Work and partner with school management to facilitate school re-opening, increase emergency preparedness through training, planning, and resources to prevent future learning disruptions.			
TALK- Technology and Access for Learning and Knowledge , and Watch Me Learn	Various donors (internal pool funding)	01/10/2021-31/05/2021	To re-establish learning access and continuity for the most marginalised via a community-based mechanism of “scholarships” for cash to children who have lost access to education and/or to prevent children from labour. A top-up of \$20,000 for Watch Me Learn, which provides capacity building to Cambodian DPO, a local OPD, in order to strengthen their Children with Disabilities activities.	scholarships - financial and material support to the most vulnerable boys and girls to retain learning and transition back to school. Provide referral support needed that goes beyond education. Children referred to relevant social services, SMCs and local commune authorities (Commune Committees for Women and Children CCWCs, Commune and village chiefs) regularly identify marginalised girls and boys, who have dropped out or are at risk of not continuing their education. Assess and improve learning spaces for safe reopening and to ensure minimum standards of WASH. Responsive, empathic, transparent and consistent messaging in Khmer language and Khmer sign language through trusted channels of communication have a positive effect on parents sending children back to school and counter misinformation Watch Me Learn for children with disabilities, implemented in	Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Kampong Thom	Children of primary school age (in school and out of school)	152,576 USD

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				partnership with the Cambodian DPO (CDPO). - Conducting home visits - Awareness raising on education for CwD - PPE against COVID-19 materials for CwD - Conduct roundtables discussions focused on promoting children with disabilities to school •Developing and broadcast radio spots on access of children with disabilities to education			
GREEN- Generating Resilient Environment and Promoting Socioeconomic development of the East Tonle Sap Lake	SCF with EC (DG INTPA)	01/03/2021-28/02/2025	GREEN aims to improve vulnerable East Tonle Sap Lake (ETSL) fishing communities' socio-economic status and resilience to climate change, through increased access to water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH), waste management services and products, green economy and education.	Vulnerable East Tonle Sap fishing communities have - improved positive WASH practices and access to sanitation, clean water, and waste management solutions - improved environmental awareness and green economy initiatives. - improved awareness on the importance of education, and better access to ECE, primary and lower secondary education. - blended training and ongoing mentoring to teachers and ECE/primary school staff on IE techniques, remedial and drop out interventions, environmental education, and access to digital / paper-based resources. - Assess, establish and/or improve learning spaces, provide age appropriate and inclusive learning materials; scholarships for marginalised and vulnerable boys and girls (material, transport, etc.) to access education services, and referrals to relevant social services.	Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Kampong Thom	Children of primary school age (in school and out of school)	4,179,024 EUR

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C.2 Laos

Project / Programme title	Donor/NGO/CSO weblink	Date / Period	Goal / Objectives	Activities	Geographical location	Target group	Indicative Budget
Lao PDR Global Partnership for Education III: Learning and Equity Acceleration Project	World Bank / GPE https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P173407 https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/827001616378469121/laos-peoples-democratic-republic-learning-and-equity-acceleration-project	2021-2026	To improve learning outcomes in primary grades in target districts and strengthen teacher and system performance in Lao PDR	Sub-component 1.v. childhood disability screening (CDS)Target; Sub-component 3b ensure better education decision-making nationwide through more and better use of data Indicators include: numeracy and literacy targets for Grade 3 students; girls participation in ECE; mathematics and Lao language teaching practice for grade 1-3 female teachers (improvements in rejecting gender bias and challenging gender stereotypes in the classroom); disability screening for 3-5 year olds (1800 by 2026) in new target districts; Improved data quality, management, and utilisation for monitoring and planning (LESMIS Platform is being used to inform the Joint Sector Review Missions or Annual Sector Report by 2026.)	All provinces	ECE, Public Administration - Education, Primary Education	USD 30m
Covid-19 Response (Grant)	GPE https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/laos-new-digital-platform-ensures-continuity-education	2020-2021	To support MOES Covid-19 Response Plan	- hygiene and cleaning kits for schools - learning materials including for children with disabilities - textbooks and learning materials for students in remote areas - TV and satellite receiver and dish set for selected rural schools - online & offline teaching and learning platform - a catch-up/remedial program for children lagging behind including for those who could not access online media, radio or TV and	All provinces	ECE and basic education Children with disabilities	USD \$ 7m

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children with disabilities - psychosocial support						
MICS-EAGLE (Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity) Initiative	GPE KIX https://www.gpekix.org/ blog/countries-using- data-inform-education- policies	2018- 2022	(i) Build national capacity for education sector situation analysis and sector plan development, and leverage the vast wealth of disaggregated education data collected by MICS6 (or future iterations); (ii) Build on the global data foundation provided by MICS6 to conduct analysis of disaggregated data at the national, regional, and global level that yields insights as to how barriers to education opportunities can be reduced so each child can reach his or her full potential	National level activities seek to identify specific education issues using MICS data linking to policy discussions, and key education data gaps that require additional studies or data sources. Seven topics will be analysed through an equity lens (gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, etc): access and completion; skills; inclusive education, early learning; out-of-school children; repetition and dropout; child protection; remote learning	National level	OOSC Dropout children Children with disabilities
Humanity and Inclusion NGO	Humanity and Inclusion NGO https://humanity- inclusion.org.uk/en/coun try/laos	1983- ongoing	To improve access to education for disadvantaged children and improve reading skills of children who do not speak Lao language and children with disabilities	Detection of disability and disability awareness raising activities	Champasak and Huaphan - improved access for CwD; Champasak, Xienghouang and Vientiane - improve reading skills	

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ECE program Primary education Gender Equality	UNICEF Laos https://www.unicef.org/laos/education	ongoing	UNICEF's education programme operates at national and local levels to help ensure quality ECE and basic education for all children in Lao PDR, with a special focus on remote and disadvantaged children. To help achieve national and international goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals for education, UNICEF continues working on addressing inequities in access, participation and learning in education in Lao PDR.	ECE: improve the pre-primary curriculum and the ECE quality standards, and to develop and implement a national ECE costed action plan; training pre-primary teachers and school principals, and the provision of teaching-learning materials; expansion of a Community-Based School Readiness Programme in educationally disadvantaged communities, including non-Lao-speaking villages; capacity building for ECE facilitators and Village Education Development Committees, and the provision of age appropriate materials; parenting education which helps raising awareness and developing skills of parents and caregivers. Primary education: reinforce primary curriculum, teacher training and support by Pedagogical Advisors; Child-Friendly Schools concept to promote safe and enjoyable learning environments which include appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. MOES support in the coordination and implementation of multi-year sector plans to strengthen planning, budgeting and monitoring processes, including the Education Management Information System. UNICEF Lao PDR works with partners, with both men and women, to address gender disparities through programmes and policies that respond to the needs of boys and girls, that transform gender norms and uneven power relations, and that ensure equal opportunities for all.	All provinces and national MOES level	ECE, primary education, gender equality for girls and boys
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Basic Education Quality Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL Phase 1)	Led by the Lao Government, with support from the Australian Government (AusAID) and the European Union. http://www.bequal-laos.org/	2015-2020		Development and implementation of the national new curriculum for grades 1–5, the improvement of teacher education and strengthening support systems such as planning, management and monitoring of teaching. Addressing and integrating Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion in all the program activities: All activities integrate gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and activities do not discriminate; Targeted activities that aim to transform social relations and address gender inequality, exclusion of people with disabilities and exclusion of people from ethnic backgrounds are designed	National, with an intensified support to 34 educationally disadvantaged districts (Khamoune, Savannakhet, Salavane, Sekong)	Estimated 740,000 children with a particular focus on children who traditionally experience poorer education outcomes — girls, students with disabilities and children from the more remote communities	UDS 47m (AUD 65m)
National Curriculum	BEQUAL	Phase 1 2015 - 2022 Phase 2 2022 - 2026	Ongoing information flow on inclusive education, Phase 2 shifts away from curriculum development to teacher support on teaching	Teacher guides, story books, trainings, PA training Phase 2 work with Teacher Training Colleges	National		
Through Semester Support	BEQUAL	2019-present	Re-training same group of PAs, etc., have tablets with monitoring checklists, etc., monitoring inclusive education	Assisted DESB with monitoring teachers in classroom through grants, lots of materials to avoid old style inspection and auditing, providing support on inclusive education	34 target districts	Target districts on low literacy, etc.	Grants 100,000 AUS for 34 districts, with budget from larger project
Spoken Lao Pilot	BEQUAL	2019-?	Reviewing data, have not continued into 2022 due to mixed results, decision on continuation is pending, “huge interest” from NGOs	Separate teacher guides, data collections have been impacted by Covid	3 provinces, 40 schools treatment / control	Schools with ethnic minorities	

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INGO Consortium for Basic Education Quality Access in Lao PDR (BEQUAL)	Plan International Laos leads the INGO Consortia in partnership with ChildFund Laos, Save the Children International, World Vison International https://plan-international.org/laos/education-laos	2021-2025	Providing access to quality education for all vulnerable children and in particular girls. Scaling up of successful approaches nationally (BEQUAL)	Partnering with children, schools, parents and the government to ensure that all primary school age children reach essential learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, enabling their continuation into secondary school			
Lao Education Assess, Research and Networking (LEARN) Project	Dubai Cares funded project in partnership with Plan International and Save the Children International https://plan-international.org/laos/education-laos	2017-ongoing	To promote accessibility to a quality education in pre-primary and primary schools. Robust piloting of new models (LEARN)	Increasing community participation in education, supporting school-based teacher training in reading, mathematics and other key subjects, improving classroom practices and giving children better access to school materials. In the secondary education sector, a focus on child protection and gender equality, and the integration of menstrual hygiene management in all of our programming	Bokeo, Saravane and Oudomxay	Vulnerable children, particularly girls, and families and communities where there is low school enrolment and completion, poor hygiene, little-to-no access to sanitation, limited safe water and high levels of malnutrition	
Lao PDR: Inclusive Communities Project - Improving access to quality health services and creating more inclusive communities	Christian Relief Services https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/laos	In Laos since 2007-ongoing IE Project 2015-2017	In partnership with the local government to ensure that all children have access to quality education Cross Cutting: inclusion of gender, ethnicity and disability in all interventions Project Objective: disability awareness and assistance	Boys and girls in remote and poor communities have improved access to primary schools; access quality literacy tools and improved literacy instruction; and quality inclusive education structure and systems in place at the basic education level Inclusive Communities Project (2015-2017) included medical screening training Village Education Development Committee (VEDC) members; training a core group of government staff and teachers on classroom strategies, management, and lesson plans for	Savannakhet and Khammouane provinces	Food insecure and underdeveloped districts 424 VEDC members trained in disabilities screening	USD 400,000

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IE, the role of village elders and parents in IE; how to build community support for IE.						
My Body, My Future (adolescent)	Plan International with CSO (GDA, PSHA) work in the community	2018-2021		WASH facility improvement Awareness-raising Rights of disabled children Sexual rights, rights to access health services	Hun Distirct, Oudomxay	In school young people (boys-girls) with/without disabilities MOU 1.0 million euro
Integrated Nutrition and WASH	Plan International with PFHA, Min of Health	2019-2022	Maternal child health	Building smaller hospitals, improving hospitals; Making them more accessible (wider doors, handles)	Saravan district, Ta-Oi, Pak Bey (Oudomxay)	Out of school, but mothers not classified as adolescents (in ethnic minority populations) 1.2 million euros
Bringing Education to All	Plan International with MOES (DEBS, etc.)	2018-2021	Gender equality integrated from early childhood to primary and secondary levels of the education system	Partnering with children, schools, parents and the government to ensure that all primary school age children reach essential learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, enabling their continuation into secondary school	Bokeo, Oudomxay 3 districts (Oudomxay), Na, Houn, Pakbeng Bokeo 3 districts (Pa Oudom, Pakta, Meung)	Same as above (in ethnic minority populations) 750,000 USD

D. List of People Met

Cambodia

#	Organisation / Office	Person Met	Position Held
1	National Institute of Special Education	Mr. Hang Kimchhorn kimchhron@hotmail.com (855)12 841047	Deputy Director of NISE
2	Department of Special Education	H.E. Chan Sophea chan.sophea@MOEYS.gov.kh , (855) 12 211 336)	Director of Department of Primary Education (PED)
3	SIDA / Sweden	Mr. Magnus Saemundsson magnus.saemundsson@gov.se (855) 16 755 655	First Secretary, Swedish Embassy, Cambodia
4	Plan International	Mr. Yi Kim Than Kimthan.Yi@plan-international.org (855) 12 998 655 & Telegram	Deputy Country Director
5	UNICEF	Mr. Ream Rin rream@unicef.org (855) 77 878 687 & Telegram	Education Officer
6	KAPE	Mr. Huon Sim kurt@kapekh.org huon@kapekh.org (855) 12 963 353 012 762 632 & Telegram	Senior Technical Adviser
7	Krousar Thmey	Mr. Chhou Darong direction@krousar-thmey.org (855) 12 801 000 Telegram: (855) 98220757	Executive Director
8	Aide et Action	Mr. Samphors Vorn Info_sea@aide-et-action.org (855) 77 777 847 & Telegram	Country Director
9	Department of Primary Education	H.E. Chan Sophea chan.sophea@MOEYS.gov.kh , (855) 12 211 336)	Director of Department of Primary Education (PED)

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10	Department of Early Childhood Education	H.E Prak Kosal echild.edu@gmail.com (855) 12 824 256	Director Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE)
11	Director of Department of General Secondary Education	Mr. Pring Morakoth morkoathpring@gmail.com (855) 12970987	Director of Department of General Secondary Education (DGSE)
12	Care Cambodia	Ms. Sovattha Neou	Country Director
13	VSO Cambodia	Joyce Laker joyce.laker@vsoint.org	GLOBAL Practice Area Lead – Education, VSO International
14	SCF Cambodia	Elizabeth Pearce elizabeth.pearce@savethechildren.org	Country Director

Laos

#	Organisation / Office	Person Met	Position Held
1	BEQUAL	Sylvia BITTER	Team Leader
2	Humanity and Inclusion	Kiran PITT Nousa SAYASARIN Vanhvana SAYASENG (Na)	Senior Gender and Social Inclusion Specialist, Learn to Read SOS IE project manager Specialist Learn to Read
3	Plan International	Vimala DEJVONGSA Ivan BAIKOUK Vilasack VIRAPHANH	Deputy Country Director Business Development Manager Head of Education program
4	UNICEF	Rachel McCarthy	Khang Panya Lao project officer
5	Care International	Keoamphone SOUVANNAPHOUM Casey MORRISON	Country Director Gender Equality Adviser
6	MoES	Ministry representatives for Inclusive Education were contacted but none were available to meet the research team	Department of General Education, IEPC and EMIS team contacted

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